

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
HEDNESFORD COMMUNITY FORUM
MONDAY 16 MARCH 2015 AT 7.00 P.M.

**HELD AT THE PYE GREEN COMMUNITY CENTRE, BRADBURY LANE,
HEDNESFORD**

PRESENT:

District Councillors:

Pearson, A. (Vice-Chairman)

Ball, G.D. Gamble, B.
Cartwright, Mrs. S.M. Todd, R.

Other District
Councillors:

- B. Hardman (Rawnsley Ward)
- J. Toth (Cannock East Ward)
- Miss S. Whitehouse (Etching Hill & The Heath Ward)

County
Councillors:

- Mrs C. Mitchell (Hednesford Division)

District
Officers:

- Mr T. McGovern, Managing Director
- Mr M. Berry, Senior Committee Officer
- Ms. K. Miles, Communications Officer

Also present:

- Local Residents x5
- Mr A. Donald, Chief Officer, Cannock Chase Clinical Commissioning Group
- PC G. Arries, Staffordshire Police
- Mr D. Ballett, Brindley Heath Parish Council and Friends of Hednesford Park
- Mrs L. Whitehouse, Hednesford Traders Association
- Mr D. Wisehall, Heart of Hednesford Restoration Project

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors G. Adamson (Chairman) and Mrs D. Grice.

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

No declarations of interests were made.

3. Notes

The Notes of the meeting held on 2 December 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed.

4. Questions for Staffordshire Police

Mrs. A. Round, local resident:

“I wish to complain about the parking of cars for Hednesford Raceway on Sunday 11th January. The roads round here were down to one lane for a great deal of Littleworth Road, Church Hill, Priory Rd, Alpine Drive and the pavements unusable for prams, mobility scooters and in some places pedestrians, because of cars parked on pavements and in some places completely on the pavements.”

PC Arries reported that as well as having been in contact with Mrs Round regarding the issue, he had also spoken to the event operators, requesting that they advise the Police of future dates when events would be held so that the parking and traffic situation could be better managed.

5. Questions for Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Services

No questions were submitted in advance of the meeting.

6. Cannock Chase Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Update

Andrew Donald, Chief Officer for the CCG provided the following update:

- Current projected deficit of £8.5m for 2014/15, an improvement on the previous year's deficit of £9.75m;
- Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) at Cannock hospital has been transferred to the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust (RWT);
- Community Nursing services have been redesigned;
- Aiming to make sure that more services are provided locally, thereby reducing the need to travel further afield;
- Control total (i.e. deficit level) has been set at £5.1m for 2015/16, with a need to achieve a balanced budget the year after;
- Biggest financial pressures being faced at present relate to 'elective' surgeries/procedures;
- Good work has been going on but money is still the key issue, efficiencies need to be removed from the system without affecting patient care.

Mr D. Ballett raised concerns about car parking provision and public transport access to Cannock hospital.

Mr Donald replied that it was a widespread problem across the NHS, but recognised

there were issues locally.

Mr McGovern further replied that the Council was working with the RWT to provide further car parking at the hospital by converting the existing staff car park into a pay and display car park, but this process was going to take several months to complete, with the aim for it to be ready in September 2015. There were also issues regarding the shuttle bus not stopping directly at the hospital and traffic management on the Brunswick Road which needed to be addressed separately.

County Councillor Mitchell then raised the following queries/comments:

- *Please could more detail be provided on the development of the Community Nursing services;*
- *It was reported at another Forum that the MIU would not be opening longer as the CCG were not prepared to provide the necessary funding;*
- *Understand that GP surgeries were now open for longer, would like to know where this has actually happened;*
- *Concerned that more cuts to patient care will happen if a balanced budget has to be achieved.*

Mr Donald provided the following responses:

- The CCG have been working with the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Partnership (SSOTP) to redesign the Community Nursing service so that the area is better covered. This has been helped by the University Hospitals North Midlands (UHM) Trust providing funding of £1m, although the CCG will have to self fund the services from 2016/17.
- The opening hours of the MIU were reduced to reflect the lack of usage and to also save money. It was expected that the RWT will operate the MIU at the same level as at present, however should they wish to open it for longer then the CCG will not provide the necessary funds. From 1 April 2015 Staffordshire Doctors will take on out of hours support (to cover most of the period when the MIU is closed), thus meaning that support will be provided more locally than at present.
- GPs/primary care services were not commissioned by the CCG, but directly by NHS England.
- Solutions were continually being explored in order to reduce the budget deficit, including reducing management costs by £500,000 and working with RWT to try and take £2.5m out of the current contract.

Cllr. R. Todd commented that the shuttle bus service between Cannock and New Cross hospitals was poorly advertised, therefore not being well used.

Mr McGovern replied that this issued had been raised at the recent Cannock Forum with the representative from RWT, who was then going to check if details about the bus services were being included in the patient information letters.

Cllr. R. Todd then commented that the low usage of the MRI machine at Cannock hospital needed rectifying given it was costing £750,000 a year to have in place.

Mr Donald agreed that improvements were needed, and he had discussed this matter with the Chief Executive of the RWT.

Cllr. Gamble raised concern that efficiencies gained as a result of financial pressures usually led to cuts in services, so wanted to reassurance that this wouldn't happen.

Mr Donald replied that at present most CCG funding was spent on acute hospitals/trusts which was unsustainable, so changes needed to be made to focus more on preventative work and non-hospital based services where possible. Should those aims be achieved, then service cuts would not be required.

Cllr. Gamble then commented that the Council's Health Scrutiny Committee was still awaiting responses to a number of questions it has raised with the CCG about their Recovery Plan.

Mr Donald replied he would look into this matter and ensure responses were provided.

Cllr. Toth raised the following comments:

- *Consider that the CCG can't manage its budgets, so this either needs to be admitted or the CCG needs to ask central government for more resources.*
- *Concerned that the CCG seems to be "proud" that the previous hours at the MIU won't be reinstated, thus causing greater pressure on A&E departments in the wider area.*
- *Issues regarding GPs support and access need addressing.*
- *Backlog of cancelled operations also needs to be addressed.*

Mr Donald provided the following responses:

- In respect of budget matters questions keep being raised with the appropriate bodies about the level of funding being allocated to the CCG as it does not match what is required due to Cannock being considered an area of deprivation;
- The gap in MIU service provision as a result of its decreased opening hours has been mostly covered by the improved out of hours service offered, with their being only a two hour period in the mornings where no services are provided.
- Agree with the concerns about GPs access, so have been pushing for the GPs in the District to work as three 'networks', based around the areas of Cannock, Rugeley and the southern villages in order to provide extra appointments for patients. The network approach has seen some success so far, with Cannock achieving the highest targets for flu immunisation and dementia diagnosis.
- Regular meetings were being undertaken to try and resolve the issues of A&E visits and operations backlogs. Better support provided by frontline ambulance teams has helped to reduce the impact on A&E services.

7. Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust (RWT) Update

The Chairman drew attention to the following written update which had provided by Sultan Mahmud, Integration Programme Director for the RWT in advance of the Forum:

"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 9th 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 10th 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 16th January 2015, Gynaecology transferred on 9th February 2015. The Gynaecology team had worked closely with colleagues from University Hospitals of North Midlands Trust (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 9th 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."

Mr McGovern raised that compared to twelve months ago, this update provided 'good news', as it showed the future of Cannock hospital had been secured, but recognised more work still needed to be done to fully utilise its services. In relation to the recent Express & Star newspaper article about the shuttle bus service, RWT have confirmed that the service was currently operating on a six months trial basis, which commenced on 9 February 2015, and its usage would continue to be monitored during that time whilst the number of services provided by Cannock hospital increased.

8. Questions for Staffordshire County Council Highways Department

Mrs C. Ballett – Local Resident

"Could I please have an update on my complaint about the state of road and footpaths in Rawnsley Road. Six to eight months after the work was done to tar and chip the road there are many bare patches on the surface of the road and most of the chippings are on the footpaths, drives and in the gutters. My lawn has many chippings on it which means they have jumped over my wall. This may mean I will have to claim for a new lawnmower and my car's paintwork. It must be awful walking along the footpaths which are covered with chippings. The chippings in the gutters will end up blocking the drains.

I am not aware of anyone coming to see the problem or to clean it up.

One worry is that due to the poor road surface of bare patches, ridges and plies of loose chippings down the centre of the road, we will go back to having accidents every week or so outside our homes like we did years ago (we have the photos). The accidents stopped when the road was re-surfaced."

Mark Keeling, Community Infrastructure Liaison Manager, has provided the following response:

"The Surface Dressing programme forms is a preventative maintenance treatment used to prolong the serviceable life of significant lengths of carriageway across the county.

The process of applying a bituminous binder topped with aggregate chippings, effectively seals the road from the ingress of water and restores the necessary skid resistance to the surface.

Inevitably, despite concerted sweeping operations, the process does lead to loose chippings after the application, however we were unaware of any defects within the new surface or existing excess chippings.

An inspection will be carried out as soon as possible.

Any problems or defects within the public Highway can be reported directly to the Staffordshire County Council Contact Centre on 0300 111 8000 or highways@staffordshire.gov.uk “

Mrs Ballett commented that the footpaths and road had been swept properly now, but the overall condition of the road surface was still poor.

Mr McGovern replied that the County Council had suffered some initial problems since the new contractor took over day to day responsibility of highways maintenance, but the County Cabinet member for Highways had spent a day with District Cllr. Alcott to see at first hand some of the highways related issues in the area.

County Cllr. Mrs Mitchell advised that she and Cllr. Adamson (in his County role) regularly updated the Highways team on issues, and whilst the project in place was good, the required funding was not available due to budget cuts at the County Council.

9. Questions for Cannock Chase District Council

9a. Councillor G. Ball – Update on Hednesford Town Centre

The Chairman referred to the following update which had been provided by the Planning & Economic Development Services Manager in advance of the Forum:

“Following the acquisition of the Victoria Shopping Park by Aviva at the end of last year, the new owners have been made aware of a number of issues associated with excessive litter and the need to improve the landscaping areas. Similar discussions will be initiated with Tesco who are responsible for the bulk of the car park at the Victoria Shopping Park, and also with Aldi with reference to the Chase Gateway development.”

Cllr. Ball commented about the continued poor state of the land situated in the car park at Hednesford train station.

Mr Wisehall replied that members of the Heart of Hednesford Restoration project and others had taken a walk around Hednesford to identify where improvements could be made. In respect of the train station car park, he had been advised by the clerk of the Town Council that London Midland were receptive to improvements being made.

Cllr. Toth queried whether the Council could go to the sites affected, clean them up and then bill the businesses concerned?

Mr McGovern replied that such legislation was in place, however this method was only used as a last resort when other approaches had not been successful. The Council had a good relationship with the business concerned, but would seek to take further action if the matter was not adequately resolved after six months.

9b. Councillor G. Ball – Update on Hednesford Park

Tony McGovern, Managing Director, provided the following update:

- *Pathway and hard works were still underway but on target to be completed by the set deadline;*
- *Resurfacing of the Rugeley Road car park had been recently completed;*
- *Design plans were being drawn up for the children's play area, with a target opening date of August 2015;*
- *Designs for the new Pavilion were now also in their final stages, with the tender process due to commence late March/early April 2015;*
- *A café will also be included in the Pavilion, and subject to a separate tender exercise;*
- *The flooding issues reported at the previous Forum were still being pursued.*

Cllr. Gamble requested an update on access to the park's war memorial.

Mr McGovern advised that no date was in place at the moment, however the relevant plans had been considered and approved by the Planning Control Committee.

Mr Wisehall requested an update on the Hednesford signal box.

Mr McGovern replied that at present there were not enough funds available to open it, although grant funding could be applied for, and it may be some time before all of the necessary funding was obtained. Additionally, Staffordshire Police had provided a list of requirements to make the box safe for public use.

Mr Wisehall advised that it may be worthwhile contacting Chasewater Light Railway staff as they had expertise in restoring former signal boxes.

10. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 30 June, 2015, location to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 8:15pm

CHAIRMAN