

**CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL**  
**NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE**  
**CANNOCK COMMUNITY FORUM**  
**TUESDAY 3 MARCH, 2015 AT 7.00PM**  
**AT THE CIVIC CENTRE, CANNOCK**

PRESENT: District Councillors:

Kraujalis, J.T. (Chairman)

Davis, Mrs. M.A.	Sutton, Mrs. H.M.
Freeman, Miss M.	Toth, J.
Mitchell, Mrs. C.	Witton, P.
Snape, P.A.	

Cannock Chase Council Officers:

Mr. T. McGovern, Managing Director  
Mrs. W. Rowe, Senior Committee Officer

Also Present

County Councillor Mrs. A. Spicer, Cannock Town Centre Division  
Councillor G. Adamson  
Councillor G. Ball  
Inspector Paul Cooke, Cannock Chase Local Policing Commander,  
Staffordshire Police  
Rob Lusuardi, Director of Operations, Stafford & Surrounds/Cannock  
Chase CCG  
Sultan Mahmud, Integration Programme Director, Royal Wolverhampton  
NHS Trust  
Zareena Khan, representing Support Staffordshire (Resident Champions)  
Kate Bainbridge, representing Support Staffordshire (Resident Champions)  
Local Residents (approximately 5)

**34. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G. Alcott (Vice-Chairman), F.W.C. Allen, C. Anslow, D.I. Dixon and Staffordshire County Councillor M. Deaville.

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

There were no interests declared.

## 36. Notes

AGREED:

That the notes of the meeting held on 9 December, 2014 be agreed as a correct record.

## 37. Questions from Staffordshire County Council Highways – submitted in advance

Tony McGovern, the Managing Director advised that neither County Councillor Deaville or Mark Keeling, Community Infrastructure and Liaison Manager were able to attend the meeting. He had therefore spoken to Mark Keeling personally in an attempt to get a representative from County Highways to attend the meeting. Mr. Keeling had advised that there was no guarantee officers could attend Forum meetings due to the number of

forum and Parish/Town Council meeting invitations received by the department and therefore written responses would be provided. Anyone wishing to raise a highways related matter should contact County Council Highways direct in order to receive a quicker response.

The Chairman referred to the leaflet that had been produced by Staffordshire County Council Highways outlining how and who resolves Highways queries. These were available at the meeting to take away for future reference.

### (i) Item from Councillor G. Alcott – outstanding highways defects within the Cannock area – email and attachment from Mark Keeling, Community Infrastructure and Liaison Manager was attached to the agenda

The Chairman explained that Councillor Alcott was unable to attend the Forum meeting. However, there was an email attached to the agenda outlining the Highways response to a number of outstanding highway defects within the Cannock area.

A local resident referred to the attachment which made reference to the condition of Old Fallow Road, indicating that there were minor issues. However, the resident stated that the condition of this road had been reported some 10 years ago and it was in a bad state of repair. He considered that work needed to be done quickly. The Chairman explained that Mark Keeling would be made aware of the concern raised.

A local Councillor made reference to the poor condition of roads and footpaths throughout the District. Despite reporting the problems to the County Council nothing ever seemed to get done. He considered that the County Council did not have enough money to repair the roads to a decent standard. However, other areas in the County seemed to have more money to spend on road repairs.

He also referred to the question he asked at the previous forum, which was included later on in the agenda: "How much of the money allocated to the County for highways repairs is spent in the CCDC area compared to other areas

of the County". Despite asking the question he considered that an answer was never forthcoming.

Other District Councillors agreed that the condition of roads and footpaths in the District were poor. However, as the County Council had cut the road repair budget the money was not available to carry out sufficient repairs. There had been no improvement since the new contractor "AMEY" had been appointed and a number of pot holes that had been repaired had to be re-done.

Members noted that a representative from Highways had not attended a Cannock Forum meeting for some considerable time. It was acknowledged that it was very unlikely that a Highways Officer would attend the forum meetings as they were not resourced to attend forums. Members considered that even though County Councillor Deaville had visited the District and met with Councillor Alcott to look at any specific highways concerns things had not improved. Therefore, Members agreed that the Cabinet Member responsible for Highways should be asked to attend the next meeting to respond to the concerns being raised.

**(ii) Mr. Gordon Taylor, a local resident, submitted the following questions:-**

- 1) The traffic island at the bottom of Cardinal Griffin Way is being damaged by vehicles during the week as drivers are using it as a car park for dropping off/taking children to school, and at the weekends by people using the sports facility at the back of the school.*
- 2) The traffic lights/pedestrian crossings on the A34 Ringway between the bus station and Job Centre do not have an audible sound when the green man is shown, thus causing issues for blind people and others when using the crossing.*
- 3) Request that Mark Keeling attend the Forum to provide updates in person on a number of outstanding highways related issues which have been reported, some of which over 5 months ago.*

Mark Keeling, Community Infrastructure and Liaison Manager, had provided the following response which was outlined on the agenda:-

- 1) The traffic island on Cardinal Way is in place to allow coaches and other vehicles to turn around safely. It seems that some of the vehicles occasionally mount the island and cause damage to the soft verge. This is difficult to manage or prevent. We have a neighbourhood highway team which carry out environmental improvement work in the Cannock town area twice a year, this team can carry out top soil repairs and re-seeding where possible if required. The school could also take some responsibility for the repairs however this would need further investigation.
- 2) I have passed on this information to the signals team and am currently awaiting response. We have recently upgraded the crossing leading from the Bus Station across Park Road.
- 3) The demand for officer time during the evening across Staffordshire is very

high and it is not always possible for officers to attend following the many invitations we receive.

However officers are available Mon-Fri to help with any highway enquiries in addition to the information that can be sought via the Contact Centre and the website.

All highway related issues should be reported directly to the call centre on 0300 111 8000 or via [highways@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:highways@staffordshire.gov.uk) in order for us to deal with any issues as quickly as possible.

However, the Community Highway Liaison Team is also available should you require any additional detailed local information. I am unaware of any issues that are five months old however if Mr Taylor wishes to raise concerns this can be done via the contact centre as above [or alternatively my direct contact information is as follows: 01785 854676 or Email:- [mark.keeling@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:mark.keeling@staffordshire.gov.uk)

A local resident referred to the double pedestrian crossings across the A34 ring road to the bus station. A blind or partially sighted person could get confused if there was an audible sound coming from the other crossing and could think it was safe to cross. However, she had been advised that to assist blind/partially sighted persons in crossing there was a small a button located on the underside of the pedestrian crossing which started to spin when the green man lights up to show it was safe to cross.

A District Councillor considered that crossings should be disabled friendly and this facility should be available on them to assist blind/partially sighted persons in crossing safely.

The Chairman stated Mark Keeling would be asked to confirm whether there was such a button located on double crossings.

**(iii) Mrs. Johnson, a local resident, submitted the following question:-**

*Car parking outside the shops on Bideford Way, Cannock – the angle which vehicles have to be parked outside of the shops is causing issues for passing traffic and other vehicles trying to park, resulting in several incidents of vehicles being bumped/hit.*

Mark Keeling had advised that the parking layout outside the shops was improved around 3 years ago following extensive consultation with the shop frontages and CCDC who owned part of the land.

The works included an extension of the parking area which provided additional spaces and spaces for the Disabled. The original layout only provided spaces for a few cars and double parking was a common feature of this particular area. The parking was angled slightly to allow these additional spaces and the improvements were welcomed by the businesses and customers. We are unaware of any incidents at this location however we will continue to monitor the area.

A District Councillor commented that the parking spaces were built at the wrong angle and cars were reversing out blind. He had written to Mark Keeling suggesting that the bays needed to be altered and he had received the same response as outlined above. Mrs. Johnson added that reversing out of the parking bays was dangerous and she had witnessed a few near accidents.

The Chairman considered that the response was not proposing any solution to the problem raised. He suggested that Mark Keeling be asked to meet with local Councillors and Mrs. Johnson on site to discuss a possible solution.

**(iv) Question raised at previous meeting:-**

***“How much of the money allocated to the County for highways repairs is spent in the CCDC area compared to other areas in the County?”***

Mark Keeling had advised that “management of the highway asset will always be constrained by funding availability and decisions have to be made as to how best to allocate budgets. Over the last few years the County Council's asset management policy has focussed on preventative treatments (keeping serviceable roads in a good condition) and the more costly renewal of life-expired roads. This approach has led to an overall improvement in road condition data across the county. Potholes across the wider network are repaired on a risk management basis; with each hazard being rated on size, depth, location and status of the route.

We work on hundreds of schemes and projects across the county ranging from day to day maintenance to designing and building improvements and new additions to the highway network. All are part of our continuing efforts to improve Staffordshire's 3,100 miles of roads. Information on recently completed schemes in each area is available on the website and we aspire to provide information on our forward programs as soon as possible - [www.staffordshire.gov.uk](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk) Contact Centre - 0300 111 8000”.

A local Councillor indicted that he was not happy with the response provided as it did not answer the question he had raised. County Councillors who were present confirmed that they were allocated £10,000 for each County Division to spend on road repairs per year. Members agreed that this question would be asked at the next meeting which the County Councillor Cabinet Member for Highways would be invited to attend. Additionally, the Cabinet Member would be asked to explain the procedure for allocating money to County Councillors for road repairs.

**38. Questions for Staffordshire Police**

No questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting. However, Inspector Cooke was in attendance to take questions from the floor.

There being no questions the Inspector advised the Forum that following a significant number of burglaries in the District various individuals had recently been arrested and remanded in custody. Further operations were being proposed to tackle these issues. Residents should report anything suspicious such as security lights or fence panels being removed as the thieves were

garden hopping.

Reference was made to the problems that had occurred with the non-emergency 101 number. Inspector Cooke acknowledged that there had been staffing issues when the number had first been launched which had led to long delays in answering the calls. However, he confirmed that the control room was now fully staffed and the response time had been greatly reduced to less than 2 minutes.

A District Councillor asked the Inspector to confirm what types of things were being targeted by the thieves. Inspector Cooke advised that the thieves were targeting 40 inch TV screens, play stations, x boxes, iPods, iPhones, iPads and jewellery. They were then selling the items they had taken door to door. The Police were working with the Council to tackle this issue. Additionally, the thieves were breaking into sheds to steal the tools to break into the houses or alternatively using a brick to gain access. There had been a team of 8 who had committed the majority of 300+ burglaries in the area and they had all been arrested. The team had been very criminally bright and knew what they were doing. They had worked together to remove the items from houses and pass them through the gardens.

**39. Questions for Cannock Chase Council – submitted in advance**

No questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting.

**40. Questions for Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Services**

No questions have been submitted in advance of the meeting.

**41. Clinical Commissioning Group**

Rob Lusuardi, Director of Operations for Stafford & Surrounds/Cannock Chase CCG was in attendance. He advised that, with regard to services commissioned by the CCG, patient satisfaction surveys had revealed that satisfaction levels were now above average. Prior to the changes being implemented the levels were below the national average.

He confirmed that 22 GP practices had extended their opening hours. He also referred to a programme known as “GP in a car” which was operating Monday to Friday afternoons. The Acute Visiting Service provided urgent afternoon visits for patients unable to wait for a GP to visit after evening surgery. The programme was assisting in significantly reducing visits to A&E.

He made reference to the “Choose Well” campaign which helps people decide if they require medical attention when they get sick and explains what each NHS service does and when it should be used. The feedback from the Patient Participation Groups was positive and patients felt more knowledgeable about their condition.

With regard to the Minor Injuries Unit that had recently reduced its operating hours he confirmed that no patients had presented for treatment beyond the current operating hours.

He welcomed any views and comments from the floor.

A District Councillor referred to the high level of alcohol abuse amongst young people in the District and asked how the CCG were planning to address this.

Rob Lusuardi advised that he had recently sat on a panel to review initiatives regarding public health interventions. There were various schemes focused on dealing with drug/alcohol abuse. He would provide the Councillor with details of the strategy being used and what the benefits would be to Cannock residents.

Reference was made to Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust taking over the running of the Minor Injuries Unit in Cannock. Sultan Mahmud confirmed that Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust took over 2 weeks ago on the terms outlined by the CCG (i.e. with the reduced operating hours). A District Councillor considered that patients were not presenting at the Minor Injuries Unit beyond the current opening hours as they were aware of the reduced hours and would now go directly to A&E.

Mr. Mahmud advised that the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust were keen to develop Cannock hospital and integrate services. However, the CCG were in control and had the decision on what services they wanted to commission.

Reference was made to the leaflet that had been circulated by the CCG regarding prescriptions and the money wasted on medicines in the district. The aim of the campaign was to help reduce the £1.5 million of medicines wasted every year across the local area. The Leader of the Council confirmed that these leaflets would be included in the Council Tax bills (at no cost to the CCG).

A District Councillor expressed concern regarding the long waiting times for patients presenting at A&E departments at Walsall, Wolverhampton, Stoke and County hospitals. He considered that the reduced hours at the Minor Injuries Unit added to the longer queues at the A&E departments. He considered that patients were not happy with the service being provided and that Cannock was not allocated the same amount of money as other areas of the County.

Another District Councillor commented that it was local people who had fought the closure of the Minor Injuries Unit and would continue to fight to increase the opening hours. She agreed that Cannock had not been allocated a fair share of the finances.

Rob Lusuardi advised that he would take the comments back to the CCG Management Board. However, he considered that there was a lot of good work being done and improvements were taking place. There were no plans to close the Minor Injuries Unit. The CCG were obliged to uphold the transfer of services in the TSA handover. With regard to finances he commented that it was national policy how much money was allocated to Cannock.

A District Councillor commented that she was pleased that 22 out of 30 GP practices had extended their opening hours but considered that the remaining 8 should be encouraged to do the same. Patients should be encouraged to go and see their doctor before presenting at A&E or the Minor Injuries Unit. She expressed concern that many Doctors were retiring and there was difficulty in

recruiting new Doctors. She also considered that the CCG were poor at communication and the public were unaware of changes or what was available.

Rob Lusuardi agreed that the remaining practices should be encouraged to be more accessible. He commented that there was a programme to try and get Doctors out of training to come to Cannock and there were number of other initiatives to address this national problem.

He confirmed that the CCG was promoting the use of the telephone number 111 as a hub for enquiries. The aim was to achieve a model where the needs for services were filtered through 111.

The Chairman thanked Rob Lusuardi for his attendance at the meeting.

#### **42. Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust - Update**

Sultan Mahmud, Integration Programme Director, the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust was in attendance. He made reference to the following update which had been circulated in advance to Forum members:-

##### *Current and Future Management of Services at Cannock Chase Hospital*

*The separation of Cannock Chase Hospital from the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust (Stafford Hospital) took place very smoothly on the 1st November 2014. The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust (RWT) now has full management responsibility for the delivery of inpatient and outpatient services on the site and plans to further develop both the site and services for patients in and around the Cannock area will continue.*

##### **Ongoing Plans:**

- *Work is ongoing for a dedicated Endoscopy Suite which will double our capacity to undertake these procedures at Cannock. It is anticipated that this facility will open to patients from 1st April 2015*
- *Trauma services ceased at County Hospital on 9<sup>th</sup> February and the service transition occurred smoothly. In line with local planning, elective Orthopaedic activity has been transferred to Cannock Hospital with the designation of a fifth operating theatre and an additional 13 beds to support this activity. This has supported the transfer of inpatient operating for 6 lower limb surgeons, who commenced operating at Cannock on 10<sup>th</sup> February and created capacity at New Cross Hospital to accommodate the anticipated increased trauma activity and operating theatre capacity for colorectal and breast surgery.*
- *The intention is to further expand elective Orthopaedic services at Cannock by building two new theatres at Cannock by December 2015.*
- *Following the successful transfer of Obstetrics Services on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2015, Gynaecology transferred on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2015. The Gynaecology team had worked closely with colleagues from UHNM to ensure the safe transfer of services. Clinics are continuing to run at Cannock Chase*

*Hospital in addition to Obstetric and Gynaecology ultrasound service.*

- *There has been no reduction in the number of outpatient clinics carried out at Cannock Hospital.*
- *The Paediatrics service will transfer in May 2015. Additional beds have been identified and recruitment is currently ongoing for nursing staff to support this service.*
- *A free bus service for patients and staff operating from Wolverhampton Bus Station via New Cross Hospital to Cannock Hospital was operational from 9<sup>th</sup> February 2015. Patients attending appointments at either Cannock Hospital or New Cross Hospital will be able to use this service free of charge on production of an appropriate appointment letter. The service will run at hourly intervals from 6:54am at Wolverhampton Bus Station with stops at New Cross Hospital, Featherstone, Wedges Mills and Cannock Chase Hospital, returning to Wolverhampton from 7:30am at hourly intervals until the last departure at Cannock Hospital at 21:40 pm.*
- *Car parking availability for patients, visitors and staff is recognised as a significant issue. It is hoped that the bus service will ease some of the pressures, however, plans are in place to increase the number of car parking spaces available at Cannock Hospital over the next few months. There will be a number of car parking spaces at Cannock Hospital allocated for Renal patients to use free of charge.*

Following the update he commented that there was a lack of Doctors in the Staffordshire area but he was not sure why this was the case. Doctors were going to work in Canada, South Africa and Australia. Consideration was being given to providing GP services at the Cannock hospital site and the NHS Trust were keen in developing primary care as a service in addition to what was currently provided.

Reference was made to the free bus service provided by the Trust in partnership with Arriva and Mr. Mahmud was asked to confirm whether details of the free bus service was being promoted on all appointment letters. He confirmed that various press releases had been issued regarding the free bus service; however, he was not aware that it was included on appointment letters. He undertook to check this and ensure that information on the free bus service was included in all appointment letters pertaining to Cannock Hospital as soon as possible.

A District Councillor sought confirmation on the rumour that the bus service was not going to continue. He considered that the service needed to be promoted correctly before it ceased operating. He also asked for confirmation of the average waiting times for GP appointment's and for information on the situation with cancelled operations.

Mr. Mahmud advised that the free bus service had only been operating since 9 February, 2015 and it had not been marketed fully as yet. It was therefore too soon to evaluate. He confirmed that he was unaware of any plans to pull the service. He explained that the service had to break even; however, should it

prove economically unsustainable then a decision would be made between the Trust Board and Arriva as to whether it should continue.

With regard to waiting times for GP appointments he advised that there was no longer a requirement to collect this data.

With respect to cancelled appointments he commented that emergency pressures were very high during the winter months. He confirmed that 25% of the 300 - 400 patients presenting at the hospital were required to be admitted. Therefore when the hospital beds were full operations would inevitably have to be cancelled.

A local resident commented that the bus service was not being fully utilised as all of the services were yet to transfer to Cannock hospital. Mr. Mahmud agreed and advised that when all the services were fully operational at Cannock the free bus service could be better evaluated.

The Chairman thanked Sultan Mahmud for his attendance.

#### **43. Support Staffordshire - Resident Champions**

Zareena Khan and Kate Bainbridge from Support Staffordshire were in attendance to explain the role of Residents Champions. They were looking for volunteers from the Chadsmoor and Pye Green areas (Blake area) who could act as a voice for fellow residents in the community. The volunteers would liaise with members of the public, listen to their views, opinions and concerns and make positive changes in the Cannock area. The volunteers meet with local Councillors and other partners to raise the issues that have been identified. The issues raised could include items relating to Crime & Anti-social behaviour, Public Transport, Environmental Health, Highways and Housing.

Councillor Mitchell advised that she used to be invited to attend Resident Champion meetings but had not received any information for a while. The representative advised that this was most likely due to staffing changes. She would ensure the Councillors for the area were kept informed and invited to any meetings.

#### **44. "Just Click" Cannock Chase Council website consultation**

The Council's current website was being reviewed and a new and improved site would be launched later in 2015. Those present were encouraged to take part in the short survey which would assist in developing the new website. The Chairman advised that the consultation had been extended to 13 March. Should anyone wish to comment the surveys were available at the meeting.

#### **45. Dates of forthcoming Meetings**

The Forum noted that meetings were scheduled as follows:-

23 June, 2015

29 September, 2015

8 December, 2015

1 March, 2016

**46. Agenda for next meeting**

Questions were invited from members of the public and these would be included on the agenda for the next meeting which was being held on Tuesday, 23 June, 2015 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber.

The following items for the June meeting were agreed:-

- (a) That the Cabinet Member responsible for Highways be invited to attend the next meeting to respond to the concerns raised by Members.
- (b) That the Cabinet Member responsible for Highways be asked to provide a response to the following question:- “How much of the money allocated to the County for Highways repairs is spent in the CCDC area compared to other areas in the County?”
- (c) That the Cabinet Member responsible for Highways be asked to explain the procedure for allocating money to County Councillors for road repairs.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

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CHAIRMAN