

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CANNOCK COMMUNITY FORUM
TUESDAY 15 JUNE 2010 AT 7.00 P.M.
AT CIVIC CENTRE, CANNOCK

PRESENT: Councillors:

Alcott, G. (Chairman)
Kraujalis, J.T. (Vice-Chairman)

Allen, F.W.C.	Mitchell, C.
Bennett, Mrs. D.J.	Morgan, C. W. J.
Davis, Mrs. M. A.	Thomas, D.
Freeman, M.P.	

Staffordshire County Councillors:

County Councillor J. Rowley
County Councillor P. Corfield

Cannock Chase District Councillors:

Councillor G. Adamson

Cannock Chase Council Officers:

Mr. S. Brown, Chief Executive
Mr. A. Lancaster, Planning Policy Manager
Mrs. W. Rowe, Senior Committee Officer

Also Present

Sgt. Gibbs, Deputy NPU Commander, Cannock Police
Mr. D. Wright, Staffordshire County Council Highways,
Representative from the Press
Local Residents (approximately 9)

1. Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

Councillor G. Alcott was appointed Chairman and Councillor J.T. Kraujalis was appointed Vice-Chairman for the forthcoming municipal year.

2. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D.I. Dixon, M.R. Green and Mrs. H.M. Sutton, Mark Powell, South Staffordshire PCT and Inspector Shannaghan, Staffordshire Police.

4. Notes

The notes of the meeting held on 17 March 2010 were agreed as a correct record.

5. Questions for Staffordshire Police

Sgt. Donna Gibbs, the new NPU Commander for Cannock introduced herself to Forum Members.

The Chairman raised the issue of inconsiderate parking along Station Road opposite McGeough Street, Hednesford. He had reported the problem to Staffordshire Police and the situation had improved for a while but the parking had now reappeared. He asked the Police to make another visit and speak with the offender.

6. Highway issues arising from the previous meeting:

Update on the progress of resurfacing

David Wright, Staffordshire County Council Highways, advised the Forum that Hamelin Street had now been resurfaced. The resurfacing of Cannock Road and Park Road would commence shortly at the expense of the contractor. It was explained that a list of roads that were due to be resurfaced was available and anyone wishing to obtain a copy should contact the Clerk.

The Forum was advised that a cycle lane was due to be installed along part of Cannock Road. Members asked how this would affect the resurfacing. David Wright confirmed that the cycle lane would be done after the resurfacing of the road had taken place.

Confirmation of the number of Highways Inspectors employed by the County Council

David Wright confirmed that the County Council employed 2 Senior Highways Inspectors, 16 Highway Inspectors and 6 Inspectors who were responsible for looking after the networks (i.e. public utilities such as gas).

The 2010/11 Preventative Maintenance Programme

The Forum was advised that a copy of the 2010/11 Preventative Maintenance Programme was available and anyone wishing to obtain a copy should contact the Clerk.

The issue of salt stocks running low during the bad winter was raised and David Wright was asked to confirm whether the County Council had any plans to increase their stocks in case of another bad winter. He confirmed that the County were doubling their salt stocks and were currently filling each location to capacity.

7. Issue from previous meeting – Clarification of the costs of employing the Marketing Specialist to compile the Citizen's Panel

The Chief Executive stated that Kathryn Cooper, the PR & Marketing Manager had advised that the Citizen's Panel was made up of 1100 residents who represented a cross section of residents within the District. The Panel was used for a variety of reasons, for example it was recently used to assess whether blue wheeled bins were preferred to the blue boxes for recycling. There was usually a good response rate of around a half. He explained that recent surveys had cost £3,600 and £2,700 respectively and there was a budget of £5,000.

Maureen Freeman asked whether the work could be undertaken by the PR and Marketing Team rather than paying outside contractors' vast amounts of money. She considered the public should have a greater say in how tax payers money was being spent.

The Chief Executive confirmed that £2,500 of the £5,000 budget was used to cover the costs of employing the Marketing Specialist. He explained that this was cheaper than employing someone in-house to carry out the work. Information regarding Council spending was included within Chase Matters and the Council's website also published a breakdown of spending. He stated that the new Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Eric Pickles had indicated any Council spending over £500 should be published. Therefore the Council would aim to do this through their website. He confirmed that communication was crucial and that consultants were used sparingly as the Council could not afford them.

8. Cannock Chase Local Development Framework – Core Strategy – Pre Publication Consultation

A short presentation was given on how people could comment on this document, which, at this final non-statutory consultation stage, sets out the future planning policies and proposals for the District from now until 2026. A handout was provided to Forum Members.

Mr. A. Lancaster, Planning Policy Manager informed the Forum that the Core Strategy was the key planning policy document in the Local Development Framework which would replace the existing Cannock Chase Local Plan. It would shape the way the District accommodated new development and determine how the existing natural and built heritage could be preserved and enhanced between now and 2026.

There were 14 policy topics which covered:-

- the overall strategy
- design of new development
- social inclusion and health living
- housing land provision
- housing choice
- employment land provision
- a balanced economy
- sustainable transport
- town centres
- biodiversity and geodiversity
- Cannock Chase Special Area of Conservation
- landscape character and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- historic environment
- climate change and sustainable resource use

The consultation period commenced on 1 June 2010 for a period of 6 weeks and responses should be received by 13 July 2010. Exhibitions would be held at 13 venues throughout the District from 3 June until 28 June 2010. The Core Strategy Pre Publication Draft and supporting documents would be available for inspection at the Civic Centre during normal office hours. They could also be viewed and downloaded from the Council's website, www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/planningpolicy and comments could be submitted online via this address as well as by post or email.

Concern was expressed with regards to the proposed abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategy and

the affect this would have on the Core Strategy.

9. Highway issue submitted by a local resident, Mrs. Bagnall:

Speeding and on street parking issues along Huntington Terrace Road

Mrs. Bagnall raised concern regarding speeding along Huntington Terrace Road. She advised that the speed humps were of little effect as they did not slow the traffic down. Vehicles were speeding along Cannock Road, they didn't slow down at the traffic island and continued to speed along Huntington Terrace Road. Parked cars had been damaged, a telegraph pole had been knocked down and a car had gone into a shop. She had spoken to the Police regarding her concerns who had advised her to bring it to the attention of the Community Forum.

The Local Ward Councillor, Chris Mitchell reiterated the concerns expressed by Mrs. Bagnall and explained that a petition had been collected by local residents. She handed this petition to David Wright from Staffordshire County Council Highways. A further copy was handed to the Clerk to pass onto Staffordshire Police. Councillor Mitchell considered that action should be taken to address the concerns being raised and asked that the County Council Highways Officer contact her direct.

Local Councillors commented that the situation was dreadful at the mini island as no-one stopped; it was an accident waiting to happen. It was considered that the speed humps were ineffective and someone was going to get hurt. It was explained that there were problems with speeding in Arthur Street and John Street as well and action should be taken to address the speeding problem in this area.

The Chairman explained that a partnership approach was necessary to address speeding issues. The Police and County Council Highways should get together to tackle the issues being raised.

Mrs. Bagnall advised that she had spoken with Staffordshire Police yesterday following an incident with a speeding motorbike where a school child had almost been run over.

Concern was expressed that double yellow lines and cycle lanes would encourage speeding as there would be less parked cars to slow the traffic down. David Wright advised that he would speak with the Project Engineer regarding the concern expressed about the cycle lane.

In response to the concerns raised David Wright explained that traffic calming had been installed along Huntington Terrace Road a number of years ago. He would request that a speed count be undertaken along Huntington Terrace Road towards the bottom end to establish the actual traffic speed. The current traffic calming would be checked to ensure that the speed humps still complied with the required standard as they may have settled over the years. He confirmed that the speeds humps went across the whole road along Albert Street and Princess Street but were staggered along Huntington Terrace Road. This was due to Huntington Terrace Road being a bus route. He would take on board the issues and concerns raised at the meeting and report back with a response at the next meeting of the Forum in September.

Forum Members considered it was unfortunate that the representative from Staffordshire Police was no longer present at the meeting to discuss this matter. It was requested that the Police be asked whether they would consider remaining to the end of future meetings in case any Police issues arose.

10. Highway issues submitted by a local resident, Gordon Taylor:

State of fence guards around the trees in Westbourne Avenue – missing bolts

Mr. Taylor explained that trees and fence guards had been installed along Westbourne Avenue a while ago. However, the fence guards around the trees were missing some bolts and were lying at a strange angle. Highways had been advised in April 2009 but no action had been taken.

David Wright advised that this matter would be dealt with in the next couple of weeks.

Parking issues around the traffic island in Cardinal Way

Mr. Taylor stated that the traffic island in Cardinal Way was partly grassed and contained daffodils. Since the school had increased pupil intake vehicles had been parking in the circumference of the island and school buses were riding over it. He considered that the school had a lot of ground that could be used to make a parking area.

David Wright commented that remedial works could be undertaken and he would be liaising with Officers regarding a planting scheme in the island to help improve the situation.

Parking issues in Westbourne Avenue when there are events/PTA's at Cardinal Griffin School

Mr. Taylor explained that vehicles parked along Westbourne Avenue when events were held at the school. Some vehicles actually obstructed access to resident's driveways. Residents did not want double yellow lines as some did not have driveways and used the road to park their vehicles. He felt that the school should make land available for parking. He stated that the school had advised parents/visitors to the school to use the Leisure Centre car park but they didn't want to walk. Visitors were also parking in the zig zag area in Cardinal Way.

County Councillor P. Corfield, Chair of the Joint Parking Committee advised that Head Teachers considered that land should be made available within school grounds for pupils to play and did not want any vehicles parking inside the school area as there was a risk that pupils could get knocked down. He commented that ignorant parking outside schools was a common problem. He understood why residents would not want double yellow lines but stated that there was a limit to what could be done to tackle this problem.

A local Councillor asked whether anyone had spoken to the Head Teacher to establish whether land could be made available for parking at the school during these peak times. Councillor Corfield stated that he would raise the issue of parking during PTA meetings/events at the Joint Parking Committee and approach the Head Teacher to discuss the matter with him.

The Chairman stated that all schools had parking problems outside their schools and it had been a problem for many years. Head Teachers would rather spend any spare money on school improvements, teachers and pupils than spend it on providing parking areas.

David Wright commented that some 6th formers travelled to school in vehicles but it was the school policy that they were not allowed into the school grounds. He would speak with Steve Schofield from the District Council regarding parking in the zig zag area of Cardinal Way. He understood that the Head Teacher advised parents/visitors to use the Leisure Centre car park when there were PTAs/events on at the school. He explained that it was difficult to see what could be done other than try to educate parents and visitors to the school to be more courteous when parking their vehicles.

11. **Forward Agenda for Future Meetings**

The Chairman explained that suggestions for issues to be discussed at future meetings of the Forum were sought and a form was available for this. It was explained that appropriate representatives would be invited to attend and debate issues and answer any questions.

The following item had been agreed at the meeting:

- Update on speeding and on street parking issues along Huntington Terrace Road - Staffordshire County Council Highways Officer and Staffordshire Police be requested to attend.

Other items:

- Proposed incinerator being built at the Poplars Landfill site – request for a Staffordshire County Council Waste Disposal Officer to attend along with a representative from BIFFA

12. **Date of Future Meetings**

The Forum noted that future meetings of the Cannock Community Forum would be held as follows in the Council Chamber:

- 14 September 2010
- 24 November 2010
- 16 March 2011

The meeting closed at 8.05 pm.

CHAIRMAN