

Cannock Community Forum

Time and Date

7.00pm on Wednesday 25 June, 2014

Venue

Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Cannock

You are invited to this meeting to consider the matters listed below.



S.G. Brown
Chief Executive

AGENDA

1. **Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman**

To appoint Ward Members as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Community Forum for the forthcoming Municipal Year.

2. **Apologies**

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

To declare any personal, pecuniary or disclosable pecuniary interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct and any possible contraventions under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

4. **Notes**

To receive the Notes of the meeting held on 4 March, 2014 (Enclosed).

5. Questions for Staffordshire Police

Gordon Taylor, local resident has submitted the following questions:

- 1. Smoking and dealing of cannabis outside fish and chip shop in Westbourne Avenue on a regular basis.*
- 2. Speeding on the A34 between Cannock town centre and White Lion Public house - vehicles frequently crossing pedestrian lights when they are showing red.*

Chief Inspector Stephen Morrey, Cannock Chase Local Policing Commander will be in attendance to respond.

6. Questions for Staffordshire County Council Highways – submitted in advance

Questions for the Highways Department are outlined below. Unfortunately, the Highways Department is unable to send Officers to all the Community Forums so their attendance cannot be guaranteed.

Gordon Taylor, local resident has submitted the following question:

Emptying of gully's on the A34 Stafford Road below Westbourne Avenue, Cannock (the gully on the corner of Cardinal Way is overflowing and has been for years and the gully's outside the new Tesco Express need attention)

A response will be provided at the meeting.

7. Questions for Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Services

No questions have been submitted in advance of the meeting.

8. Potential parking issues associated with Cannock Hospital – questions submitted by Mr. L. Cooper

The following questions have been submitted:

“With Cannock Hospital due to come under control of the Trust running New Cross, greater use of facilities has to be applauded. However, there will be associated problems, particularly with additional patients, visitors and staff travelling to the venue by car.

It is an unfortunate fact of life that, while healthcare is extremely important, the car now impacts heavily on daily routines and causes disruptions that need to be addressed. Main problem is irresponsible parking, particularly by those who don't want to pay to use a car park, and in this respect students are also part of the scenario.

(1) Has the Trust discussed potential parking problems with authorities in

this area – District Council, Police and Highways? If so, with what conclusions? They will be aware of the impact at New Cross and measures needed to reduce it.

- (2) What will be done to prevent Blue Badge holders creating problems through irresponsible parking on double yellow lines in Brunswick Road – part of measures implemented to alleviate congestion in this area?”*

In response Mandi Dunbar, Mid Staffs NHS Foundation Trust has advised the following:-

“We have discussed concerns regarding parking, increased activity and access to Cannock Chase Hospital with our colleagues at The Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS Trust, the Trust who will take over responsibility for Cannock Chase Hospital later this year. They are considering this as part of their overall plan for Cannock Chase Hospital.”

Mark Keeling, Community Infrastructure Liaison Manager, Staffordshire County Council Highways has advised the following:-

“In terms of the current situation with parking arrangements on the Public Highway, the County Council are aware of the parking issues on Brunswick Road and checks are carried out by our Civil Parking Officers on a regular basis. We have recently extended the restrictions on Brunswick Road within the residential area, and further restrictions have been supported by the Local Parking Committee in the forward programme”.

9. Questions for Cannock Chase District Council – submitted in advance

(A) FRIDAY STREET MARKET:

Four questions have been submitted regarding the Friday street markets. Questions 1 and 2 are from Glyn Farr and questions 3 and 4 are from Barry Grainger:-

- 1. How was the review of the Friday street market undertaken and will the findings be available for public scrutiny and how was the effect on local traders measured and were the indoor market traders included in the survey ?*
- 2. What are the medium to long term plans for the Indoor Market Hall as other local authorities are investing in their markets to regenerate town centres ?*
- 3. Why has the Council been complicit in setting up a Friday street market in competition to their regular indoor market resulting in the reduction of their regular traders income and consequently risking their ability to pay their weekly Council rent ?*
- 4. Why has the weekly Friday street market continued past the 6 months trial period when the legally signed agreement with Bescot Promotions terminated 6 months from 29 November 2013 and during*

this trial period the 50% of craft and specialist stalls (Item 5 of the agreement) has rarely been achieved ?

Glenn Watson, Economic Development and Planning Services Manager and Bob Phillips, Head of Service (LEP Consultant) are unfortunately both on leave week commencing 23 June, 2014 and therefore unable to attend the Forum. Mr. Phillips has offered to convene a separate meeting with relevant officers and the Portfolio Leader if required. He has however, provided a written response to the questions raised, these are outlined below:

- 1. This information will be available in the report which will be considered by the July Cabinet meeting. The report will be available to the public and the Council is happy to make this report available to Mr Farr and Mr Grainger as representatives of the indoor market traders.*
- 2. The Council's current medium to long term plans are to continue to do all it can to ensure that the indoor market remains a successful and well occupied market. Over recent years the market has enjoyed good levels of occupancy with on average of some 90% of stalls let. The Council has supported its traders by freezing stall rents for the last 5 years and, when the traders had a local committee, the Council met with them on a regular basis to support market promotions and discuss the investment needs of the market. The Council would like to see the traders reforming their local committee so that promotions and improvements can again be discussed on a regular basis.*
- 3. The Council is committed to trying to improve Cannock town centre as a place to visit and shop. Street markets are a recognised way of bringing vitality and vibrancy into town centres and the Council took an opportunity to test out what a street market could do in Cannock. The impact on the town centre and on the indoor market traders will be the subject of the report to Cabinet. It is quite wrong to suggest that the Council set out to reduce the income of the indoor market traders. Before going ahead with the street market the Council met with a small number of traders from the indoor market whose views were that a street market was worth trialling to see if it could bring more custom into the town centre and ultimately into the indoor market. The actual impact of the market will be considered by Cabinet in July.*
- 4. It is clearly sensible to make a decision on the future of the street market while it is still operating. Unfortunately, because of the lateness of the elections this year, there was no meeting of Cabinet in May and the first meeting post the end of May is in July. The agreement to operate the street market was extended to take in the Cabinet meeting. The ability of the market to achieve the percentage of craft and specialist stalls sought in the trial agreement will be considered by Cabinet in July.*

(B) COMMUNITY FORUMS:

The following question has been submitted by Graham Burnett (Cannock Chase Resident):-

Are the current Council Community Forums format the most effective means of communicating with the residents of the district on matters that concern them?

What do they cost the Council to host and are they an effective use of Police and Council officer's time, and other resources, in answering questions that appear often to be raised only by Councillors for their own benefit when they have access to information from Council Officers through their normal duties?

Could the expense and resource spent on Community Forums be used more effectively elsewhere for better value to the local community?

Can the Council prove forums are effective given that only Councillors and other officials are recorded as attending in the minutes? How can the all-important levels of local resident participation and attendance be monitored effectively as there is no apparent means of recording these beyond a vague head count?

Has this Council done any work in assessing the Forums effectiveness and considering any other means of engaging with a wider audience of residents on the issues discussed at Forums?

The election of Forum Chair and Vice Chair is restricted to only Councillors from the local wards and voting is restricted to themselves. How can this process be justified as a democratic one when the Forums claim to represent the local residents and yet they allow no permanent representation on them?

Can we be assured that these forums are an effective means of influencing Council policy by residents and not simply a box tick exercise to fulfill a criteria set simply to impress external auditors or verifiers of the Councils own processes?

The following response has been provided by Steve Partridge, Democratic Services Manager:-

The Council would like to thank Mr. Burnett for raising concerns about the effectiveness of its four Community Forums as a means of communicating and engaging with local residents. The Council itself has identified the need to review the Community Forums, and has included it in the Transformation Priority Delivery Plan for 2014-15, and will be undertaking a consultation / review exercise later in the year. The issues raised will be included as part of this consultation.

The forums, which were initially set up a number of years ago, meet on a quarterly basis in each of the four main population areas within the district, i.e. Cannock; Heath Hayes, Norton Canes and Rawsley; Hednesford; and Rugeley and Brereton, and form part of the Council's annual Calendar of Meetings. They are intended as a means of discussion on any matters of local concern, i.e. relating to the relevant Wards therein, which may be raised by members of the public or the relevant Ward Members; they are

also intended as a means of consultation on, for example, planning or budgetary matters.

In order to ensure that appropriate Officers can be in attendance, if required, i.e. as opposed to having a number of representatives present 'just in case', we ask that questions be submitted in advance. This is particularly the case if questions are of a technical nature or relate to an area that is not the Council's responsibility, such as highways or Police matters; or any other potential invitees, such as the Fire and Rescue Service or local Health Trust.

The Police; relevant County Councillors; and local Parish / Town Councillors, plus representatives from local Health Authority / Trust; local Voluntary Organisations; local Residents' Associations; and local business organisations, where known, are all invited to attend, as is the local MP, and members are given advance notice of the meetings and asked to publicise them on notice boards etc to encourage public attendance. However, it is recognised that public attendance / participation is limited. This could be for a number of reasons, including those referred to.

Finally, the Council would like to give an assurance that the forums are not simply a tick box exercise; however, as previously mentioned, it shares the concerns about their ongoing effectiveness and plans to undertake a consultation / review exercise later in the year..

If members of the public would like to participate in the proposed review, any ideas or suggestions on how they could be improved should be emailed to membersservices@cannockchasedc.gov.uk using the title 'Review of Community Forums'. Any ideas or suggestions will be considered as part of the proposed review.

10. Mid Staffs NHS Foundation Trust - update

Mandi Dunbar, Personal Assistant to Jeff Crawshaw, Deputy Chief Executive, Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust has provided the following update:-

"Our Directors have concluded that, as the Trust continues to be going through the Trust Special Administration (TSA) process, it would not be appropriate for them to attend the Community Forums at this time. The Directors would like to assure local people that services at both Cannock Chase and Stafford Hospitals continue as usual and would encourage people to continue to use them as appropriate.

If there are any specific questions on the day-to-day business of the hospitals, we would be very pleased to email you answers/updates from the Directors.

If you have any questions around the TSA process and future of services, these would need to be addressed to the TSA. Please let me know if you'd like me to put you in touch with them.

The TSA can be contacted at: www.tsa-msft.org.uk/contact-us or for confidential matters at: TSApublic@MidStaffs.nhs.uk

11. Update on the position of the negotiations in respect of the Asda s106 monies for the Artificial Turf Pitch

The following press release was issued on 1 April 2014:

FUNDING DISPUTE SETTLED

Over £500,000 will be invested in sports facilities in the District after a long-running dispute between Cannock Chase Council and Asda was resolved. The dispute centred on the use of £527,500 Section 106 funding received by the Council from Asda in May 2005 as part of the construction of their Avon Road store in Cannock.

Fresh negotiations between the Council and Asda have now resulted in an agreement. The Council will retain the £527,500 for investment in a sports and recreation hub at the former Cannock Stadium site and return to Asda the interest accrued on this amount. These funds will be used in conjunction with other funds and granted funding bids to establish new sports and recreation facilities on this site following an extension public consultation last year.

The £527,500 has to be spent within six years and Asda will be given proper recognition as being the co-funder of any sports facilities delivered by the funding.

Councillor George Adamson, Cannock Chase Council Leader, said "I am pleased that this long-standing dispute has been resolved and that the funds are now protected for investment in sports facilities in the District".

Doug Wilson, Head of UK Property Communications said "We are delighted that the issue has been resolved and that the funds will be invested into sports facilities that will benefit the local community".

12. Forward Agenda for Future Meetings.

Questions are invited from members of the public and will be included on the Agenda for the next meeting. Any questions from members of the public should be submitted on the form available at the meeting. Submission of written questions in advance will ensure that appropriate representatives can be invited to attend meetings to debate the issues and answer any questions.

13. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 16 September, 2014 at 7.00pm.

To Councillors:-

Alcott, G.
Allen, F.W.C.
Anslow, C.
Davis, Mrs. M.A.
Dixon, D.I.
Freeman, Miss M.

Kraujalis, J.T.
Mitchell, Mrs. C.
Snape, P.A.
Sutton, Mrs. H.M.
Toth, J.
Witton, P.

Other Invitees:

Mrs. J. Arm
County Councillor Mrs. D. Todd
County Councillor Mrs. A. Spicer
County Councillor D. Davis
Mr. K. Parsons
Chief Inspector Stephen Morrey
Inspector Paul Cooke
Michelle Lucas

Mark Keeling
Mr. A. Burley

Angela Schulp

Jonathan Bletcher
Neil Pedersen
Victoria Singleton
Miss T. Gould
Mandi Dunbar

Clerk to Bridgtown Parish Council
SCC - Cannock Villages Division
SCC - Cannock Town Centre Division
SCC - Chadsmoor Division
Chase Council for Voluntary Services
Staffordshire Police
Staffordshire Police
Cannock Chase Chamber of Commerce
and Industry
Staffordshire County Council Highways
Member of Parliament (Cannock Chase
Constituency)
District Lead Commissioner, Staffordshire
County Council
South Staffs PCT
Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service
Neighbourhood Watch, Staffordshire Police
Residents Champions, Chase CVS
Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust

Note: The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Wendy Rowe, Senior Committee Officer:

Telephone: 01543 464584

E-mail: wendyrowe@cannockchasedc.gov.uk

Date of despatch: 17 June, 2014