

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
CANNOCK COMMUNITY FORUM
NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
TUESDAY 11 MARCH 2008 AT 7.00 P.M.
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PRESENT: Councillors:

Alcott, G. (Chairman)

Allen, F.W.C.	Faulkner, B.J.
Bennett, Mrs. D.J.	Freeman, M.P.
Davis, Mrs. M.A.	Morgan, C.W.J.
Dixon, D.I.	

Cannock Chase Council Officers:

Mr. W.L. Trigg, Deputy Chief Executive
Sgt. P. Davies, Cannock CDRP Partnership Development Unit Police Manager
Mr. N. Hackney, Partnership Development Officer
Mrs. W. Rowe, Senior Committee Officer

Also Present

Mr. D. Botfield, Divisional Highway Manager, Staffordshire County Council
Representatives from the Press
Local Residents (approximately 55)

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C. Mitchell, J.T. Kraujalis, D. Thomas and J. Toth and PC Wardle, Staffordshire Police)

1. Notes

The notes of the meeting held on 10 December, 2007 were agreed as a correct record.

2. Item requested at previous meeting – Lichfield Road area - update

Sgt. Davies, Partnership Development Unit Police Manager, explained that since the last meeting there had been a number of multi agency operations to deal with the problem of boy racers in the area. He outlined the offences and prosecutions that had resulted from these operations.

He further advised that problems with boy racers existed in the Nottingham area which had resulted in injunctions being imposed at various locations in an attempt to deal with this issue. He commented that he would like something similar imposing in this area.

He confirmed that the Police would continue to provide a high level of resources and work in

conjunction with other agencies in an attempt to address the problems being experienced.

Dave Botfield, Staffordshire County Council Highways, advised that following discussions with the Staffordshire Casualty Reduction Partnership a decision had been made not to place a speed camera on either Eastern Way or Lichfield Road. The reason for this decision was due to the number of recorded accidents being below the required level. He further advised that mobile safety cameras would continue to be located at both sites and it was proposed to extend the times of these visits until later in the evening.

A local resident informed the Forum that the situation with boy racers along Eastern Way and Lichfield Road had improved during the last few weeks due to the intense Police action. She thanked the Police for their assistance in this respect. She explained that a noise monitoring test had been undertaken in her home and that the results had showed that noise levels were in excess of the guidelines. She sought confirmation as to whether more effective screening was to be provided along Eastern Way.

Dave Botfield advised that he had received a copy of the noise monitoring report and had sought clarification regarding the inappropriate fencing. A response was awaited as to whether the noise was coming from a particular direction in order to decide on the correct positioning of any screening. He had also asked the contractor to provide a quote to repair the fencing.

Dave Botfield stated that he had requested that the sewer trench along Lichfield Road be realigned in the new financial year. Officers were also looking to relocate the crossing points near to the bus stop in Lichfield Road.

3. Item requested at previous meeting – Update on Parking and One Way System – Wolverhampton Road (including confirmation of the current position regarding the funding for the traffic scheme)

Dave Botfield advised that it was intended to introduce a one way system in Wolverhampton Road. However, no funding was yet available but every effort would be made to implement the scheme within the new financial year. He stated that the introduction of decriminalised parking enforcement in February 2009 may assist in addressing the parking issue in this area.

Confirmation was sought regarding the £90,000 of funding for the implementation of the scheme. The Chairman stated that he had been provided with a verbal response in respect of this matter and that the money had been a developer contribution in the form of a Section 106 Agreement. The money had been used to implement part of the scheme towards the top end of Wolverhampton Road and Newhall Street as part of the High Green development.

4. The New Highway Management Programme for 2008-09

Dave Botfield provided the Forum with information in respect of the Highway Management Programme for 2008-09. He advised that highway maintenance was a key priority for Staffordshire County Council, however, budgets for maintenance works were competing for resources with other vital services. He then outlined the assets that the County Council had to maintain and explained that there was considerable demand for maintenance works with limited resources available. A significant proportion of maintenance works were undertaken on a priority basis. The various methods of assessing works included visual inspections, scanner surveys, defect graph and defect reporting system – CLARENCE.

He further advised that the maintenance budget was divided into structural maintenance, routine and

reactive maintenance, preventative maintenance, integrated transport schemes and winter maintenance.

He then outlined the structural maintenance programme for 2008-09 as follows:

Principle Roads

1. A460 Rugeley Road, Hednesford – carriageway reconstruction
2. A34 Stafford Road, Cannock – provision controlled crossing point and carriageway

Non Principle Roads B/C

1. Lime Lane, Little Wyrley – Drainage investigations
2. Brownhills Road, Norton Canes – Footway and cycleway reconstruction

Unclassified Roads

1. Burnthill Lane, Rugeley – Re-kerbing and footway reconstruction together with carriageway reconstruction
2. St Pauls Road, Rugeley – carriageway resurfacing
3. Laburnum Avenue, Cannock – carriageway reconstruction
4. Bevan Lee Road – carriageway overlay

Footways Schemes

1. Hunter Road, Cannock
2. Rothbury Green, Heath Hayes
3. Pye Green Road, Cannock

IT Programme

1. Kingsmead, Heath Hayes – Safer Routes to Schools scheme
2. Chase Heritage Trail – completion
3. Cardinal Griffin High School – Safer Routes to Schools – cycle storage
4. Old Hednesford Road/Hawks Green Lane, Cannock – local safety scheme
5. A5190 Lichfield Road/Devon Road junction – local safety scheme
6. Signing improvements – Cannock Town Centre
7. BQP Route Hospital circular – Stafford/Cannock
8. Post Rugeley bypass – Eaton Lodge to The Arches

Arising from this concern was expressed that the proposed development on the Stadium land, the development at Pye Green Valley and the development on the land west of Pye Green Road would have an impact on the Pye Green Road, Cannock Road, Chadsmoor and Stafford Lane. It was requested that further information with regards to the impact of these proposed developments on these roads be submitted to the next meeting.

Dave Botfield advised that consideration would be given to the impact on the highway as and when planning applications were submitted in respect of these developments. Until this time he would be unable to report any information to the Forum.

It was therefore considered that further information be submitted to the next meeting outlining parking and speeding issues on the Pye Green Road along with information relating to the

deactivated speed cameras. Additionally, information was requested in respect of controlling the traffic along the Stafford Road after the junction of Pye Green Road towards Cannock.

5. **Consultation on the Sustainable Community Strategy for Cannock Chases**

Nick Hackney, Partnership Development Manager provided the Forum with a presentation outlining the consultation process relating to the production of the Sustainable Community Strategy for Cannock Chase.

A final draft of the Sustainable Community Strategy would be submitted to the next meeting of the Forum in June prior to its approval at the Council meeting on 25 June 2008.

Members of the public were welcome to be involved in the consultation process and anyone interested should contact the Partnership Development Unit at the Council.

6. **Cemeteries/Headstone Testing Open Day**

Les Trigg, Deputy Chief Executive read out the following statement relating to Cemeteries/Headstone Testing open day:-

“A memorial management open day will be held at Wolseley Road Cemetery in Rugeley on 19 March 2008. There will be three programmes throughout the day,

10.00 am
12.00 noon
2.00 pm

The programme will consist of a welcome/introduction, a demonstration of testing a memorial and what options there are for failed memorials and a talk from a memorial mason on fixing a failed memorial”.

The Chairman stated that at a previous Forum meeting it was requested that a public awareness day be held in Cannock. He would therefore request Councillor Mrs. A. Bernard, the Healthier Communities, Housing and Older People Portfolio Leader, to arrange for a headstone testing open day to be held in Cannock Cemetery.

7. **Question from Mrs. Hazel Heath – Do local authorities/County Council’s communicate with the Primary Care Trust as the County Council are closing the care homes and the Trusts are closing hospital wards? In Cannock Hospital there were originally nine wards now there will be three (maybe two if Littleton Ward goes – this ward has been refurbished with money left by an ex-miner in his will) – Can we have some clarification on this matter?**

The Deputy Chief Executive read out the following statement provided by Mid Staffordshire NHS Trust:

“Littleton Ward at Cannock Chase Hospital is to remain open – but will change to become a unit where patients are cared for as a stepping stone to returning into the community.

Advances in healthcare mean that the acute hospital needs fewer beds. This is because of the increasing trend to treat patients as close to their homes as possible and efforts to reduce the length of time that people need to stay in hospital after they are admitted.

“This is all great news for patients and our staff. It did mean that doubt was cast over the future of Littleton Ward for a while because we need fewer acute beds,” said Martin Yeates, Chief Executive of Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust.

“I am more than aware that the question mark on the future of the facility was causing anxiety for local people as well as our staff and I am therefore delighted that, following extensive discussions with South Staffordshire Primary Care Trust (PCT), a solution has been found that means Littleton ward will remain open at Cannock Chase Hospital.

“We are now consulting with staff about the decision to change Littleton from an elderly care ward to an intermediate care unit.”

An intermediate care ward is a unit where patients who have recovered enough to be discharged from an acute hospital bed but are not yet well enough to go home can be cared for until arrangements can be made for their future care, whether in their own home, in a nursing home or elsewhere in the community.

Stuart Poyner, Chief Executive, South Staffordshire PCT said: “This approach to the provision of care means that we will provide patients with appropriate support, which will enable them to go home and live independently rather than have continued care in hospital or residential care.”

Littleton will be run jointly by South Staffordshire PCT and Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust and staffed by nurses and other healthcare professionals from the hospital but supported by the intermediate care team from the PCT and key staff from Social Services.

The decision follows discussions between Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust and South Staffordshire PCT about the future of the 28-bedded ward.

The PCT has agreed to invest around £900,000 to keep Littleton Ward open for at least two years, while further work is carried out to provide more intermediate care services in the community”.

Arising from this a Member suggested that consideration be given to establishing liaison meetings between representatives from Cannock Chase Council, Staffordshire County Council and the NHS Trust. However, the Forum noted that the public were welcome to attend meetings of the Healthier Communities, Housing and Older People Select Committee which were held approximately every six weeks. It was explained that representatives from the PCT and Mid Staffordshire Hospital attended these meetings and consideration was given to reports from the PCT and Mid Staffordshire Hospital. It was noted that these meetings could be used to discuss issues affecting the hospital and the PCT. Reference was made to a statement made by Councillor J. Beddows, Chairman of the Healthier Communities, Housing and Older People Select Committee which outlined a number of developments at Cannock Hospital over the last few months.

8. Question from Mrs. Hazel Heath – Could you tell me the cost of printing 380,000 copies of the Staffordshire County Council magazine and the annual total sum of expenses paid to the 62 County Councillors featured in this Council Magazine?

The Deputy Chief Executive read out the following response provided by Staffordshire County Council:

“In response to the question regarding the cost of the Staffordshire Magazine I can confirm that for a countywide coverage of six editions the total cost is £240,000. Further information about the Staffordshire Magazine can be obtained from Jackie Mckinlay 01785 223121 or Jackie.mckinlay@staffordshire.gov.uk The only figures I have for members allowances are for the financial year 2006/07. The current financial year’s figures will not be available for a month or so. For 2006/07 County Councillors received £526,414.40 in allowances. Additional allowances of £314,616.32 were paid to Councillors who took on extra duties over and above their normal divisional responsibilities. More information can be obtained about Members Allowances from Lynne Hemborough 01785 223121 or lynne.hemborough@staffordshire.gov.uk. “

9. Questions from Dave Cartwright:

As a resident of the Old Penkrige Road I have recently received a letter from Staffordshire County Council proposing the reopening of the children’s home on the Old Penkrige Road. Could you please ensure that I have response from the relevant persons to the following questions?

- (A) Why after correspondence received in 2005 confirming the location of the children’s home in the Old Penkrige Road was unsuitable and now the Council consider it to be suitable?**
- (B) What was the full cost of the purpose made ‘new’ children’s located on the Walsall road Cannock and how many young people was it designed to accommodate and how many are housed at present?**
- (C) Have Cannock Council made Staffordshire County Council aware of the catalogue of problems surrounding the history of this children’s home when located on the Old Penkrige Road?**
- (D) Have Cannock Council and Councillors been formally involved with the consultation process to express concerns of the local residents to the history of this home?**

The Deputy Chief Executive read out the following statement in response to the four questions which had been provided by Staffordshire County Council:

“(A) It continues to be the belief of the Council that the children’s home on Old Penkrige Road is unsuitable for purpose. This led to our decision to close the home in 2005. The current proposal is to open the staff house on the same site. This building would require an extension in order to make it fit for purpose. It is proposed that the current building would be extended to provide accommodation for a maximum of 4 young people. This home would be staffed at all times and would have a minimum of 2 staff on duty at all times (this would include 2 waking night staff).

(B) The home on Walsall Road Cannock was constructed, and is currently managed through a Public Finance Initiative (PFI). The Council rents this property through the PFI, and they in turn provide the maintenance of the home.

The home was designed and built to provide accommodation for up to for 10 young people. However, it has long been acknowledged that it is not practical to work with 10 young people who are experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties. This is why the council are proposing to only work with up to 4 young people in our children’s homes. It was also felt that

the PFI buildings had an institutional look and the homes external layout was designed with a leaning towards an institutional care model. Eg industrial kitchen etc

The Council had for a considerable time been looking at the need to relocate some of it's services that provide support and respite care to the young people with disability. The PFI home on Walsall Road was seen as fit for this purpose through it's design and location. The disability service took over the management of this home in 2006 and currently offer support to a considerable number of young people and their families within the community.

- (C) Staffordshire County Council and the previous Social Services Directorate were aware of some of the difficulties experienced by the residents surrounding the home on Old Penkridge Road. These have since been reaffirmed and articulated both in writing and verbally in the current consultation process.
- (D) We are currently in the process of public consultation which will enable local residents and Councillors with the opportunity to express concerns and share their views with the County Council. The consultation will end at the end of March and will consider all the information, views and concerns shared.

A number of residents attending the Forum outlined their concerns at the proposal to reopen the children's home in Old Penkridge Road. They also outlined the problems they had experienced and the anti social behaviour that residents had been subjected to for over ten years whilst the children's home in Old Penkridge Road was open.

The Forum noted that Staffordshire County Council had closed the children's home two years ago and relocated it to an alternative site. Residents feared the outcome of reopening the home in Old Penkridge Road and considered that the site should be sold off for residential development.

Councillor D. Dixon, the Staffordshire County Councillor for the area, advised the Forum that as Staffordshire County Council had taken a decision to close the home and sell the land two years ago he was therefore shocked to hear of the proposals to reopen the children's home in Old Penkridge Road.

He explained that he would be meeting with the appropriate Staffordshire County Council Cabinet Member tomorrow and would be reporting the concerns that had been raised at the Forum meeting. He would never support the reopening of the children's home and would be insisting that the County Council abide by their decision to close the home and sell the land. The Chairman requested that Councillor Dixon keep the residents informed of the outcome of the meeting.

The local Ward Councillors expressed their concerns at the proposal and offered their support to the residents. It was requested that Councillor Dixon also advise them of the outcome of the meeting.

The Chairman thanked the residents of Old Penkridge Road for bringing their concerns to the attention of the Forum. He outlined the importance for residents to make their objections to the County Council known in respect of the proposal to reopen the children's home and to object to the planning application for the extension to the building.

10. Update on Leisure Village

Christine Salmon requested an update on the Leisure Village. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that no update could be provided at the present time as the Leisure Village was dependant upon the sale of the stadium land. He commented that planning permission had been granted at the stadium

site and the sale of the stadium land was progressing. However, there were a number of issues which required clarification before the sale could continue.

Maureen Freeman, Friends of Cannock Park, commented that the land at Cannock Park was charity land and consultation with the Trustees and the public should be undertaken when the Leisure Village proposal progresses.

The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that he was aware of the position regarding Trust land and that Cabinet on 20 March 2008 would be considering a report on the progress on the BVTC issues.

11. Update on Cannock Park Golf Course Review

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that a review of Cannock Park Golf Course was being undertaken as part of the Council's Fundamental Service Review programme. Members of the Review Panel would be discussing the scope of the review and their concerns, the baseline information for the Golf Course (i.e. the current position) and benchmarking information. The third phase of the review would be to consider possible options for future delivery of the Golf Course. He advised that work was still in progress and the review had not yet concluded.

Christine Salmon, who had requested this item, stated that the Golf Course was part of Cannock Park and consideration should be given to the fact that the public use the park for recreational purposes and that charity land was included on the Golf Course. She therefore considered that both the public and Friends of Cannock Park should be consulted as part of the review.

Maureen Freeman asked that Friends of Cannock Park be provided with a copy of the report following the completion of the review. She also asked whether it was intended to consult the Trustees of the Park as part of the review. The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that the report on the outcome of the review would be a public document and a copy could be forwarded to Friends of Cannock Park. He stated that should any of the recommendations of the report affect Trust land the Trustees would be consulted accordingly.

Confirmation was sought as to whether those undertaking the review of the Golf Course were aware that a public footpath application had been submitted several years ago.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that he would ensure the relevant Officers undertaking the review were made aware of the comments that had been made.

The Deputy Chief Executive stated that he would write to Maureen Freeman, Friends of Cannock Park, to confirm the name of the link person between the Council and Friends of Cannock Park following the departure of Karen Bradford, Head of Culture and Major Projects.

Councillor Morgan stated that as a Member of the Golf Course Fundamental Service Review Panel he would ensure that the Panel were made aware that the Golf Course was on Trust land and that a public footpath application had been made.

12. Forward Agenda for Future Meetings

The following items were requested to be included on the agenda for the next meeting:-

- information outlining parking and speeding issues on the Pye Green Road along with information relating to the deactivated speed cameras

- information in respect of controlling the traffic along the Stafford Road after the junction of Pye Green Road towards Cannock

The Chairman informed the Forum that forms were available for completion for items to be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

13. Dates of Future Meetings

The Chairman advised that Forum meetings would be held as follows:

Monday 9 June 2008

Monday 1 September 2008

Monday 1 December 2008

Tuesday 24 February 2009 (not Monday 2 March 2009)