

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CANNOCK COMMUNITY FORUM
TUESDAY 11 JUNE, 2013 AT 7.00 P.M.
AT CIVIC CENTRE, CANNOCK

PRESENT: District Councillors:

Alcott, G.	Freeman, Miss M.
Allen, F.W.C.	Kraujalis J.T.
Anslow, C.	Mitchell, Mrs. C.
Davis, Mrs. M.A.	Snape, P.A.
Dixon, D.I.	

Staffordshire County Councillors:

Councillor Mrs A. Spicer

Cannock Chase Council Officers:

Mr. S. Brown, Chief Executive
Mr. S. Partridge, Democratic Services Manager
Mr. M. Berry, Senior Committee Officer

Also Present

Chief Inspector Carl Ratcliffe, LPT Commander for Cannock Chase District (*for agenda item 5*);
Inspector Geoff Knight, LPT Inspector for Cannock Chase District (*for agenda item 5*);
Neil Pedersen, Station Manager, Cannock Community Fire Station (*for agenda item 6*);
Hester Parsons, Health Watch Staffordshire (*for agenda item 7*);
Local Residents (approximately 15).

1. Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

Councillor G. Alcott was appointed Chairman and Councillor F.W.C Allen was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Forum for the forthcoming Municipal Year.

2. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received for Councillors C.W.J. Morgan; Mrs H.M. Sutton and J. Toth.

3. **Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restriction on Voting by Members**

There were no interests declared.

4. **Notes**

The notes of the meeting held on 19 March 2013, were agreed and signed as a correct record.

5. **Questions for Staffordshire Police**

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Chief Inspector Carl Ratcliffe and Inspector Geoff Knight who were in attendance to answer questions relating to local policing matters that had been submitted in advance.

Inspector Knight introduced himself to the Forum as this was his first meeting, having been recently appointed Inspector with the Cannock Chase District Local Policing Team. Chief Inspector Ratcliffe commented he was pleased Inspector Knight had joined the Team.

As no questions had been submitted in advance, Chief Inspector Ratcliffe took questions from the floor.

Question from Mr Haywood, local resident:

‘Vehicle parking on footpaths was still an ongoing issue, and becoming an increasing problem, particularly outside the fire station. He appreciated that the Police had limited resources, however, he believed that the District Council and County Council weren’t prepared to do anything about it due to political issues. Mr. Haywood believed that somebody should be issuing tickets to offenders.’

Chief Inspector Ratcliffe responded that he was aware of the issues, and had been receiving regular updates about it. Good quality photos had been received recently of such obstructions, which made it easier to tackle the problem. Targeted work would be undertaken, where practical, and advisory leaflets warning of potential hazards, fines etc distributed. However, he stressed the need to ensure a balance between addressing the problem and managing the needs of residents and businesses.

Question from Councillor Miss M.A. Freeman:

“The Police & Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire recently announced extra officers would be provided across the County. Do you have an update on this in respect of Cannock District?”

Chief Inspector Ratcliffe responded that two new student officers had been recruited for Cannock, along with looking into hiring additional PCSOs. The student officers started in May, and were presently five weeks into their training programme. They would become full time officers from October and join the Local Policing Team.

Question from Mr Taylor, local resident:

'Issue of cannabis being smoked along Cardinal Griffin Way. Cars and vans had been spotted parking along there undertaking this activity. He was aware that both residents and businesses in the area had reported this to the Police.'

Chief Inspector Ratcliffe responded that Inspector Knight had issued a press release about the work the LPT had been undertaking to tackle this issue. The press release would be available to read from 12 June.

Inspector Knight further responded that a survey had been undertaken with 2,000 people in the District to understand what their concerns were. The biggest concern raised was that of drug dealing and drug taking. Known dealers and users had been targeted directly over the last 2 to 3 months, as this problem also had direct links with serious acquisitive crime. The Neighbourhood Action Team had been tasked to deal with this issue, along with drunken behaviour and anti-social behaviour. Twenty arrests had been made over recent weeks, seizing assets and drugs with a combined value of £140,000 (£70,000 each). 'Street takes' on vehicles were also carried out. Inspector Knight advised that use of disruptive tactics was proven to work, as it helped to reduce serious acquisitive crime.

Question from Councillor P. Snape:

"With cutbacks in policing, are you meeting your minimum response levels?"

Chief Inspector Ratcliffe responded that the minimum levels were being met, mainly thanks to careful management of resources . Having limited availability against lots of priorities meant it was important to ensure incidents can be solved with the community so no return was needed. Technology and support from the wider force also help to achieve the required levels. He would be attending a meeting on 12 June to bid for additional resources.

6. Questions for Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Neil Pedersen from Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service who was in attendance to answer questions relating to local fire and rescue matters that had been submitted in advance.

Neil Pedersen introduced himself as the new Station Manager for Cannock Community Fire Station, explaining that he was pleased to be based at the station, and would be encouraging lots of community engagement and involvement with the station.

As no questions had been submitted in advance, Neil Pedersen took questions from the floor:

Question from Councillor P. Snape:

“Last year a joint project was organised between the Council, Police and Fire Service relating to fire safety. Will the project be undertaken again this year?”

Neil Pedersen responded that a review was being conducted of projects undertaken. In particular, they were looking at initiatives to stop children from setting fires in open spaces and woodland, and bringing the children in centrally to engage in activities with different groups of people across different age ranges. The aim was to reduce the number of fires being started, reduce anti-social behaviour and improve health and wellbeing. Community Safety Officers would also go into local schools to promote the initiative.

The Chairman informed Neil Pedersen that if there were any specific topics he wished to present at future forum meetings, to contact the relevant officers accordingly.

7. LINK (Local Involvement Network) / Healthwatch Staffordshire

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Hester Parsons, Community & Engagement Lead for Cannock and South Staffordshire from LINK, who was in attendance to provide information about the work of LINK and answer any questions.

Hester Parsons advised that LINK had ceased to exist from 31 March 2013, and had been replaced by a body called Healthwatch Staffordshire, which came into being on 01 April 2013. Healthwatch was setup through the Health and Social Care Act 2012. 152 Healthwatch bodies had been established across the country, each based in a specific county/unitary area. Each of these local bodies reported into Healthwatch England, which held the overall strategic role for the organisation.

Healthwatch was sponsored by a not for profit company called Engaging Communities Staffordshire (ECS). Funding for Healthwatch was provided by central government, via Staffordshire County Council, who then provided ECS with grant funding to enable Healthwatch to deliver its services. Healthwatch organisations across the Country had been faced with large funding cuts, fortunately this was not the case for Staffordshire.

Healthwatch's role was to act as a consumer champion for patients and services users across all aspects of health and social care provision within the County. Healthwatch had a number of specific responsibilities, which included;

- reviewing service provision to meet the needs of the local community;
- seeking people's views on service provision, both positive and negative;
- allow people to make suggestions as to how services can be improved, and report these suggestions to the relevant service provider;
- Asking for information from local Trusts, with Trusts having to provide the requested information within an acceptable agreed timescale;
- Entering hospital wards, care homes etc. to observe how services were being provided to meet the needs of the patients, and produce an accompanying report with recommendations, which would be submitted

to the service provide and Care Quality Commission to action as required.

Healthwatch also worked closely with local health scrutiny committees, and was the only quasi-statutory organisation to have a seat on county level Health and Wellbeing Boards.

Healthwatch was made up of a small staff team, with most of its work being undertaken by volunteers and members. People were being encouraged to sign up as members, and then members were being encouraged to become health champions. Champions support Healthwatch by helping to review services from patients' perspectives, attend meetings and focus groups and feedback about the work of Healthwatch to local communities.

Healthwatch had developed the following long-list of priority work areas for 2013/14 and were seeking people's views on which of these work areas should be focussed on:

- GP Appointments;
- Impact of personal budgets;
- Accident and Emergency (A&E);
- Domiciliary care;
- Support for carers;
- Services for children and young people;
- Outpatients experience;
- Hospital organisation.

Hester Parsons informed the forum that leaflets explaining the work of Healthwatch, member registration forms and forms for providing feedback about the priority work areas were available for people to take away and complete.

The Chairman queried if the address and contact details for Healthwatch were available on the forms?

Hester Parsons responded that the information was available both on the leaflets and on the organisation's website.

Having completed her presentation, Hester Parsons then took questions from the floor:

Question from Councillor Miss M.A. Freeman:

“In respect of A&E and the provision of the new 111 non-emergency telephone number, which has received many complaints nationally, could complaints about it locally be sent to Healthwatch?”

Hester Parsons replied that yes complaints could be fed through. The 111 system could not cope with the volume of calls that had been received, so the GP Out of Hours telephone service was providing additional support.

Question from Councillor Miss M.A. Freeman:

“Has Healthwatch received many complaints about the 111 number, and has A&E closure had a large effect on it?”

Healthwatch has received some complaints, but not many, as the GP Out of Hours Services has provided additional capacity to cope with the volume of calls being made. The A&E closure had not really impacted on the service as those people who would ordinarily have been referred to A&E were being sent to alternative services.

8. Questions submitted by Mr. G. Taylor

“Traffic island at the bottom of Cardinal Griffin Way is used for parking of vehicles and is being damaged. When the facility was applied for at the rear of the school, the plans stated this would include the re-construction of the island and continuation of footpaths up to the new roadway. At the present time it is dangerous when attempting to cross this road into the “ancient wood”. The signage when leaving the facility is non-existent, as the present signs are all facing in the opposite direction.”

Mark Keeling, Community Infrastructure Liaison Manager, Staffordshire County Council Highways, had provided the following written response in advance of the meeting:

“We are aware of the issues on Cardinal way however I have checked the various planning documents and have no reference to “reconstruction of the island and continuation of footpath to new roadway”. There were various site constraints on and off the highway, one of the issues we actioned was the Traffic Regulation Order / double yellow as per below:

28. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until an off-site traffic management scheme comprising of double yellow lines protecting the Stafford Road (A34)/Cardinal Way (U5055) junction has been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved traffic management scheme shall thereafter be implemented prior to first use of the proposed development. – Planning Ref No 28

I understand there are issues with parking during the day outside the school which obviously increases during drop off and pick up times. I also understand there are occasional parking issues during events outside of school hours.

This is difficult to prevent and it could be considered to introduce a total ban on parking with a new traffic order, however this would only lead to cars being pushed into other adjacent residential areas thus not solving the issue just moving it.

In terms of the signage I have little information but presume this is within the school boundary.”

Mr Taylor advised that when plans were passed for a turning circle, it was understood that the size of the turning circle was to be reduced. The footpath was a dangerous size, and the school had installed speed bumps to reduce

speeding issues. Mr. Taylor expressed surprise that Mark Keeling had not noticed the planning issues in the documents mentioned. Furthermore, Mr Taylor had raised that nobody could be issued with a ticket for parking on the double yellow lines around the island as it doesn't belong to anyone.

Stephen Brown, Chief Executive, read out an additional response which had been provided by Mazer Aqbal, Development Control Manager:

"I can advise that Condition 28 referred to by Mark Keeling is specified on the implemented planning permission for the Synthetic Turf Pitch at Cardinal Griffin School. I can also confirm that the condition has been discharged by planning officers, in consultation with County Highways. I have also visited the site and the approved waiting restrictions have been implemented at the junction of Cardinal Way/Stafford Road and at the turning head of Cardinal Way.

The turning circle was originally proposed to be re-configured/upgraded. However, because cores were taken which showed the existing road construction to be acceptable, no further works or revisions were required to the road and roundabout.

Appropriate signage has also been provided. However, I have noted that a 'Give Way' sign at the junction of the access to the Synthetic Turf Pitch and Cardinal Way appears to be facing the wrong direction. Officers will contact the school regarding this.

Based on the above officers conclude that the main issue is inconsiderate and unauthorised parking, which is a management and enforcement matter."

A local resident advised that the entrance on Cardinal Way had always been the entrance to the park, and when the access was purchased by the District Council, the aim was for the park access to be improved. No path was in place at entrance to the park, and there was an issue with the access road being designated a public highway.

Mr Haywood, local resident, raised further issues in relation to the planning application, particularly the astro turf project at the school, stating that the required acoustic fence had not been installed, the spectators' area remained incomplete, road works had not been undertaken and accounts not finalised. My Haywood also commented he was concerned by the lack of officers in attendance at the forum who would be able to answer these questions.

The Chairman informed Mr Haywood that the relevant officers had provided a response to Mr Taylor's question as published on the agenda, and that the points raised were a separate matter.

Stephen Brown, Chief Executive, requested that Mr Haywood write in to the Council with any further questions, and he would ensure officers reply accordingly.

Mr Taylor raised he was disappointed with Mark Keeling as responses to his questions had not been supplied as promised.

The Chairman advised Mr Taylor that contact would be made with Mark Keeling to request that a response be provided.

The Chairman then moved on to the second question raised by Mr Taylor:

“Cannock Leisure Centre – Car park floodlights are being left on during the hours of darkness.”

Mike Edmonds, Head of Commissioning, had provided the following written response in advance of the meeting:

“The lighting in respect of the car park at Chase Leisure Centre is currently controlled by the same operational arrangement as other Council public car parks. For security and safety reasons all lights are operated and controlled by sensors that activate them between “dusk until dawn”.”

Mr Taylor commented that going back ten years, individual lights were set to switch off at dusk, with four being left on for safety reasons. Having all lights switched on was a waste of money.

Councillor Mitchell, in her capacity as Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader, informed Mr Taylor that this issue had also been raised at the Friends of Cannock Park meeting, and that Mike Edmonds, Head of Commissioning, would be looking into what changes could be made in order to reduce the amount of lighting.

A local resident commented that this issue had been going on for the last decade, with 28 lights operational on the car park. The manager of the leisure centre had been approached, but no action was taken.

Stephen Brown, Chief Executive informed the forum that in recent years there had been a spate of vandalism attacks on staff cars, and staff safety had been threatened.

The Chairman requested that residents be informed of the outcome of the research undertaken by Mike Edmonds.

Mr Taylor commented that a barrier had been installed to prevent vandalism on the car park; however the barrier was now permanently open. Councillor Mitchell advised that she would ask Mike Edmonds to address this matter as well.

Councillor Snape requested that he and Councillor Anslow, as the relevant ward members, should also receive copies of any reports produced by Mike Edmonds.

9. Questions from Mr A. Haywood

“A professional builder recently developed a site near the town centre. On the site there were a number of trees to which a T.P.O was attached. During the building one of the trees was removed and another was cut back without permission. A further number of trees in the street were

also given protection during the build and one of these was subjected to a “kango” type ground breaker which was being used against the side of the tree to enable a fence post to be inserted into the ground through the root system.

I understand there is not to be any action taken against the builder for failing to respect the relative orders. If this is the case can home owners now follow the builder’s example and expect to be treated in the same way or do we have a duel system of justice.”

Stephen Brown, Chief Executive, read out the following written response which had been provided by Simon Turner, Principal Solicitor, in advance of the meeting:

“Prosecution of breaches of Tree Preservation Orders can be difficult to investigate. The investigation is ongoing at this time.”

The Chief Executive informed Mr Haywood that if possible, a more detailed response would be provided directly before the next forum meeting.

The Chairman then moved on to the second question submitted by Mr Haywood:

“What is the date by which the Astro Turf Project (ATP) at Cardinal Griffin School has to be completed and when will the accounts for the project be available to the public for inspection.”

Mike Edmonds, Head of Commissioning, provided the following written response in advance of the meeting:

“The 12 month defect period in respect of the ATP at Cardinal Griffin formally ended on 31st May 2013. (Practical Completion 1st June 2012). After a final inspection of the facilities, which is currently being arranged and satisfactory sign off by the School and the Council any outstanding funding will be drawn down and the final retention fee payable to the Contractor released.

It is only after all financial matters are concluded, likely to be later in this financial year that the accounts will be closed and available for inspection as part of the Council’s annual account process.”

10. Mid Staffs NHS Foundation Trust - Update

The Chairman announced that a written update had been circulated in advance of the meeting, and circulated to all present for reference. The written update detailed that the Trust Special Administrators (TSAs) would be publishing their draft proposals on Wednesday 19 June, with formal consultation period opening on Tuesday 25 June, and running for 30 days, until Monday 05 August. Details were also provided of three public meetings which would take place in Cannock during the consultation period.

Councillor Snape queried when the public meeting for Rugeley would be taking place.

Steve Partridge, Democratic Services Manager, advised that it would be taking place on Wednesday 03 July, 7pm, at Lea Hall Social Club.

Councillor Davis urged as many people as possible to attend the public meetings, as the Trust needed to understand everyone's concerns as part of its review process.

NB: Since this meeting, a further update had been issued on 13 June stating that the TSAs had requested additional time from Monitor to develop their draft recommendations. As a result of this, the above mentioned public meetings had been cancelled, and would be rescheduled accordingly once the new timetable had been confirmed.

11. Update on the position of the negotiations in respect of the Asda s.106 monies for the Artificial Turf Pitch

Stephen Brown, Chief Executive, read out the following written update provided by Tony McGovern, Corporate Director:

"The Council continues to be in correspondence with Asda over the matter of the S106 Asda sum. The Council's Cabinet are due to consider a report in the confidential section of the meeting scheduled for 20 June 2013 relating to the allocation of the Asda S106 sum."

In addition to this, the Chief Executive commented that a confidential report on this issue was going to be considered at the Cabinet meeting taking place on 20 June, and public information would be released when able to do so.

12. Forward Agenda for Future Meetings

The Chairman explained that a form was available for any issues to be discussed at future meetings of the Forum. Appropriate representatives would be invited to attend and debate the issues and answer any questions.

13. Date of Future Meetings

The Forum noted that meeting of the Cannock Community Forum had been arranged as follows:

Tuesday 17 September, 2013
Tuesday 10 December, 2013
Tuesday 4 March, 2014

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 8.08pm.

CHAIRMAN