

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
RUGELEY AND BRERETON COMMUNITY FORUM
WEDNESDAY, 16 JUNE, 2010 AT 7.00PM
AT RUGELEY ROSE THEATRE, TAYLORS LANE, RUGELEY

PRESENT: Cannock Chase Council Forum Members:

Councillors

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| Davies, D.N. | Molineux, G.N. |
| Grocott, M.R. | Williams, A. |
| Jones, R. | Williams, Mrs. P. |

Cannock Chase Council Officers:

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| Mr. S. Shilvock. | Head of Environmental Health |
| Mr. S. Partridge | Democratic Services Manager |

Representatives from the following organisations:

Staffordshire County Council
Staffordshire Police / Staffordshire Police Authority
Rugeley Town Council
Brereton & Ravenhill Parish Council

Approximately 7 local residents

1. Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

Councillor D.N. Davies was elected as Chairman, and Councillor M.R. Grocott as Vice Chairman.

2. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cannock Chase District Councillors: N.K. Stanley; R.G. Meaden; and B. Williams.
A number of local residents had also sent their apologies.

3. Declarations of Interest

None.

4. Notes of the Previous Meeting

The Notes of the meeting held on 22 March, 2010 were accepted as a correct record.

5. Matters Arising

44. Gritting / Salting During Bad Weather / State of Repair of Footpaths

- (i) Councillor A. Williams sought confirmation of a local newspaper headline he had seen suggesting that Staffordshire County Council salt / grit stocks were being increased to overcome the problems suffered previously. Mr. Wayne Mortiboys, Staffordshire County Council, was unable to confirm this, but advised that a “lessons learnt” exercise had been undertaken, and report was being prepared for the Regeneration and Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee that was due to meet on 11 June, 2010*, which he would expect to include recommendations to this effect. However, it was also worth remembering that the Government had taken over responsibility for redistribution, as necessary, of salt / grit stocks.

** The Committee resolved that the proposal for opening salt stock increases from 13,500 to 30,000 tonnes and retaining the same level of precautionary route treatments be supported.*

- (ii) Councillor Grocott noted that he was pleased to see some footpaths repairs had begun, but he was concerned that the footpath outside Chancel School did not appear to be being done, and it was in a particularly bad condition.
- (iii) Councillor Grocott also noted that while Arthur Wood place had been resurfaced, an area off it had not been.
- (iv) Councillor A. Williams recorded his thanks to the County for carrying out repairs in Brookside Lane.
- (v) A member of the public commented that a good job had been done on West Street (between Heron Street and Lichfield Street), but that dog fouling remained an issue, particularly in the lane at the rear of St. Joseph’s Church. Mr. Shilvock advised that he would follow up the latter point.
- (vi) In response to a question from Councillor Davies, Mr. Mortiboys advised of the County’s inspection regime and scheme of fault categorization.

6. Questions for Staffordshire Police

With the consent of the Chairman, this item was moved up the agenda.

Anti-Social Behaviour: Hagley Fields / Diners Nob

Councillor A. Williams advised that he had received complaints from residents in respect of anti-social behaviour in the above area, and sought assurances from the Police that the matter was being dealt with; particularly in light of the upcoming school holidays.

Sergeant Judith Browning gave assurances that an Action plan was already in place, which included school visits and communications with parents (via the schools), to raise awareness and ask the question "Do you know where your kids are?"

Anti-Social Behaviour: Shaftesbury Road

A local resident advised Sergeant Browning that her son lived in Shaftesbury Road and this was an ongoing problem, particularly on Friday nights, with pre-teens banging on doors and throwing objects at properties.

Anti-Social Behaviour: Etchingill Area

Councillor Jones requested that the top of Etchingill be added to the Police patrols as it was a known haven for teenage drinkers.

7. Questions for Staffordshire County Council

No questions had been submitted in advance for the Staffordshire County Council representative, Mr. W. Mortiboys, to prepare responses to, however, questions were invited from the floor.

Area Road Signage

Councillor Ray Jones advised that there was no "You are now entering" sign at the entrance to Slitting Mill, whereas Fair Oak has one, and it isn't a proper Ward, Parish or village. Furthermore, while he had submitted a request on Clarence, he had no way of knowing what progress, if any, was being made in dealing with the matter. This latter concern was echoed by a number of others.

8. Any Other Business

Former Mineral Railway Bridge Over Canal

Councillor Jones raised concerns in respect of a former (mineral) railway bridge (Lea Hall Bridge) spanning the canal in Rugeley, which had become a favoured gathering place for youths. It was believed the bridge was owned by Advantage West Midlands who had promised to demolish it some time ago; however, to date, this had not happened. Councillor Jones said he believed the delays might be due to power cables attached to the bridge, but would like to know for sure if this was the case and, if so, when a resolution could be expected.

Street Warden Service

Mr. G. Grant sought clarification of the structure of the Street Warden Service. Mr. Shilvock advised that the responsibilities of the 7 Street Wardens were being revised such that 3 would concentrate on community engagement duties, while the focus of the work of the other 4 would shift to environmental enforcement duties.

Canal Footpaths

Mr. Grant also raised concerns about the state of canal footpaths, some of which were crumbling. Mr. Grant was advised that the canal footpaths were the responsibility of British Waterways, rather than the District or County Council.

Rugeley Charter Fair

Councillor Grocott extended his thanks as Chairman of Rugeley Town Council to Cannock Chase DC's PR & Marketing Team and Environmental Services for supporting the Charter Fair.

Nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour, Subway at Crabtree Way

In response to a resident's question, Mr. Mortiboys advised that improvement works had been undertaken at the subway, including removal of wing walls, and repainting the subway white to brighten it up and make it feel more open and less intimidating. However, it was acknowledged that there remained a litter nuisance, and provision of litter bins was not a County responsibility.

A resident asked why the subway was not simply filled in. Mr. Mortiboys advised that this was not a favoured policy, as the benefits of having them were considered to outweigh the disbenefits and the cost of providing an alternative.

9. Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy Pre-Publication Document

Mr. Antony Lancaster, Planning Policy Manager, advised the Forum of the current consultation on the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy Pre-Publication document, and distributed an information sheet which provided further details of the topics covered and the consultation process that was being followed.

10. Future Agenda Items

The Chairman reminded the Forum of the need to submit written questions in advance of the meeting to Officers of the Council in order to allow Officers time to gather information and prepare a comprehensive response. Forms were available for this purpose at the Forum.

11. Next Meeting

The Forum was asked to note the date of the next meeting as 29 November, 2010.

Councillor Grocott suggested that, to avoid confusion, the Rugeley Rose should become the default venue for future Forums, unless there was a particular need, e.g. because of a local issue, to hold one in another part of the area. There was general consensus that this to this suggestion.

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm.

CHAIRMAN