

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
HEATH HAYES, NORTON CANES AND RAWNSLEY COMMUNITY FORUM
TUESDAY, 23 JUNE 2009 AT 7.00 P.M.
AT HAYES GREEN COMMUNITY CENTRE, HAYES WAY, HEATH HAYES

PRESENT:
Councillors

Jillings, J. F. (Chairman)
Bernard, J. D. (Vice-Chairman)

Ansell, Mrs. P.A. Bullock, L.W.
Bernard, Mrs. A. F. Mawle, D. L.

Other Cannock Chase Councillors

Ball, G. D.

Cannock Chase Council Officers

Mrs. C. Bowker, Committee Officer
Mr. D. Hoare, Director of Service Improvement
Mr. S. Shilvock, Head of Environmental Health

Also Present:-

P.C. Dean Cooper, Cannock Police,
Inspector Pat Shannaghan, Cannock Police
Paul Gerrard, Incarace (Hednesford Hills Raceway)
Deane Wood, Incarace (Hednesford Hills Raceway)
County Councillor J. Rowley
Representative from the Press
Local Residents (approximately 15)

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs. D. M. Todd and Rugeley Police).

1. Appointment of Chairman and Vice Chairman

Councillor J. F. Jillings was appointed as Chairman and Councillor J. D. Bernard was appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Community Forum for the forthcoming Municipal Year

(With the agreement of the Chairman it was agreed that the order of the agenda be changed in order that the representatives from Incarace could leave earlier)

2. Hednesford Hills Raceway

The Head of Environmental Health informed the Forum that Mr. Paul Gerrard and Mr. Deane Wood from Incarace were present to answer any questions. He reported that substantial negotiations had taken place to endeavour to alleviate concerns that had been raised relating to Hednesford Hills Raceway, particularly noise issues. A new Code of Practice would be attached to the lease, which it was anticipated would be signed within the next few weeks. It had been agreed that no more than 19 event days would be held per year for the next two years, this would then be reviewed. No more than 2 consecutive 2 day championship events would be held if needed, 1 of right and a second could be applied for if required. Practices would take place on the morning of the one day events and would last for 1 hour. However, when the 2 day events were held a practice would take place on the Friday, but would be for only a short period. The events would close at 8.30 pm, not 10.00 pm. It was reported that Incarace was adhering to the revised Code of Practice already. The Code of Practice would be available on the Council's website, when the new lease had been signed, together with a list of the dates when events would be held. Monitoring would continue to take place on a regular basis.

Mr. Gerrard and Mr. Wood informed the Forum that they would not allow the revving of engines and would check, amongst other things, silencers.

Concern was raised with respect to parking problems, particularly when the firework event was held. Mr. Gerrard and Mr. Wood explained that cones would be set out to stop people parking inappropriately. A traffic plan would be developed by Incarace, the Council and Police to address this matter.

Residents thanked the representatives from Incarace for listening to them, together with Ward Councillors and Officers. The Forum also thanked the Council Officers for the work they had carried out. It was considered that the Raceway was good for the area and tourism and that a compromise had been achieved which boded well for the future.

3. Notes

Concern was raised with respect to the safety issues relating to the Cannock and Hednesford Roads, Heath Hayes and the Wimblebury Road and that Zebra Crossings should be erected on John Street to the Community Centre and on the Cannock Road. It was explained that non reportable accidents occurred, mainly back end shunts. County Councillor John Rowley undertook to investigate this matter. It was requested that an item be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Forum.

The notes of the meeting held on 3 March 2009 were agreed as a correct record.

4. Chase Shaping Consultation – Core Strategy Preferred Options

The Chairman read out the following statement:-

“For anyone who hasn’t seen the Chase Shaping Consultation pull-out in the Chronicle or the smaller advertisements in the Mercury & Post, it is not too late to have your say about the future planning of Cannock Chase District to 2026. Copies of the Preferred Options summary consultation document are available to take away this evening and the full document is on the website www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/planningpolicy . Comments are welcome until the end of June.”

Members were concerned that if housing developments took place to the south and east of Heath Hayes that the villages would become merged and that it was important that Heath Hayes and Norton Canes remained as separate villages. It was explained that from the Core Strategy consultation process residents had indicated that they considered developments should be spread across the whole of the district. Central Government required the Council to provide land for housing and employment.

5. Inspector Pat Shannaghan – Staffordshire Police

Inspector Pat Shannaghan informed the Forum that he had been in the Police force for 23 years and was now Commander of the Cannock Neighbourhood Policing Unit (NPU). He requested that a standard item be placed on the agenda for the forum for Police issues. The Chairman agreed and welcomed that Police would be present at future meetings.

Inspector Shannaghan informed the Committee that Staffordshire Police had a good performance record, however, it was considered that the needs of the community were not always being met. Chris Sims, Staffordshire Chief Constable had adopted a different approach to policing, the aim of which was to deliver a service more in line with the type of policing the community wanted. A local Councillor reported that Norton Canes Parish Council considered that PC Dean Cooper had made a big difference to their area. PC Cooper explained that he was part of a team which worked well together.

The Forum was advised that Staffordshire Police had undertaken reviews to reduce bureaucracy and paperwork.

The Committee asked if the new Chief Constable when appointed was likely to change policing policies. Inspector Shannaghan explained that Staffordshire Police was at the forefront of modern policing and he did not consider that policies would change dramatically.

A local resident expressed concern that when a burglary had occurred a resident who had witnessed what was taking place was reluctant to come forward. It was explained that witnesses could be protected by various means to help overcome this issue. P.C. Dean Cooper explained that he received many telephone calls from people providing information and that the Police needed the support of the public which they often received. Cannock Chase had relatively low levels of crime and was a safe place to live.

A resident explained that in past years when going on holiday he had informed the Police that his house would be empty and patrols were carried out. He had reported this again to the Police and they did not seem interested. Inspector Shannaghan explained that this may be due to cutting down on bureaucracy and that neighbours often looked after properties when people were away. The resident reported that he had completed a Council form with contact details relating to his alarm and when contacted the Council no one seemed to be aware of this matter. The Head of Environmental Health explained that his department kept a register of who to contact if alarms were set off and it was periodically advertised requesting that this information be provided.

The Chairman thanked Inspector Shannaghan and P.C. Dean Cooper for attending the meeting.

5. The position with respect to Bye Laws being introduced to prevent parking on grass verges.

Councillor L. Bullock expressed concern regarding the state of the grass verges along the Cannock Road, Heath Hayes as they made the area look shabby. He explained that in the Birmingham area there were notices displayed which stated that it was an offence to park vehicles on the verges and this, therefore, did not take occur.

The Director of Service Improvement explained that he had requested legal advice, but further clarification was needed with respect to this matter. He would provide an update when this had been provided.

It was requested that the car parking attendants undertake patrols in Chapel Street as problems occurred in that area with cars being parked inappropriately.

6. What is the position with respect to Councillor I. Carr's absence from the Heath Hayes East and Wimblebury Ward

Mr. C. Collis expressed concern with respect to Councillor Carr's absence from England to reside in Sardinia. He explained that residents had asked about his absence while he was out campaigning for the county council election. He considered that if Councillor Carr was to resign a by election would have to be held and that it could have taken place when the county council/European elections were held at a reduced cost to the taxpayer.

It was explained that Councillor Carr had attended a meeting on 23 February 2009 and under the six month rule he was still entitled to be a Councillor. It was reported that he had stopped claiming his allowances.

Councillor Bullock reported that Councillor Carr had unexpectedly been given the opportunity to retire and had always intended to spend time in Sardinia. He was contactable by email and was in contact through the Members' portal. He had returned to England but not when meetings had been held.

7. Forward Agenda for Future Meetings

The Chairman informed the Forum that forms were available to be completed for questions to be raised at the next meeting.

8. Dates of Future Meetings

The Chairman agreed that due to its close proximity to today's meeting, the next meeting of the Forum would be moved to 8 September 2009. The following meetings would be held on:-

Wednesday, 25 November 2009

Tuesday, 16 March 2010