

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL

HEATH HAYES, NORTON CANES AND RAWNSLEY COMMUNITY FORUM

NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON

MONDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER, 2007 AT 7.00 P.M.

AT THE THEATRE, NORTON CANES HIGH SCHOOL

PRESENT: Cannock Chase Council Forum Members

Councillors:

Bernard, Mrs. A.F. (Chairman)

Beddows, J. (Vice-Chairman)

Bullock, L.W.

Holder, M.J.

Butler, R.D.

Mawle, D.L.

Collis, C.

Todd, Mrs. D.M.

Cannock Chase Council Officers

Mr. D. Hoare, Director of Service Improvement

Mr. S. Shilvock, Head of Environmental Health

Mrs. W. Rowe, Senior Committee Officer

Also Present:

County Councillor Mrs. S. Woodward

Mr. G. Hunt, Partnership District Officer, Staffordshire County Council

Mr. D. Botfield, Staffordshire County Council Highways

PC Norman, Staffordshire Police

Representatives from the Press

Representatives from the Parish Councils

Local Residents (approximately 10)

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs. P.A. Ansell and County Councillor J.O'Leary)

9. Notes

The notes of the meeting held on 9 July 2007 were agreed as a correct record subject to Councillor Mrs. P.A. Ansell being included in the list of Members present.

10. Police Issues

The Chairman explained that PC Norman from Staffordshire Police was in attendance at the meeting and would take any questions or respond to any issues.

The following issues were raised:

Concern was expressed with regards to the number of buses and heavy lorries travelling along Burntwood Road, Norton Canes and to parked cars along Burntwood Road near to Norton Canes High School. It was considered that more police presence was required to assist with this problem.

PC Norman advised that he would request the Police Community Support Officers to visit the area during the schools opening and closing times. Additionally he would request that an action plan be commenced to assist in alleviating the difficulties being experienced. An update would be provided at the next meeting.

The Forum was informed that there were problems with the parking of vehicles on the footpath in the Littleworth Road, Rawnsley area and it was requested that an action plan be commenced. PC Norman advised that there was an ongoing action plan in that area which monitored heavy goods vehicles using the road and speed enforcement checks were also undertaken. He would ensure that particular attention was given to the parking of vehicles on the footpath as part of the action plan.

PC Norman was asked to confirm whether any action would be taken should the registration numbers of offenders be reported to the Police and whether images captured on camera phones would assist. PC Norman stated that two independent witnesses were required to make a statement regarding a particular offence. The Magistrates would decide whether camera phones capturing images of offenders could be used in prosecutions.

Councillor D Mawle raised concern regarding the use of off-road motorbikes in the Prospect Village area. PC Norman stated that the Police were aware of the problem and had undertaken patrols in the Sevens Road area in an attempt to catch offenders. Residents were urged to note bike registration numbers and pass them onto the Police. Similar problems had been experienced in the Eastgate / Westgate areas of Rawnsley. In an attempt to resolve the problems, a mailshot was sent to residents asking them to provide information about the offenders anonymously. A similar notice could be forwarded to the residents of Prospect Village via their newsletter. Councillor Mawle would liaise with PC Norman regarding this matter.

County Councillor Mrs. S Woodward raised concern regarding the anti social behaviour being experienced at the Meadow Way Play area. She had reported this matter to Inspector Derrick and PC Norman. Councillor C. Collis stated that an action plan had been developed to address the problems at this play area. A multi-agency approach was being taken to seek a long term solution. Ward Members and residents had been involved in the discussions along with representatives from the Parish Council, Staffordshire County Council, Trading Standards and Staffordshire Police. It was requested that Heath Hayes Ward Members also be involved in the discussions.

Concern was expressed regarding the number of road signs in the area that had been defaced or destroyed. Additionally, signposting for the new DHL warehouse at the Orbital Centre was requested as heavy vehicles were getting lost and causing problems in Norton Canes.

Dave Botfield, Staffordshire County Council Highways, advised that road signs which were the responsibility of the County Council had been cleaned and new ones had been ordered where necessary. Signage to the DHL Warehouse would be the responsibility of the company and Mr. Botfield would talk to the company regarding this matter. However, the situation may

become clearer as traffic signals were due to be installed at the A5 junction. Additionally, part of the new road, which runs from Norton Canes to the Orbital Centre, would shortly be adopted.

11. Highways Issues

- **Problems relating to the grass verges alongside the Cannock Road**
- **Provision of Pedestrian Crossings near to Five Ways Island and near to the junction with Chapel Street**

This item had been requested by Councillor Chris Collis. He thanked both Graham Hunt, Partnership District Officer, and Dave Botfield, Staffordshire County Council Highways, for meeting with him to discuss these issues. He considered that the damage to the verges had mainly been caused by residents parking their vehicles on the verges. The Parish Council had sent letters to residents to try and discourage parking on the verges. He considered that two crossings would be necessary and the Parish Council was looking at funding opportunities to assist.

Mr Botfield reported that a minor scheme for improvements to the footway along Cannock Road would commence after Christmas. Measures to persuade residents not to park on the verges would be incorporated into the scheme.

It was considered that the planting of trees/shrubs along the grass verges would discourage parking and it was noted that residents were able to apply for licences to plant trees/shrubs in the verges. The possibility of the District Council introducing a bye law was also suggested which would forbid parking on verges. Mr Botfield stated that he would investigate the suggestions put forward.

With regards to the pedestrian crossings, Mr. Botfield reported that a request had been made through the Chase Heritage Trail to seek the installation of a crossing along the route. However, a response was awaited. He explained that, if this was not possible, the site would be assessed to ascertain if it met the criteria for the installation of a crossing.

12. The siting of Trade Signs on the side of roads in the area – clarification of trade clearance to erect such signs

Mr Withington who had requested this item expressed concern regarding the number of trade signs which were located in the area, of particular concern was Hemlock Way. He stated that many of the signs were unsightly or broken and considered that action was required to remove the signs as they were a safety hazard.

It was explained that there was a bye law prohibiting flyposting and the Planning Services Unit was responsible for removing unauthorised trade signs and posters.

Mr Botfield advised that action could also be taken under the Highways Act and he would ensure that an Highways Inspector visited the area tomorrow. He explained that residents should ring the Clarence system on 0800 232323 to report any highways issues.

13. What has been done with the letters from residents forwarded to the County Council with respect to speeding issues on the Cannock Road?

Mr Baseley, who had requested this item, explained that a number of letters had been forwarded to Staffordshire County Council last year outlining concerns regarding speeding on Cannock Road, Heath Hayes and requesting a 30 mph speed restriction. However, no reply had yet been received.

Graham Hunt advised that a petition had been presented to Staffordshire County Council on 27 July 2006 requesting a speed reduction to 30 mph on the Cannock Road. The County Council decided against imposing a 30 mph speed restriction, however circumstances had changed and further consideration was being given to speed restrictions in the area. An action plan had been established and data on speed and volume of traffic in the area was being collected. There would therefore be an update on this issue at the next Forum meeting.

Mr Hunt explained that a letter had been forwarded to Mr Baseley on 31 July 2006 responding to this matter and a copy of the letter would be provided to Mr Baseley after the meeting.

14. What is the County Council's policy with respect to the cutting of verges and hedgerows in Heath Hayes, particularly the Chapel Street area?

This issue had been requested by Mrs. Skomski. She had made a number of calls to Staffordshire County Council complaining about the state of the hedgerow at the Chapel Street/Hednesford Road junction. She explained that other hedgerows in the Heath Hayes area were overgrown and these also required maintenance. It was noted that some residents had undertaken work themselves.

Mr Botfield advised that the hedgerow at the Chapel Street / Hednesford Road junction was owned by Staffordshire County Council and he would request that the maintenance be attended to as soon as possible. Staffordshire County Council could serve notice on landowners requesting that hedgerows/verges be maintained. Should landowners not undertake the work, Staffordshire County Council could carry out the necessary work and charge the owners accordingly.

It was noted that similar problems existed elsewhere in the District. Mr Botfield advised that Highways Inspectors undertook inspections throughout the District to highlight any problems. However, residents were welcome to report any issues by telephoning the Clarence system and these would then be addressed.

15. Hednesford Raceway

- **Following the various meetings that have taken place and the concerns expressed by local people and their elected representatives, what changes, besides the reduction in practice days do you intend to make to the Code of Practice?**
- **What are the dates of the practice days for this season?**
- **What measures have been taken to reduce the noise levels at the race meetings?**

Mrs. Barratt who had requested this item outlined the concerns in respect of this matter.

With regards to the issue of practice days, Mr. Steve Shilvock, Head of Environmental Health advised that the season ran from 1st February to 31st January and there was an agreement

with the Raceway that there would be a maximum of three practice days this season. The first one had been held on 3 August but he was not aware of the other two dates or even if they would occur. There would be six practice days the following season. The Raceway had stated that they required flexibility regarding practice days for operational reasons.

Residents were of the opinion that they should be made aware of the practice days. In view of this, Mr Shilvock stated that he would ask Incarace to provide the dates of practice days for this season and the next season and inform residents accordingly.

With regards to the other issues, Mr Shilvock explained that a new PA system had been installed which had smaller speakers and this may assist in addressing the problems with noise levels. However, it was necessary to set the sound level at a safe level for crowd safety. As the F1 stock cars had been found to be particularly noisy the manufacturer was looking at a new exhaust which was quieter and this may help alleviate some of the noise issues. This would be monitored at the November meeting. Additionally, consideration was being given to setting noise limits on the boundary of noise sensitive properties.

Mr. Declan Hoare, Director of Service Improvement advised that the lease was due to be renewed in January 2008. Negotiations would be taking place with Incarace regarding the renewal of the lease and the District Council would be seeking improvements take place at the Raceway prior to the lease being renewed. However, the Forum was advised that the company had a right to a continuation of the lease in its current form.

Councillor Collis reported that a number of meetings had taken place with Incarace to discuss residents concerns. Leaflets were to be published to advise visitors of appropriate places to park during race meetings. Further meetings would be held with the Raceway to discuss the concerns raised.

Mrs. Barratt reiterated her concerns regarding the frequency and clustering of meetings and the level of noise during race meetings. Mr Shilvock confirmed that these concerns would be addressed as part of the renewal of the lease.

16. 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 items were requested at the meeting:

- Update with regards to the number of buses and heavy lorries travelling along Burntwood Road and to parked cars along Burntwood Road near to Norton Canes High School - request that the entrances to the schools be opened to parents (Relevant officer from County Council to attend)
- Update on speeding issues on Cannock Road, Heath Hayes

17. Dates of Future Meetings

The Chairman advised the Forum that meetings had been arranged for Tuesday 20 November 2007 and Monday 10 March 2008, the venues had yet to be determined.