

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CANNOCK COMMUNITY FORUM
TUESDAY 16 SEPTEMBER, 2014 AT 7.00PM
AT THE CIVIC CENTRE, CANNOCK

PRESENT: District Councillors:

Kraujalis, J.T. (Chairman)

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| Allen, F.W.C. | Snape, P.A. |
| Anslow, C. | Sutton, Mrs. H.M. |
| Freeman, Miss M. | Toth, J. |
| Mitchell, Mrs. C. | Witton, P. |

Cannock Chase Council Officers:

Mr. S. Brown, Chief Executive
Mrs. W. Rowe, Senior Committee Officer

Also Present

Chief Inspector Stephen Morrey, Cannock Chase Local Policing
Commander, Staffordshire Police
Local Residents (approximately 12)
Councillor G. Adamson
County Councillor Mrs. A. Spicer

14. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from District Councillors G. Alcott and Mrs. M. Davis.

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

There were no interests declared.

16. Notes

Christine Salmon referred to page 7 (Minute 9, paragraph 5) regarding the discussion about the Friday street market and asked that the reference to Friends of Cannock Park be removed as she was speaking as a local resident.

Gordon Taylor referred to page 2 (Minute 6) regarding the emptying of gullies

and commented that he had reported that the gully remained blocked to Staffordshire County Highways some 6 weeks ago. However, no response had been received. The Chairman advised that an email would be sent to Mark Keeling, Staffordshire County Council Highways to advise that the issue had been raised again at the Forum meeting and required attention.

AGREED:

The notes of the meeting held on 25 June, 2014 be agreed as a correct record subject to the reference to Friends of Cannock Park being removed from Minute 9, page 7, paragraph 5 as Christine Salmon was speaking as a local resident.

17. Questions for Staffordshire Police

No questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting. However, Chief Inspector Morrey was in attendance and took questions from the floor.

A District Councillor raised the problems that had been experienced for the last two years around Halloween time. A number of anti social behaviour incidents had occurred with eggs being thrown at properties and cars. Particular reference was made to Stafford Road and the Cannock Park area. It was considered that there had not been enough manpower on the evenings to deal with the incidents.

Chief Inspector Morrey confirmed that problems had arisen in Cannock around Halloween and there had been an issue with resources. He confirmed that discussions were taking place to ensure that the right resources were deployed around Halloween this year. On 20 October there would be changes to the Anti Social Behaviour Act which would enable a more responsive approach to incidents and for them to be dealt with more dynamically.

Another District Councillor raised the issue of drinking that was taking place around St Luke's churchyard in Cannock which he had been reporting to the Police everyday for a number of weeks. There did not appear to be any manpower deployed between 12noon to 3pm each day. He also commented that the response from the Police when reporting the incidents was not very helpful.

The Chief Inspector was aware of the problem in this location and acknowledged it was not being dealt with as dynamically as he would like. However, he confirmed that work was underway to ensure that resources were available to tackle the issue and there were plans for patrols to be deployed at this location. He commented that there were staffing problems within the Control Room which may account for the response received. The Control Room was massively understaffed and it was taking 45 minutes for a call to get through. He acknowledged that this was unacceptable and that a lot of work was going on to resolve the problem. With the new powers under the changes to the Anti Social Behaviour Act it was anticipated that a more forceful approach could be taken.

The issue of youths travelling at high speed throughout the district was raised. The Chief Inspector commented that speeding vehicles and other traffic offences were an issue within the district. Work was underway to build up a profile of

offences to ensure that the right resources were available to tackle these types of offences. The camera van was used for incidents of this nature and this had led to 20 offences over the last weekend.

A County Councillor asked what action was being taken to combat shed thefts. The Chief Inspector advised that patrol strategies were being identified to tackle this problem. It was also important to educate and support the public about safety issues and work was ongoing with the Neighbourhood Action Team to catch these individuals who were known to the Police.

A District Councillor asked the Chief Inspector when Police resources would be at a level to start seeing a difference. The Chief Inspector commented that Police resources were tight but he did not consider that extra Police Officers were necessarily the answer. He considered that Policing teams had to become smarter with the staff they had and about where resources were deployed. He commented that it was not all about resources though as a number of the issues raised such as ASB, speeding, thefts from sheds required the involvement other agencies who would assist in tackling these matters.

A local Councillor commented that he had recently been approached by youths on three occasions outside Barclays Bank in Cannock asking him to buy alcohol for them. He had not reported the incidents as they had only occurred last week. The Chief Inspector commented that there were pockets of problems of this nature in the District and advised that reporting these types of incidents was essential so that they could be tackled effectively.

18. Questions for Cannock Chase Council – submitted in advance

Two questions had been submitted from local residents concerning the security of Cannock Park/Golf Course, these were as follows:-

Question 1 submitted by Mrs. C. Salmon:-

“Will an officer please attend the Forum with a plan (or map) to clarify who is responsible for the management, maintenance and security of **all areas** of Cannock Park (including the area in which the park’s golf course is located)”

Stephen Brown, Chief Executive explained that Mike Edmonds, Head of Commissioning was on leave this week and was therefore unable to attend the Forum. He read out the response that had been provided:-

“Cannock Chase Council has overall responsibility for the management, maintenance and security of all areas of Cannock Park, including the golf course.

- It discharges its responsibility for the golf course via a contract with Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust (WLCT);
- It discharges its responsibility for maintenance of Cannock Park (excluding the golf course which is maintained by the Council’s in-house team) via a contract with The Landscape Group (TLG);
- There are no formal security personnel employed or funded by Cannock Chase Council, WLCT or TLG in Cannock Park/golf course and any

criminal activity should be reported to the Police as a matter of course.

The Chairman asked whether Christine Salmon wished to add any further comments. She explained that there was confusion over the maintenance of the golf course, particularly around the perimeter where the public walk. This perimeter area was not being maintained (i.e. no litter picking/boundary work had taken place). She then made reference to the rough sleeper in this area and advised that the maintenance staff had not been aware that anyone was there. She considered that all maintenance work was concentrated on the golf course and the perimeter was being forgotten.

Stephen Brown advised that he would ensure that a plan outlining the difference between the golf course and the perimeter was forwarded to Mrs. Salmon. With regards to the rough sleeper issue he advised that the Head of Commissioning had provided an update since the agenda was published which had been forwarded to all on the forum distribution list. The update was as follows:-

“With regard to the issue of security in the park and person(s) sleeping rough on the golf course the following action has been taken since the initial response was provided to the Forum.

Thursday – 4th September

On Thursday 4th September officers from the Council's Housing Option Team (responsible for homelessness) reported the issue to the 'Rough Sleeper Service' provided by an organisation called 'Brighter Futures' (BF).

Monday – 8th September

Officers from BF, which cover both the Shropshire & Staffordshire areas, visited the location on the golf course just after 7.00am on Monday morning the 8th September. They were accompanied by the Park Warden. Sleeping bags were found but no one was present and it was not possible to determine whether anyone had spent the night there.

Contact details for the Brighter Future Team were left at the location and with both the Warden and Manager of Chase Leisure Centre and Golf Course should anyone return.

Officers from the Council's Housing Options Team, together with the Duty Manager from Chase Leisure Centre visited the location again on Monday afternoon. No one was present but further contact details requesting that the person/s contact the Housing Options team for advice and assistance, were left.

Wednesday – 10th September

Staff from the 'Rough Sleeper Service' visited the location again on Wednesday morning (10th September) and left their contact details.

No requests for advice or assistance were received by the Council's Housing Option Team or Brighter Futures and during the day officers from the Council's Parks and Open Spaces Team) removed the sleeping bags and any discarded

rubbish from the location as well as crown lifting the tree where the individuals were sleeping to try and improve the visibility in this area”.

Question 2 submitted by Mr. G. Taylor:-

“Security of Golf Course and Ancient Wood by Green Keepers Compound – is this the responsibility of Wigan Trust or Cannock Chase Council?

- Persons are sleeping rough on the Golf Course
- There is a litter problem on the Golf Course and Ancient Wood
- Persons drinking, drug taking and cannabis smoking causing large amounts of litter in the area”

The Chief Executive outlined the response provided:-

“Please see the response above in respect of the security of the golf course and all areas of Cannock Park.

The incident of persons sleeping rough on the golf course has been reported to the Council’s Homelessness Team who are investigating this matter.

In response to the specific examples referred to, any incidents of criminal or anti-social behaviour should be reported to the Police and any litter problems should be referred to the Council”.

The Chairman asked whether Mr. Taylor wished to add anything further to his question. Mr. Taylor commented that he had visited the Ancient Wood by the green keepers’ compound to try and clean the area of the discarded litter. It appears that someone had been trying to make a fire with the litter that had accumulated. On visiting the area 3 weeks ago he saw youths of about the age of 10/12 smoking cannabis.

Chief Inspector Morrey confirmed he was aware of this issue and said it was important to report any such incidents to the Police, even though by the time an Officer arrived the youths would probably have moved on. All the information available including times they were congregating would help set a strategy to tackle the problems at this location.

Mr. Taylor also made reference to the issue in Cardinal Way he had raised at the previous meeting. The Chief Inspector said he would speak to Mr. Taylor after the meeting.

The Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader commented that apart from this incident there did not appear to be a problem with homelessness/sleeping rough in the District. A discussion had now taken place with the Leisure Centre Manager and the Duty Manager and all staff had been briefed on how to deal with an incident of this nature in the future. They should be reported to the Homelessness Team straight away. With regard to security of the Park and Golf course she explained that money was not available to pay for this. Youths have and always would gather at such locations. She said that should there be any similar incidents of persons sleeping rough in the future the public were welcome to contact her direct. She made reference to the quarterly meetings between Officers, Councillors and Friends of Cannock Park and advised that a decision had

recently been taken to suspend these meetings for the time being. This was because Officers were required to be involved in the major projects, such as Hednesford Park, Cannock Stadium, Stile Cop Cemetery and Cannock Cemetery. She gave an assurance that she would now attend the Friends of Cannock Park meetings and take back any issues to the relevant Officers. She agreed to walk around the Ancient Wood with Mr. Taylor and would give him her contact number at the end of the meeting.

A District Councillor offered her support to Christine Salmon in this matter. She too had been involved and had walked the Golf course and noted how the perimeter was not being well kept. Over the last 6 weeks she had visited the area on a daily basis and had come across the rough sleeper. She had noticed the rubbish in this area was accumulating. Councillors and the public had been unaware of who and how to report such matters. However, with the involvement of the Head of Commissioning the lines of communication had now been improved and the procedure for reporting and dealing with similar incidents was now clear.

The Chairman thanked the Councillor for her involvement and was pleased the lines of communication had been improved should a similar incident occur.

A District Councillor commented on homelessness within the District and stated that although there were very few incidents of persons sleeping rough there were a lot of families in unsatisfactory accommodation. There was a massive Council housing waiting list and a lot of people stayed with relatives whilst they tried to secure suitable accommodation.

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

No questions have been submitted in advance of the meeting.

20. Questions for Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Services

No questions have been submitted in advance of the meeting. The Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader advised that there was an Open Day at Cannock Fire Station on 1 October should anyone wish to attend.

21. Mid Staffs NHS Foundation Trust - Update

Deborah Neal from Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust provided the following update which was included on the agenda:-

“The 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. 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 questions on the day-to-day business of the hospitals, we would be very pleased to email you answers from the Directors.

The following is a statement from the Trust Special Administrators:

“The transition and integration planning phase of the TSA process has commenced, and will result in Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust (MSFT) services being managed by University Hospitals North Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust (“UHNS”) and The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Foundation Trust (“RWT”). Please note that post dissolution both Stafford Hospital and Cannock Chase Hospital will remain open and operational but with the services being managed by UHNS and RWT.

“The transfer of services as above will take place at the start of November 2014.

“All MSFT staff will transfer with their current pay and associated conditions to either the University Hospital of North Staffordshire NHS Trust or The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust under plans agreed between the Trusts to transfer the management of services, and staff have been informed of this.

“The majority of staff will remain in the same or comparable roles. Some staff will be asked to take on new roles to support RWT and UHNS in the delivery of the TSA model for clinical services at Stafford and Cannock hospitals.

“Please note that the hospitals will remain open as a result of the management of Stafford Hospital transferring to UHNS and the management of Cannock Chase Hospital transferring to RWT. Patients should continue to attend the hospitals as normal.”

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

The Chairman considered that the update was disappointing. Forum members would like to see representative from the NHS Trust to attend meetings.

The Leader of the Council advised that he too was disappointed with the information that had provided. However, by 1 November the Mid Staffs NHS Trust would be gone. It was proposed to rename Stafford Hospital and it would be known as The County Hospital. The University Hospital of North Staffs would be known as the Royal Stoke University Hospital. He had recently met with David Loughton, Chief Executive of Royal Wolverhampton Hospital NHS Trust who had advised that work had commenced and the following had taken place:

- the Littleton Ward at Cannock hospital had been demolished
- The outpatient rooms at Cannock had doubled from 30 to 60
- As there was no A & E department at Cannock there was less chance of operations being cancelled
- Arriva were to operate a bus service every 30 minutes
- A promise had been made to transfer all staff over
- All residents in Cannock and Rugeley would be transferred to New Cross Hospital in Wolverhampton

The Leader considered that there was a reasonable future for Cannock Hospital but things were looking a lot different for Stafford.

A local resident commented that he was involved in helping with the Chapel at

Cannock Hospital and had recently had a good meeting with the Chaplaincy of Wolverhampton to discuss the future proposals.

A local Councillor advised that she had attended the County Council's Health Select Committee along with David Loughton, Chief Executive of Royal Wolverhampton Hospital NHS Trust and Mark Hackett, Chief Executive of the University Hospital of North Staffordshire. Mark Hackett had commented that there would be a trial of the bus service from Stafford to Stoke operating 24 hours.

In response to a comment made about car parking the Leader of the Council explained that car parking had been discussed with Wolverhampton hospital in view of the prospect of a large number of patients coming to Cannock. Various options were being considered, including a multi storey car park. It was understood that a leaflet would be distributed to all households across the District in December informing people of the changes.

A local resident said that the perception of the public was that Stafford hospital would be closed and the land sold for houses. The Leader of the Council commented that he was sad to see the demise of Stafford hospital. The Mid Staffs NHS Trust's link to Stafford hospital had affected the ability to recruit staff.

A District Councillor commented that he also considered the update from Mid Staffs NHS Trust was poor. He wanted Stafford hospital to remain open. The reorganisation of the hospitals and the new proposals meant that residents were unsure of what was happening. He did not consider that providing shuttle buses to and from the hospitals was satisfactory. He had concern regarding the healthcare provision in the area and would be making every effort to ensure Stafford remained open and that services were not lost. He would be watching the developments very closely.

Reference was made to the troops from the Army that would be relocating to Stafford next year. A District Councillor asked how they would be affected if Stafford hospital was to close. The Chief Executive from the University Hospital of North Staffordshire had commented on this at the County's Health Select Committee earlier today. He said that the hospital was working with the Army to accommodate the extra people. However, the Army did provide its own hospital services to its personnel.

A local resident suggested that a letter of support from the Forum be sent to the campaigners who were camping at Stafford hospital in an attempt to stop services at the hospital being taken over. Forum Members agreed to the suggestion and a letter would be prepared.

22. Forward Agenda for Future Meetings

Questions were invited from members of the public and these would 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.

23. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 9 December, 2014 at 7.00pm.

The meeting closed at 7.55pm.

CHAIRMAN