

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
RUGELEY AND BRERETON COMMUNITY FORUM
HELD ON TUESDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER, 2014 AT 7:00 P.M.
IN THE MAIN BAR AREA, RUGELEY ROSE AND COMMUNITY CENTRE,
TAYLOR'S LANE, RUGELEY

PRESENT: Councillors:

Grocott, M.R. (Chairman)	
Bennett, C. (Vice Chairman)	
Bottomer, B.H.	Molineux, G.N.
Jones, R.	Whitehouse, Miss. S.

Cannock Chase Council Officers:

Mrs. J. Aupers	Head of Governance
S. Partridge	Democratic Services Manager

Representatives from the following organisations:

Staffordshire County Council	M. Lucas, County Highways
Rugeley Town Council	Various
Brereton and Ravenhill Parish Council	Various
The Landor Society	Mrs. M. Kettle
Friends of Etching Hill	Mr. and Mrs. G. Brookes
Police	PC Nick Smith; Special Sgt. Kevin Lee

Local Residents

Approximately 8

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from CCDC Councillors Mrs. A. Allt; A. Dudson*; P.A. Fisher; J.P. Johnson; and A. Lovell.

Apologies were also submitted on behalf of SCC Councillors A. Dudson*; and G. Martin; the Ven. Simon Baker; the Rev. Preb. Michael Newman; and a number

of Town / Parish Councillors.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Notes

The notes of the meeting held on 23 June, 2014 were accepted as a correct record.

4. Matters Arising (Not Otherwise Covered on the Agenda)

(Item 14.) Community Litter Picks on Etching Hill – Geoff Brookes, Chair of Friends of Etching Hill, advised that the issue was in respect of path clearances, not litter picks.

(Item 5) Town Centre Inspection Route Walkabout – Cllr. R. Jones advised that he and other Western Springs Ward Members were still awaiting an invitation to walk the inspection route with a Highways Inspector. Mr. Lucas advised that he would follow up on this matter.

Bow Street Nursery Site (Matter from meeting of December, 2013) – Cllr. C. Bennett advised that he was pleased to inform the Forum that an agreement had been reached for the local Air Cadets to use the site on a temporary licence for practice drills etc.

5. Questions for Staffordshire Police

No questions had been submitted in advance, but the Police representatives invited questions and comments from the floor.

Mr. Brookes advised that the Police had been very helpful with issues on Etching Hill. Cllr. Jones commented that there was a litter problem near one of the schools; and he had concerns about potential drug use in some of the little culverts.

A local resident advised that the area in the vicinity of the Ferndown Shopping Centre, Green Lane, was much improved and youths / anti-social behaviour appeared to be much less of an issue than was previously the case.

Mrs. Cooney advised of ongoing anti-social behaviour as a result of youths gathering at / in the multi storey and indoor car parks. They were intimidating towards older people and she was aware of them being present as late as 3.50 a.m. on occasion. Cllr. Grocott advised that he was aware that Arts Development staff, who were involved in an initiative in the area, had also reported feeling intimidated by some of the youths present.

The Police confirmed that they were aware of the issues and were taking action to reduce / eradicate the problem, however, they needed to rely on members of the public reporting incidents. In this regard, they requested that incidents be reported on 101.

Thanks were also given to the Police for their assistance with the Rugeley 10K run.

6. Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Services

No questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting for the Fire and Rescue Services, consequently no representative had been sent to the meeting.

No matters were raised from the floor to be fed back.

7. Staffordshire County Council Highways

No questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting for the County Highways Department, however, a number of items were raised from the floor. M. Lucas, Highways Engineer, was present and agreed to try and address the matters, or take them away to liaise with relevant colleagues.

Further to matters raised at the previous meeting, concerns about overgrown vegetation and low hanging branches. Mr. Lucas acknowledged the issue and commented that it had been an exceptional year for plant growth. Some of the issues would be the responsibility of land owners / householders, while others would fall to the County and District councils. Examples given included Taylor's Lane, vicinity of former Aelfgar School; and Peakes Road / Woodcock Road; Fairmount Way; Rider's Way. Neighbourhood teams were working with colleagues at the District Council and the issues were being addressed in a methodical manner; however, with limited resources and the continued good growing weather, it was an effort to keep on top of the problem.

Concerns were also raised in respect of directional signs, which are variously out of date / defunct ("Shopmobility"); or pointing in the wrong direction (Heron Street). Concerns were also raised about a lack of adequate signage following the Horsefair public realm works.

Mrs. Cooney also commented on the town centre "Welcome gate", which was repeatedly hit by lorries making deliveries to businesses in Elmore Lane.

Mention was also made of trip hazards at various locations in the town centre (see earlier comment from Cllr. R. Jones). In respect of an issue concerning the path to the rear of Nat West bank, Mr. Lucas advised that he had visited and established that the path was a bridleway that belonged to the District Council, not the County.

A number of concerns were also raised about state of the road surface in the Horsefair public realm, where other utilities had undertaken works following completion, and general confusion about the meaning of some of the road markings and layout.

Mr. Lucas said he would note the concerns and liaise with the relevant teams at the County and District Councils.

9. **Question Submitted by Mr. G. Grant, Rugeley Town Councillor and Local Resident**

Mr. Grant had submitted the following question in respect of:

Partial Collapse of Bridge over Brook, Adjacent to Western Springs Road

“The bridge, which forms part of the Heritage Trail, has been in a state of disrepair for over two years. Various reasons were given for delays in progressing repairs, and temporary diversions have been put in place. When will permanent repairs be effected, and who is ultimately responsible for the bridge and its maintenance?”

The Chairman read out the following response, which had been provided by the Head of Economic Development:

“The bridge is the responsibility of the District Council. However the hydraulic performance of the Rising Brook on the Chase side of Western Springs Road is the responsibility of the land owners and the County Council and on the town centre side it is the responsibility of the Environment Agency.

The rebuilding of the bridge is affected by work being carried out by the Environment Agency (EA) which is currently completing a hydraulic modelling investigation into the existing flood risk from the Rising Brook. The EA have explained that ‘this comprises a detailed representation of the channel and floodplain of the Rising Brook, as well as representation of the Severn Trent Water sewerage network within Rugeley. We need this information to establish the criteria for any upstream flood storage solution within the Hagley Park playing fields area. As part of the study, we will be testing different arrangements of floodplain storage to test the effectiveness of removing downstream properties from flood risk areas. This modelling is anticipated to be completed late 2014.’

It is possible that the outcome of this investigation could change the profile of the brook and its hydraulic structures, such as weirs, in the vicinity of the bridge. Because of this and because the replacement of the bridge will be an expensive project complicated by the existence of white clawed crayfish, a protected species, it is prudent and sensible to wait for the outcome of the EA’s work before deciding on the work required to the bridge.

As well as the immediate implications for repair of the bridge, the Hagley Park flood relief scheme is critical to removing town centre properties from flood risk and to enabling new development in Rugeley town centre. Unfortunately we are in the hands of the EA for completion of the modelling work and for finding Government funds to implement a flood relief scheme. It would be helpful to have the support of the Forum, the Town Council and the County Council to assist the District Council in pressing the case for early completion of this work.”

The Forum lent its support to the Council’s case, and Mr. Grant advised that he would also seek the support of Rugeley Town Council at its next meeting.

10. The Old Chancel, St. Augustine's Church, Rugeley

Standing Item. The Venerable Simon Baker, Archdeacon of Lichfield, and The Reverend Prebendary Michael Newman had both submitted apologies, and there was nothing further to report.

The Chairman asked the Democratic Services Manager to contact the Diocese of Lichfield to advise that the forum would very much appreciate an update for its next meeting in December.

11. Mid-Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust

The Trust Directors had concluded that, as the Trust continued to be going through the Trust Special Administration (TSA) process, it would not be appropriate for them to attend the Community Forums at this time.

The Directors had said they would like to assure local people that services at both Cannock Chase and Stafford Hospitals continued as usual and they would encourage people to continue to use them as appropriate. If there were any specific questions on the day-to-day business of the hospitals, the Directors would be very pleased to email answers.

The Chairman then read out the following 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

Cllr. Bennett commented that he considered it unlikely that Directors would attend any of the Forums going forward. However, he advised that the Cannock Chase Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) were consulting on their proposals for End of Life Care and Oncology Care, and would be holding a public meeting at the Leahall Miners Welfare Club on Thursday, 18 September, 2014.

12. Any Other Business

Children's Play Area, Green Lane – Darren Rowlands, a local resident advised the forum that he was seeking its support to make an approach to Morrisons, for a contribution towards redevelopment of the children's play area. Morrisons were in the process of redeveloping the former Moderation public house, which was opposite the play area, into a supermarket. (Mr. Rowlands had previously been advised that, unfortunately, it was not possible under the circumstances to apply a S.106 or similar development agreement on the site, as it only amounted to a change of use.)

The forum was generally supportive of the suggestion, and Cllr. Bennett suggested that local Ward Councillors could request a site meeting with Morrisons to discuss the possibility of either making a contribution or undertaking improvement works themselves as a gesture to the community.

Mill Green Designer Village Development – Cllr. R. Jones advised that there was to be a public display / consultation in respect of the above development to be held in the Rugeley Town Council offices.

Etching Hill – Mr. Brookes advised that the Friends of Etching Hill were due to meet at 7.30 p.m. on Thursday, 11 September, 2014, with the Chairman of the Charity for the Provision of a Recreation Ground for Inhabitants of the Ancient Parish of Rugeley.

13. Forward Agenda for Future Meetings

None.

14. Next Meeting

Monday, 8 December, 2014. Venue: Rugeley Council Chamber.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.

CHAIRMAN