

**CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL**  
**NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE**  
**HEATH HAYES, NORTON CANES AND RAWNSLEY COMMUNITY FORUM**  
**MONDAY, 10 MARCH 2008 AT 7.00 P.M.**  
**AT NORTON CANES HIGH SCHOOL, BURNTWOOD ROAD, NORTON CANES**

PRESENT: Councillors

Bernard, Mrs. A.F. (Chairman)

Ansell, Mrs. P.A.	Holder, M.J.
Bullock, K. L.	Mawle, D.L.
Carr I. R.	Todd, Mrs. D.M.
Collis, C.	

Council Officers and other Representatives

Mr. D. Botfield, Staffordshire County Council Highways  
Mrs. C. Bowker, Committee Officer  
PC Dean Cooper, Staffordshire Police  
Mr. N. Hackney, Partnership Development Manager  
Mr. J. Heminsley, Planning Services Manager  
Mr. D. Hoare, Director of Service Improvement

Representatives from the Press  
Local Residents (approximately 120)

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Beddows, K. L. Bennett, and County Councillor S. Woodward).

(Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Chairman informed the Committee that the order of the agenda would be changed to allow P. C. Dean Cooper to continue with his duties and it was also requested that the item regarding the Wind Farm be brought forward)

**1. Notes**

The notes of the meeting held on 20 November 2007 were agreed as a correct record.

**2. Meadow Way Play Area – Vandalism Problems (including broken glass being placed on play equipment)**

P. C. Dean Cooper informed the Forum that as reported photographs had been taken of the graffiti in the play area which had been taken round various schools. He had arranged a meeting with the press, however as the graffiti had been removed the meeting was cancelled. The Police had been called to two incidents in February 2008, one relating to

damage to a lamp and another concerning taking someone who was drunk home.

Concern was raised regarding the number of youths congregating on the play area and the Forum was informed that as it was a public open space area, the youths could not be disbursed if they were not doing anything wrong. The Police regularly patrolled the area but were unable to be there all the time and relied on residents to report incidents to them. An internal review of local policing had taken place and an additional PCSO had been allocated to the area.

**3. Concerns regarding the location of the proposed Wind Farm and the decision of Heath Hayes & Wimblebury Parish Council to support the proposal**

Residents raised concern regarding the planning application submitted to Cannock Chase Council by Harworth Power for a Wind Farm with three turbines as they considered that the Bleak House site was not suitable. Concern was also expressed regarding Heath Hayes & Wimblebury Parish Council's apparent support for the proposal and that this did not reflect the views of local residents.

Councillor Merry explained that the Parish Council had given careful consideration to the proposal and had voted democratically not to oppose the application. He considered that the Wind Farm was needed to help overcome global warming and not all information regarding problems encountered with them was correct. It was reported that not all residents were opposed to the application and that another Parish Council had also not opposed the proposal.

Residents considered that the Wind Farm, in view of its location, would be too close to homes, cause a noise nuisance and shadow flicker, have a detrimental effect on house prices and to the visual amenity to the area. Concern was raised with respect to Cannock Chase having been a former mining area and that vibration from the turbines may lead to further subsidence.

Concern was also raised regarding the low level of power which would be produced with the turbines working at 100% efficiency.

The Planning Services Manager outlined the planning process the application would need to go through. He explained that officers from the Planning Section would prepare a report to be considered by the Planning Control Committee. Issues such as noise, visual impact, shadow flicker, impact on television and mobile reception would be investigated. An environmental statement has been prepared and further technical advice would be obtained if required. Cannock Chase Council had a duty to consider all planning applications. It was explained that the impact on house values could not be taken into consideration by law.

Two speakers either for or against the application were allowed to speak at the Committee the date of which was not yet known. The agenda would be despatched five clear working days before the meeting. The Chairman of Planning had requested that the Committee makes a site visit to an existing operation as similar as possible to that proposed. The visit would be made by coach and in addition to Councillors and representatives from Lichfield District Council, there may be seats for 2/3 representatives of local residents to accompany them.

The Chairman read out two letters which Heath Hayes & Wimblebury Parish Council had written with regard to this issue.

Councillors C. Collis and D. Mawle reported that although they were on the Planning Control Committee, they had predetermined the application and would not be able to take part in the debate or vote on the application. Councillor Collis would, however, be speaking against the application. Councillor L. Bullock explained that he was speaking at the Forum without prejudice or prejudgement and had taken no part in the debate. He requested that residents forwarded to him as much factual information as possible in order that he could have a balanced view.

#### **4. Items requested at last meeting**

- Hednesford Hills Raceway – what measures are being introduced into the lease to protect local residents from noise nuisance
- What progress had the local authority made towards the new leasing agreement
- Has progress been affected by the recent transfer of ownership
- Has the sound and health and safety monitoring been completed

The Director of Service Improvement explained that the lease was a commercial negotiation and a confidential report detailing how the negotiations would proceed would be considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 20 March 2008. A press release would be issued on certain aspects.

Although precise details could not be disclosed, issues such as noise and car parking problems, the number of race days, start times being breached, etc., would be taken into consideration

With respect to transfer of ownership it was explained that shares in the company had been sold to a new shareholder and Incarace would continue to run the site.

Incarace had employed the services of a noise consultant and the results of the investigations would be known within the year.

The Council had served a summons against Incarace in respect of an accident that had occurred and the matter would be going to Court in the near future.

It was reported that previously the Council had held liaison group meetings made up from local residents, parish and district councillors, officers and other organisations and it was considered that issues with respect to the Raceway may be better considered by them rather than at the Forum. The Director of Service Improvement explained that it was not appropriate at the current time but would be considered in the future.

#### **5. Highways Management Programme for 2008/09**

Mr. D. Botfield from the Highways Department, Staffordshire County Council gave an overview of the Highways Management Programme for 2008/09.

He explained that the County Council was responsible for maintaining:-

- 1,100 road bridges
- 2,560 footbridges and bridleway bridges
- Over 6,000 km of roads of various classifications
- 263 km of cycle lanes
- 200 km of retaining walls
- Over 100,000 lighting units (street lights and illuminated signs)
- 146,000 road gullies

Visual inspections were carried out by a Highways Inspector at varying frequencies dependent on the road category. Work was categorised from 1-4, those classed as 1 being considered the most urgent cases and 4 the least.

Scanner surveys were undertaken to capture surface conditions and deflectograph was used to measure structural conditions of highways.

CLARENCE was used as a defect reporting system with work being prioritised.

The maintenance budget was divided into, structural maintenance, routine and reactive maintenance, preventative maintenance, integrated transport schemes and winter maintenance.

The Structural Maintenance Programme for 2008/09 consisted of:-

#### Principal Roads

A460 Rugeley Road Hednesford – carriageway reconstruction

A34 Stafford Road, Cannock – provision of controlled crossing point and carriageway resurfacing

#### Non Principal Roads

Lime Lane, Little Wyrley – drainage investigations

Brownhills Road, Norton Canes – footway and carriageway reconstruction

#### Unclassified Roads

Burnthill Lane, Rugeley – re-kerbing and footway reconstruction, together with carriageway reconstruction

St. Pauls Road, Rugeley – carriageway reconstruction

Bevan Lee Road – carriageway overlay

#### Footpath Schemes

Hunter Road, Cannock

Rothbury Green, Heath Hayes

Pye Green Road, Cannock

#### IT Programme

Kingsmead, Heath Hayes – Safer Routes to School

Chase Heritage Trail – completion

Cardinal Griffin High School – Safer Routes to School – cycle storage

Old Hednesford Road/Hawkes Green Lane, Cannock – local safety scheme

A5190 Lichfield Road / Devon Road junction – local safety scheme

Signing improvements - Cannock Town Centre  
BQP Route Hospital circular – Stafford/Cannock  
Post Rugeley bypass – Eaton Lodge to The Arches.

Mr. Botfield explained that although the above were planned to take place, should more urgent issues arise then this may affect the programme.

Councillor Bullock expressed his thanks for the work carried out with reinstating the grass verges alongside the Cannock Road, Heath Hayes. It was reported that residents were still, however, driving across the verges. Mr. Botfield reported that further work would be carried out with a timber 'kicking rail' being erected. However the onus was on residents not to drive on the verges and letters had been forwarded to those concerned.

## **6. Consultation on the Sustainable Community Strategy for Cannock Chase**

The Forum received a presentation by the Partnership Development Manager on the Sustainable Community Strategy for Cannock Chase.

He explained that the Strategy was required to be produced by Statute for the period 2008-2020. The Strategy would contain the long term aspirations to make Cannock Chase a better place to live, not to the detriment of future generations.

A consultation process was being developed and as part of this process a Citizen's Panel made up of 1,200 people from age 18 plus being were being requested to complete a survey four times a year to ascertain their priorities.

Some of the priorities so far identified were:-

- To improve skill levels
- Reduce those claiming incapacity benefit
- Address anti social behaviour
- Violence in town centres
- Not enough for the young to do

A draft of the Community Strategy would be published on the internet. The consultation process would end on 5 May 2008 and the public were requested to make their views known on what they considered the priorities should be.

A final draft of the Sustainable Community Strategy would be submitted to the next meeting of the Forum in June prior to its approval at the Council meeting on 25 June 2008.

Councillor Collis requested that if possible the press could help to publicise the Sustainable Community Strategy consultation process.

## **7. State of Roads and Footpaths in Cannock Chase** **Fly tipping and litter problems** **Dog fouling – lack of enforcement and provision of bins** **Condition of derelict buildings**

A local resident explained that adjacent to a shop in Hazel Slade there were two pot holes

from when the path had been dug up and not resurfaced for at least 20 years. The litter problem had increased and had not been helped by fortnightly collections with plastic bottles etc., being blown out of containers. He reported that in his neighbourhood dog fouling problems had increased in the last five years. Concern was expressed regarding derelict properties, with particular respect to a disused iron foundry, a large shed near to the Windmill Garage and a property near to the Catholic Church in Hednesford.

The Director of Service Improvement informed the Forum that he was meeting with Mr. Botfield from the County to identify problems with footpaths and to endeavour to provide solutions.

Included within the approved Budget was funding to assist with enforcement issues to overcome fly tipping problems. Known areas where dogs were causing problems would be targeted.

It was requested that further litter bins be located near to schools. The Director of Service Improvement explained that while no extra funding was available for this, a review of existing litter bins was being undertaken and some may be resited. Investigations were being undertaken with respect to derelict buildings.

The Planning Services Manager informed the Forum that with regard to the iron foundry planning permission had been granted, but it could not be developed until great crested newts had been relocated and this could be undertaken during Spring of this year. The land in Cannock Wood Street on which the shed referred to stood, was up for auction and the new owner would be contacted. With respect to the property in Uxbridge Street it was explained that this was listed for action to be taken.

**8. Future Plans for Public Transportation in Norton Canes (West)**

A local resident explained that although improvements had been made to the service to Walsall, people from Norton Canes would like a direct bus route to Cannock. Mr. Botfield explained that improvements were being made to services and that a Local Transport Plan was in place, a copy of which was available on the internet.

**9. What progress has been made with respect to the proposed Cycle Path between Rawnsley and Hednesford**

The Planning Services Manager reported that the part of the cycle path near to Victoria Street formed part of the Chase Heritage Trail and construction was underway and should be completed within six weeks. The remainder between Rugeley Road and Rawnsley Road was to be developed by Sustrans Limited and planning permission had been obtained for this. He understood funding was being explored and further information on this matter would be sought.

**10. Cemeteries/Headstone Testing – Open Day**

The Chairman read out the following statement:-

“A memorial management open day will be held at Wolseley Road Cemetery in Rugeley

on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2008. There will be three programmes throughout the day,

10.00 a.m.

12.00 noon

2.00 p.m.

The programme will consist of a Welcome / introduction, a demonstration of testing a memorial and what options there are for failed memorials and a talk from a memorial mason on fixing a failed memorial.”

**11. Forward Agenda for Future Meetings**

The Chairman informed the Forum that forms were available for completion for items to be included on the agenda for the next meeting. The following item was requested by Councillor Mrs. P. A. Ansell:-

What is the current position with respect to the resurfacing of the Littleworth Road

**12. Dates of Future Meetings**

The Chairman advised the Forum that the next meeting had been arranged for Monday, 2 June 2008 at Hayes Green Community Centre, Hayes Way, Heath Hayes.