

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CANNOCK COMMUNITY FORUM
TUESDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2012 AT 7.00 P.M.
AT CIVIC CENTRE, CANNOCK

PRESENT: Councillors:

Alcott, G. (Chairman)

Allen, F.W.C.

Snape, P.A.

Dixon, D.I.

Sutton, Mrs. H.M.

Freeman, Miss M.

Cannock Chase District Councillors:

Councillor J. Bernard

Cannock Chase Council Officers:

Mr. S. Brown, Chief Executive

Mrs. W. Rowe, Senior Committee Officer

Mr. A. Lancaster, Planning Policy Manager

Mrs. A. Grove, Senior Planning Officer

Mr. I. Curran, Legal Services Manager

Also Present

Chief Inspector Carl Ratcliffe, LPT Commander for Cannock Chase District

Mike Yarn, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Services

Aaron Cummins, Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust

David Wright, Staffordshire County Council Highways

Local Residents (approximately 20)

(Prior to the commencement of the meeting Councillor Maureen Freeman paid tribute to the two female Police Officers who had lost their lives following an incident in Manchester today. The Forum stood in silence as a mark of respect).

14. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Ward Councillors J. Kraujalis (Vice-Chairman), C. Anslow, Mrs. M.A. Davis, C. Mitchell and J. Toth, County Councillor P. Corfield and District Councillors Ms. J. Jones and M. Sutherland.

15. Notes

The notes of the meeting held on 6 March 2012 were agreed as a correct record.

16. Questions for Staffordshire Police – submitted in advance

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

The following two questions had been submitted by the Chairman:-

What is being done to tackle speeding vehicles throughout the Cannock Chase District and are the speed cameras in the District being used? There are five along the Pye Green Road that are not working

He also asked what the Police and the Safer Roads Partnership were doing to slow down traffic in the District in order to prevent accidents.

Chief Inspector Carl Ratcliffe explained that fixed and mobile speed enforcement cameras were used throughout the District to assist in reducing the speed of traffic. They were placed in areas where serious incidents had occurred or where the community had raised issues about a specific area. He was unable to discuss which cameras were working but the specific comments raised had been noted.

He commented that the Safer Roads Partnership were focused on reducing vehicle speeds and were involved in a number of initiatives publicising the dangers of speeding. These included:-

Speed Indication Devices – luminous signs displaying and recording speed, date and the time each vehicle passes - designed to encourage drivers to reduce their speed

20 is plenty – encourages drivers to reduce their speed to 20mph on the approach to schools

Community Speed Watch – helps local people address speeding problems in their own area and increases driver and public awareness of the dangers of speeding

David Wright, Staffordshire County Council Highways Officer advised that Pye Green Valley School was included on the 20 is plenty scheme for next term. In addition, the traffic lights on Cemetery Road were being considered for a red light camera.

Members of the public expressed their concerns regarding speeding in the District. Reference was made to Lichfield Road, Cannock and the A34 ring road where traffic speeds were considered to be excessive. There was concern that the speed camera in Thornhill Road was hidden by trees. David Wright confirmed that he would investigate this.

Councillor Snape asked whether the traffic department still existed and whether there was a dedicated Police vehicle allocated for the Cannock Chase area. Chief Inspector Ratcliffe confirmed that the Road Policing Team proactively policed the roads with the aim of reducing casualties. He advised that the Team had recently been in the area and the results had been disappointing as 80 drivers had been summonsed for such things as using mobiles phones whilst driving, having no insurance and using vehicles with defects. He reassured the Forum that the Team would actively enforce legislation and work in partnership supporting the Local Policing Teams. He confirmed that any serious or fatal road traffic collision was investigated with a number of factors being taken into account to ascertain the reasons for the accident. These included looking at the road layout, the vehicle itself and also giving consideration to whether there was driver/pedestrian error.

The Chief Inspector confirmed that Staffordshire Police continued in their bid to combat “street racers” who met up in their vehicles and engaged in unacceptable activity. He explained that, in partnership with the District Council, they would be applying to the court to extend an injunction to ban the activity in the District. If the injunction was granted anyone caught car cruising could face a prison sentence of up to two years.

He further explained that he was required to place resources where they were needed based on priority and the views being expressed at the Forum would be taken into account when considering what should be classed as priority.

Cannock Park Update

Chief Inspector Ratcliffe explained that at the last Forum meeting there had been a detailed discussion on the anti social behaviour taking place in Cannock Park. It was agreed that the Community Safety Partnership would discuss this matter and clarification on roles and responsibilities would be obtained. He confirmed that the Partnership had met on several occasions with residents and local Councillors to discuss the situation. Two individuals had been charged with public order/harassment offences and were currently on bail. The conditions of the bail restricted the individuals from having any association with each other and from entering Cannock park. He anticipated a term of imprisonment for the individuals when they were sentenced.

He made reference to a Joint Training Day taking place on 3 October with Police Officers and Park Wardens when a clear understanding of their responsibilities would be established and clarification would be obtained on how best to deal with ASB. It was hoped that quarterly meetings could then be arranged.

Arising from the meetings that had taken place there had been a suggestion that the Pavilion at Cannock Park be used by the Police as a “One Stop Shop” and to hold Community meetings. The Chief Inspector confirmed that he would be happy to do this.

Councillor Freeman considered that there had been improvements in the Park since the last meeting. Local Councillors had worked with the Police and the Partnership Team in an attempt to tackle ASB, not just in Cannock Park, but in the whole District.

17. Questions for Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service

The Chairman confirmed that the two questions he had submitted would be dealt with under the Community Safety Presentation later on in the agenda.

18. The following question has been submitted by Mike Mellor, a local resident:-

“Many years ago, Cannock was renowned for its ability to plan and organise memorable Town Centre celebrations for the Community. Sadly, in recent years our town has lagged behind its near neighbours, who have shown us how it can be done. This fact has not gone unnoticed by the people who live in Cannock and who are expected to support the town.

In view of Cannock’s apparent inability to participate not only in the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Celebrations, which were held successfully all around the Chase area, undertaken by Trader’s Associations assisted by Town or Parish Councils, is it time for Cannock to have its own Town Council?

This would be a way of bringing together people who are passionate about Cannock and

hopefully would begin to restore prosperity and pride in our Town.

The Chairman explained that he was surprised at the comments made by Mike Mellor in relation to the lack of events in the Town Centre. He had been provided with a list of 27 Community events that had been held in the Cannock Chase District between 2010 and 2012. He made reference to a number of these events and explained that a full detailed list was available should anyone wish to see it.

Mike Mellor explained that any Council representative that attended a function deserved recognition but he believed that things could be done more a little more professionally. He made reference to the recent Paralympics celebrations in Cannock Park where the Leaders speech could not be heard over the PA system. He considered that there were volunteers in the area who would be prepared to help to put on professional events. The establishment of a Parish Council in Cannock would be the catalyst to get things moving.

A local resident had concern that forming a Parish Council for Cannock would cost money which would have to be paid for by increasing the Council Tax.

Stephen Brown, Chief Executive welcomed Ian Curran, Legal Services Manager, to the meeting who would explain the legal aspect of establishing a Town Council.

Ian Curran advised that the District Council could only create a new Parish Council after it had conducted a "Community Governance Review". This would involve conducting a consultation of voters, businesses and other relevant bodies within the area affected to see what their thoughts were on how that area should be governed at a local level.

If the District Council had no plans to initiate a "Community Governance Review", then the electorate themselves could ask for one. This would need a valid petition signed by at least 10% of the electorate of the proposed parish. On receipt of a valid petition, the District Council would be required to carry out a "Community Governance Review". The act stated that a review should be completed within 12 months.

The Chief Executive confirmed that there would be significant cost implications in establishing a new Parish Council. The previous administration had discussed this matter a few years ago and decided it would be too costly. The Paralympics event in Cannock Park had been organised by Wigan Culture and Leisure Trust (the Council's new partner in delivering Leisure Services). He considered that the event had been well attended and it was unfortunate that the PA system had not worked well. Whilst he had sympathy for Mike Mellor's suggestion he was not sure that establishing a Parish Council was the answer. He agreed that there was room for improvement in organising events and was grateful that there were willing volunteers. He suggested that a meeting be arranged between himself, Mike Mellor and other interested parties to discuss the matter more thoroughly.

A local resident referred to the recent Party in the Park event in Cannock which she considered was a huge success with around 5,000 people attending. Another resident considered that events could be better advertised and suggested that a programme of events could be posted through residents' letterboxes. The Chairman explained that the Council's Press Officer dealt with the advertising of events but it would be too costly to leaflet drop all residents in the District.

A representative from Cannock Traders Association suggested that when events were held in Cannock Park it would benefit the Traders if they could be linked to the Town Centre. The Chairman suggested that this could be discussed in the meeting that would be arranged between the Chief

Executive and Mike Mellor.

19. Questions for Mid-Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust

The Chairman welcomed Aaron Cummins, Director of Finance, to the Forum who was in attendance to answer questions and provide an update on Trust related matters.

Mr. Cummins explained that he had three updates for the Forum; the first update was on the position with regard to the re-opening of A & E at night. He explained that A & E at Stafford Hospital had been closed overnight since December 2011. The Trust made this decision and agreed that a number of requirements needed to be met before A & E could be re-opened. The Trust Board met on 6 September, 2012 and agreed that the criteria had mostly been met and sought the Commissioners approval to reopen. On 11 September, 2012 the Commissioning Board recognised what the Trust had achieved but remained concerned about the sustainability of a 24/7 service. The Commissioning Board decided that the A & E department should not fully re-open between the hours of 10pm and 8am. The Commissioners are clear that a new 24/7 model of emergency and urgent care is what they want Stafford Hospital to provide for local people. Based on the lessons learnt from the temporary closure period a pilot programme would be tested in December 2012.

A number of questions were raised by Members and residents and in response to these questions Mr. Cummins explained that Cannock Hospital was a fantastic facility but it was severely underused. When Cannock Hospital was established the services provided were very different to what was provided now. The Commissioners dictate the services and they were not choosing to use Cannock to deliver these services. Should activities be taken from Stafford to Cannock this may mean that there were not be enough activities provided at Stafford to cover the costs of keeping it open. Additionally, should Cannock Hospital take services from Stafford the effect of this would be that more facilities would have to be installed at Cannock to take the service across. With regard to the 12-15 patients treated at other hospitals during the overnight closure he commented that the majority of these would have travelled to Wolverhampton or Stoke on Trent in any case. Therefore, these hospitals were seeing minimal impact from the closure. Additionally, a number of patients who would have previously come into A & E were actually self treating.

He then provided the Forum with an update on the closure of the Cannock Hospital kitchen. He explained that the catering services at the Trust were losing over £500,000 per year. Therefore, the Board had agreed to close the kitchen at Cannock which would save £220,000 per year. The food would be prepared at Stafford Hospital and transferred to Cannock and a hostess service would be provided. He confirmed that the contract to transfer the food would go out to tender. Consultation was currently taking place with regard to this proposal and alternative employment was being sought for those currently working at Cannock.

Finally he advised the Forum that a team of experts from Monitor, the independent regulator, had used their powers of intervention. They would be working with the local commissioners and clinicians to look for a long term solution to ensure that services were provided for local patients on a sustainable basis.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Cummins for his attendance and for providing the updates.

20. Hazardous Parking in the Brunswick Road Area – update

The item had been submitted by Les Cooper, a local resident. He sought an update from the Highways Officer on the proposals to address the hazardous parking in Brunswick Road. David Wright, Staffordshire County Council Highways, advised that a proposal for the area had been

prepared by a Highways Officer who had now left the Authority. He confirmed that the scheme would be delivered in this financial year but there may be a three month delay. Mr. Cooper asked that residents be kept informed of the progress with the proposal. David Wright agreed to liaise with Mr. Cooper after the meeting.

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

Stephen Brown, Chief Executive advised that there has been no resolution of the dispute with ASDA to date and the Council were waiting to receive a response from them. He confirmed that he would advise the Forum once more information was available.

22. Cannock Town Centre and Bridgtown Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans

Angela Grove, Senior Planning Officer provided the Forum with a presentation on the Cannock town centre and Bridgtown conservation areas. She explained that Management plans and appraisals for the Cannock town centre and Bridgtown conservation areas were out for consultation until 26th October, 2012. The plans would guide future development to make sure the conservation areas were protected. The appraisals record the special historic and architectural qualities of the area, while the management plans suggest ways to manage change while retaining and enhancing the conservation areas' special qualities.

She advised that local people could have their say on Council plans to manage and protect the two conservation areas in the District. All documents could be downloaded from the website www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/planningpolicy and were also available at the Council's Civic Centre in Beecroft Road, Cannock, and at Cannock Library. Comments could be made by email to planningpolicy@cannockchasedc.gov.uk or by post to Planning Policy, Cannock Chase Council, Civic Centre, PO Box 28, Beecroft Road, Cannock WS11 1BG. The closing date for comments was Friday 26th October, 2012.

23. Presentation on the Community Safety Partnership

The Forum received a presentation from the Chief Executive, Chief Inspector Carl Ratcliffe from Staffordshire Police and Mike Yarn from Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

The Chief Executive explained that the vision of the Community Safety Partnership was for Cannock Chase to be a place where people have the opportunity to enhance their quality of life and achieve economic prosperity. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 placed a statutory duty on local authorities and other 'Responsible Authorities' to 'exercise their various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area'.

It was explained that the Chase Community Partnership was made up from the following partners:-

- Staffordshire Police
- Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service
- Cannock Chase Council
- Staffordshire County Council
- Staffordshire Fire Authority
- South Staffordshire PCT
- West Midlands & Staffordshire Probation Service
- Parish Council

- Chase CVS
- Cannock CAB
- Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
- Clinical Commissioning Group

The Chief Executive advised that the Community Safety Delivery Plan had a number of targets, including increased assurance in the community, improved living environments and reduced offending. It was explained that Councillor G. Adamson, Leader of the Council, was the Chair of the Strategic Board / Responsible Authority's Group (RAG) and the Chief Executive, Stephen Brown, was the Chair of the Executive Board.

The Chief Executive explained that a number of initiatives had been undertaken by the Chase Community Partnership with respect to domestic violence which had proved to be successful with an increase in the number of incidents being reported and the level of incidents reducing.

Chief Inspector Ratcliffe advised that it was important that resources were used in an effective and efficient manner, particularly as allocated budgets were being reduced. He commented that the public's perception of crime and anti social behaviour (ASB) was greater than that which was actually occurring and ways to address this issue were being explored. The top priorities for 2012/13 were to deliver quality services, reduce crime and disorder, protect the public from harm and provide value for money.

It was reported that Police Officers, with the support of partners, had conducted a number of search warrants as part of "Operation Impact" at four addresses in Mill Street, Cannock after members of the community had raised concerns relating to drug activity, ASB and criminal activity. A series of actions had been taken by partners.

A number of initiatives had been carried out to try and address ASB issues, including a boxing project for young people, PCSOs attending youth clubs and young people had been encouraged to take a pride in their area and to take part in a community clear up. It was explained that an ASB Reduction Officer had also been appointed to the Council and a notable reduction of 20% had been achieved during the last year and a significant reduction was continuing to be made.

The Police and their partners were continuing to look after those that were considered to be vulnerable, particularly those with disabilities, suffering abuse and those experiencing hate crime.

He referred to the continued efforts of Staffordshire Police in their bid to combat "street racers" and explained that, together with the District Council, they would be seeking an injunction to ban the activity in the District. He also advised that, following concerns raised in the community, a "crack house" had been closed in the Rumer Hill area.

The Chief Executive advised that Staffordshire County Council, as part of the Chase Community Partnership

- Supported vulnerable people in the community through Children's and Adult safeguarding processes
- Commissioners of services within the area covering a range of services accessed by residents
- Responsibility of road safety across the county taking account of local issues
- Members of the Joint Operational Group (JOG)
- Statutory service provider across a range of services

Mike Yarn from the Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service commented that there had been a significant reduction in the number of small fires occurring and a great deal of time had been spent by Fire Officers on fire prevention projects. It was explained that the majority of small fires occurred during school holidays and a number of initiatives had taken place, including, LIFE (Local Intervention Fire Education), a Play it Safe campaign and student fire fighter schemes.

He then referred to the two questions raised by the Chairman:

**What are the Fire and Rescue Services doing in the District to promote fire safety?
Have the Fire and Rescue Services got anything planned for the winter, i.e. Electric blanket testing?**

He responded to the questions advising that the Fire and Rescue Services continued to promote fire safety in the District and was involved in a number of initiatives (as mentioned above - LIFE and Play it Safe). The Fire Service was keen to pass on proper values to young people and worked in schools to promote fire and bonfire safety. Officers provided fire safety advice and offered free risk assessment checks to residents.

With regard to a winter campaign he commented that although Trading Standards had not been involved this year there was still a small stock of electric blankets available. Fire Officers would be willing to provide advice to residents and replace blankets if necessary.

He echoed the comments made by the other partners and agreed that Partnership working through the Chase Community Partnership enhanced the ability to deliver targets.

24. 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.

25. Date of Future Meetings

The Forum noted that the next meetings of the Cannock Community Forum had been arranged for 27 November, 2012 and 19 March, 2013.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 8.55pm.

CHAIRMAN