

Buzz

Head injury for 15-year-old girl as new fight takes place on Beeston Fields estate

FOLLOWING the Foster Avenue fracas on Saturday on Foster Avenue, six teenagers were arrested in connection with an incident of violent disorder in Beeston on Tuesday, October 6.

At about 5pm, police received a number of calls from members of the public about groups of youths in Central Avenue and Wallett Avenue.

Witnesses to the fight understand that the trouble started on the school bus

and continued in the street after the youths had left it, when 'reinforcements' were summoned up by mobile phones.

Police officers attending found a 15-year-old girl with a head injury – she had been hit with a stick and was taken to hospital for treatment, but was released shortly afterwards.

The youths are all male and are aged between 14 and 18. All six have been arrested on suspicion of violent disorder, and one has

been arrested on suspicion of assault.

Neighbourhood Policing Inspector for the Beeston area, Insp Zoe Hallam, said: "At the moment, we don't believe this incident is linked to the events of Saturday night, but we can't rule that possibility out.

"We also believe that other teenagers were involved, and we would like to speak to them. If anyone witnessed the incident or has information about who was involved,

please contact Beeston Police Station on 0300 300 9999. Alternatively, call the Crimestoppers number anonymously on 0800 555 111.

"We've increased patrols in and around Beeston town centre in order to discourage any further incidents of this kind."

The six teenagers arrested have all been questioned and released on police bail pending further enquiries.

Snippets

Bringing the harvest in

THE theme for the harvest celebrations at Chilwell Road Methodist Church during the first weekend of October was 'Living in God's World – Sharing God's Bounty'.

The harvest weekend included the monthly coffee morning and a harvest supper with a barn dance. More than £350 was raised for the Church Charity as well as £131 for The Bluebird Trust. The harvest gifts were distributed to church members and friends, the Parish Pantry and Framework.

Money for Macmillan

THE Macmillan Cancer Support Coffee Morning held at 15 Stapleford Lane, Toton on September 25 raised more than £323 for the charity.

The winner of the 'Work-a-Holic' competition was Mrs Maureen Hopewell of Wollaton.

Thanks are offered to the people who supported this event.

Summer fundraising

THE Beeston Committee of Cancer Research UK has been busy fundraising during the summer months.

A Coffee Morning held at Beeston Golf Club on August 14 raised £570.

A week later, £900 was raised when over 90 people attended an evening buffet with a chance to view the Summer Exhibition at the Djanogly Arts Centre at the University of Nottingham.

Finally, a Flag Day held in Wollaton on September 5 raised £257, bringing the grand total for the summer to £1727.

Since March this year, the committee has raised £9832.35 including gifts and donations, and they would like to thank everyone who has supported events and donated money.

Between you and me...

BROXTOWE MP Nick Palmer writes his monthly column for the Beeston Express to keep us, his constituents, up-to-date and informed. We would like to remind you, however, that the views he expresses are his own and do not necessarily reflect those of The Beeston Express. If you would like to comment on any of the issues he raises, please write to the address on page 2.

The Beeston Express has no allegiance to any political party.



ONE of the virtues of elections is that they encourage political parties to be creative. In everyday politics you don't see that many new ideas: MPs are far too busy reacting to current events and arguing the toss about them. But if you're asking for votes for a 5-year period, you need to have some specifics about what you'll do that you've not done before.

I'm quite encouraged that both major parties have chosen to put forward new ideas on care of the elderly and long-term disabled, since I see in constituency work that it's an aspect of our society that really doesn't work very well.

The current position, basically, is that if you have trouble looking after yourself you'll get some free help from the council if you don't have many savings, or the

option to pay for it if you do have savings. If your needs get worse and you have to go into a care home, the NHS will now pay for the medical care (this is relatively new – up to a few years ago the NHS didn't pay except for hospital patients), but you have to pay for the residential side, potentially having to sell your home to do it.

There are two ways of improving this, and interestingly the main parties have each chosen a different one. Labour's proposal is to work towards a National Care Service, free at the point of use, to parallel the NHS and be paid for either by an annual NI contribution or by a charge on your estate when you die. As a first step, it's proposed that from next September, all the home assistance that you get will be free of charge if

your needs are in the highest category (which is defined as needing more than 16 hours/week of care).

This partly pays for itself, since if you're being looked after in your own home, you aren't taking up a bed in a care home with all the costs associated with residential care. I also think it's attractive because it goes with the grain of what most elderly people want: to stay at home as long as possible – partly because it's familiar, partly because it may have many pleasant associations. Constituents who tell me they are going to have to go into a home are usually quite brave about it, but they're very rarely happy with it, and if we can help delay it or avoid it altogether, we'll be doing a kind thing for quite vulnerable people.

The Conservatives, I understand (as I write this,

their conference hasn't happened yet), will reject this but instead propose to make it more affordable to go into a care home. Their idea is to ask everyone who reaches 65 to pay £8000 towards the possible cost of care, administered by a private insurance company like BUPA. If you agree to this, and later on need to go into care, you won't need to pay any more. Since only one in five of us do need to go into care, the scheme would partly fund itself, by pooling 5 x £8000 - £40,000 for those who do need to go.

Should we do both? The Conservative proposal seems attractive too, but there are snags, apart from the obvious one that not everybody has £8000 lying around when they retire. One problem is that it squeezes the elderly with modest means with a nasty dilemma. If they don't

yet need to go into care but they do need support, they'll want to spend some of their savings to pay for the care at home. But if they're diverting £8000 each to the scheme, they'll need to go into care earlier because they won't be able to afford the home care fees for as long. That in turn puts up the cost of the scheme (more people in care homes for longer).

The other snag is the nature of private insurance companies. If they're going to make it pay, I'd predict that they'll put in a clause saying that you're not covered if you've got a pre-existing condition that may lead to your needing care – such as advancing rheumatoid arthritis. But if you can only take part if you're well enough not to foresee needing it, I suspect that relatively few people will fork out the £8000.

And yet, the cost of care homes is certainly an issue. So what I'd like to do (and will propose when we discuss it for the manifesto) is to supplement the Labour scheme with one addition: cover residential costs for people with the highest needs in homes as well. And I'd pay for that not by a levy at age 65 but by a charge on our estates when we eventually die – while lots of people will struggle to find £8000 at the moment of retirement, most estates do have enough to cover that, and although it reduces the windfall for the next generation, they'll know the money went to give their parents comfort and peace of mind. I'd like to think that few would begrudge that, and it will make our society that much kinder and less worrying as we ourselves get older.