

Hello 😊

HOW CAN WE WORK TOGETHER?



For the past 4 years, there's been a controversial planning application for a multi-faith community centre at the derelict 'Icepak' site on Barkly Road here in Beeston. In June, the application was finally granted permission.

We (Aspiring Communities) are the group behind that application. We're really sorry to have seen so much misunderstanding and tension arise about the application, and are sorry if we contributed to that. We're getting in touch now to say hello, and to see if you're interested in working with us to make the centre everything that our community needs and wants.

Our vision has always been to create a centre for a wide range of local people to use for the following, and more: health activities, sports, community events, provision for youth and those with disabilities, and faith programmes. (We have always said that we intended it to be – amongst many other things – a venue for prayer and religious teaching.)

To achieve this, we absolutely want to work with diverse local people. We are very much open to your ideas and requests. We are committed, of course, to work within the rules and regulations laid down by the planners (noise, usage, traffic, etc). And we are totally committed to being transparent, available, and accountable to the local community and local government.

As well as distributing these flyers, we are currently meeting with local stakeholders – including schools, politicians, and other charities and community groups. We will be attending the monthly Beeston Forum meetings. We have fixed a **meeting** date for **Sunday 10th December from 7pm-9pm at St Marys Church Community Hall**. The purpose of this meeting is to update the local community and residents how we intend to move forward now that the planning application has been granted approval. If you have any questions or ideas, please get in touch anytime. Thanks for listening – and we look forward to meeting you, working with you, and serving this great community together.

Yours sincerely,
Ash Mahmood on behalf of the AC board

FAQs

Q: What is Aspiring Communities (AC)?

A: AC is a registered UK charity (1141103), established in (2010), and committed to advancing communities, health and religion. We operate across the north of England, but several of the leadership team are born-and-bred in Beeston, and we have been active (eg volunteering) in the local area over several years.

Q: What was this planning application, and what went wrong?

A: We first submitted our planning bid for this site in (2013) – for a mixed-use community facility, providing sports, health, community, study, and faith programmes and facilities.

We started community outreach at that time – but sadly, a lot of misunderstandings and opposition arose, so we became embroiled in a planning battle. We are now looking to start afresh, build bridges, and move forward.

Q: Isn't it secretly a mosque?

A: No. We have always simply stated that – alongside a wide range of other uses – the centre will feature an Islamic learning centre, including prayer facilities.

Q: How many car parking spaces will there be?

A: There will be about 160 car parking spaces on site, as instructed by the Leeds Highways team. This extension of car parking spaces (we had originally proposed fewer) forced us to include a two-storey carpark.

Q: How many people will the centre hold?

A: Up to 308, plus staff.

Q: Has our planning application changed over time?

A: Yes, in response to feedback from local residents and the Council, we have adapted our proposals in various ways.

Q: When will the centre be busiest?

A: It will be busiest on Friday afternoons, for prayers; and at any times when events take place (including for example, those booked by local people), most likely to be at weekends.

Q: What will the local community's involvement be?

A: This centre will be entirely open to the local community – both to use our range of sports, community, health and faith facilities and programmes; and we are also very keen to hear from local people to help shape those facilities and programmes.

Q: When will building work commence?

A: Mid 2018.

Q: Will women's and men's entrances be different?

A: Yes, dependent on the use, this was also a stipulation of planning preapp and post planning submission review with the LPA.

Q: Why do they segregate women?

A: Due to the facility being mixed use, the segregation of women is relevant for respecting the privacy of the women themselves, based on protecting the cultural and religious views of all members of the local community.

With regards rights for any gender, the facility is an equal access centre, which does not prevent, prohibit or contravene any rights.

Q: Can we play loud music in the hall and consume alcohol?

A: The planning conditions do not allow loud music, due to local concerns about noise nuisance. Local objections about catering also mean that parties/weddings/etc will also not be allowed. Finally, as the facility is not licensed, so no alcohol – sorry!

Q: What is the proposed multi-faith room?

A: A multi-faith room/library will be accessible during opening hours, for people of any faith or none to learn and study.

Recently there has been a lot of talk about the asbestos and how it was removed and by whom.

Below is the information that was posted on the SOB facebook page several times:

Apologies it's taken a while to pull this information together, but it's not information I hold and it was the middle of the holiday season.

Aspiring Communities decided to demolish the building (for which there was pre-existing planning permission) because of repeated break ins where individuals had stolen and were intent on stealing the remaining metal, most of the roof had been removed and the steel frame structure was left exposed.

An enviro survey report was done and Complete Asbestos Services Ltd were given the job of removing all the asbestos found within the enviro survey report. BDP LTD from Birstall was the carrier employed to remove the asbestos material away from the site.

The asbestos was taken to different landfill sites which include Demex Ltd which is in Rotherham and Bradley park waste management Ltd which is in Huddersfield. A construction company was employed to remove all metal frameworks. NM Construction LTD issued an F10 demolition notice to Leeds City Council.

All the works were carried out in late 2012.