

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
HEDNESFORD COMMUNITY FORUM
TUESDAY 14 JUNE, 2011 AT 7.00 P.M.

AT THE MUSEUM OF CANNOCK CHASE, VALLEY ROAD, HEDNESFORD

PRESENT: Councillors

Adamson, G. (Chairman)
Grice, Mrs. D. (Vice-Chairman)

Ball, G.D.	Grice, Mrs. D.
Burnett, G.	Todd, R.

Other Councillors present:

Councillor Mrs. D. Todd
Councillor Mrs. L. Whitehouse

Officers: T. McGovern, Corporate Director
B. Phillips, Head of Planning and Regeneration
G. Watson, Economic Development Manager
Miss. J. Tunnicliffe, Senior Committee Officer

Also present: Members of the Public – approximately 15
Councillor A. Pearson, Hednesford Town Council
Inspector C. Ellerton, Staffordshire Police, Chase Division
Mr. M. Watkins, St Modwen
Mr. C. Price, Prosurv
Press

1. Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

Councillor G. Adamson was appointed Chairman and Councillor Mrs. D. Grice was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Hednesford Community Forum for the municipal year.

2. Apologies

No apologies were received.

3. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restriction on Voting by Members

<u>Member</u>	<u>Nature of Interest</u>	<u>Type</u>
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4. Notes

Arising from consideration of the Notes, a Hednesford Town Councillor referred to Minute 42. Brindley Crescent and asked if an Officer from Staffordshire County Council had visited the Crescent in respect of the problems which had been identified. Councillor D. Grice reported that she had met with Mr. Mortiboys who advised that the barrier across the footpath could be removed. It was left with Mr. Mortiboys to pursue this further.

The Notes of the meeting held on 10 March, 2011 were agreed as a correct record.

5. Questions for Staffordshire Police

The Chairman welcomed Inspector C. Ellerton, Staffordshire Police (Cannock Division) to the meeting.

Cotton Grove/Clarkes Lane, Hednesford

A local resident raised concern in respect of the Cotton Grove/Clarkes Avenue area of Hednesford. She was keen to know what initiatives there were to help combat anti-social behaviour, drug dealing and speeding motorists. She explained that drug dealing was occurring on a daily basis and she was currently keeping a log. She also stated that on occasions the Police targeted the wrong people.

Inspector Ellerton advised that there were anti-social behaviour hotspots within the District and regular patrols involved with the work of Operation Matrix. The Police also worked in partnership with the Fire Service and on occasions Youth Workers, Councillors and people from other organisations who would visit certain areas.

Inspector Ellerton encouraged all residents to contact Crimestoppers if they should need to, and indicated that he would speak with the Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) in respect of the problems particularly with reports of drug dealing at the back of Clarkes Avenue.

Pye Green Valley

A local resident explained that the construction of the road on Pye Green Valley, Hednesford was nearing completion, although there was a problem with it being accessed by travellers and being abused by motorcyclists.

Inspector Ellerton explained that the Police would normally consult with the landowner to try and move travellers on, and advised that he would raise the issue with Officers across the District with regard to motorcyclists.

The Chairman raised concern in respect of the access to the new road on Pye Green Valley as Staffordshire County Council had agreed to block the road off with concrete blocks. He asked that an Officer from the County Council be available to discuss this at the next meeting.

Tower Road, Hednesford

Councillor D. Grice explained that she had received numerous complaints regarding anti-social behaviour near the grassed open space by Tower Road, Hednesford.

Inspector Ellerton advised that he would raise this matter with the PCSO's and request that they check the area.

Hednesford Town Centre

A local Hednesford trader raised concern with regard to the congregation of 'gangs' around the town centre and local stores during the summer months. She explained that shop windows had been smashed and local stores targeted by shoplifters in the past. She also indicated that the PCSO's patrolled the area at the wrong times and more Police presence was needed especially on Friday nights.

Inspector Ellerton reported that a number of initiatives had recently taken place in Hednesford which included the youth bus which had been a success. He advised that he would liaise with the Joint Operation Group to try and undertake further engagement with young people.

Theft of Lead

A Hednesford Town Councillor highlighted the problem of lead theft around the area and brought to the attention of the Police the amount of building materials currently in Hednesford with the regeneration of the town centre.

Inspector Ellerton reported that he had reviewed the crime figures across the District and there had been no cases of theft within Hednesford for the last 7 days; however the previous week there had been 3 burglaries and a charge had been made in respect of one of these.

He also commented that there was a commitment from the Police to make sure that there was Police presence in certain areas.

6. Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service

The Chairman reported that there was no one in attendance from Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service and asked if contact could be made to establish why.

7. Relocation of the Aquarius Ballroom

The Chairman welcomed Mr. T. McGovern, the Council's Corporate Director to the meeting.

Mr. McGovern reported that he had met with the proprietor of the Aquarius Ballroom on 17 and 29 March, 2011 and an agreement was signed on 4 April, 2011. Following this, block booking of the Ballroom in the Civic Suite had been agreed to enable most of the Aquarius programme to be transferred to the Council which had commenced the end of May, 2011 with no impact on other users. He indicated that the licensing arrangements were to be

considered in respect of music and alcohol and advised that the Council's Ballroom could be booked for use by individuals, groups and organisations by contacting 01543 464391.

Councillor G. Ball requested an update for the next meeting in respect of how the arrangements were running between the Council and the previous tenant of the Aquarius.

8. Hednesford Town Centre Regeneration – Update

The Chairman welcomed Mr. M. Watkins, St Modwen Developments and Mr. C. Price, Prosurv to the meeting.

Mr. Watkins provided background information to the Forum and stated that consent had been given for both Phase 1 and Phase 2. He reported that a Section 106 had been exchanged and Tesco had now confirmed that they accepted the planning consent.

Mr. Watkins provided detailed maps/information which outlined both the Phase 1 development – Chase Gateway and Phase 2 – Victoria Shopping Park. He explained that current proposals for Phase 2 included a food store, a replacement community facility, a new drill hall for the Reserve Force Army Cadets, new bus facilities, and an enlarged car park of approximately 650 spaces. The replacement community facility would be located on the 1st floor and would be 10,000 square feet. ATP and the Aquarius would be demolished and hopefully the scheme would be in place by October 2012 ready for Christmas trading.

He reported that the Bingo Hall and the MoD Drill Hall would need to be re-located, with demolition proposed for late 2011, and it was hoped that completion of the new Bingo Hall and Drill Hall would be around October 2011.

Members of the public were then invited to ask questions regarding the information which had been provided.

A local town trader raised concern that the car park in Hednesford was originally scheduled to be closed for 6 weeks, although after 8 weeks it was still closed and this was having an impact on traders and their businesses.

Mr. Watkins and Mr. Price stated that they would investigate why the Cardigan Place entrance had been closed for longer than planned. They also reported that the development agreement provided for at least 50 car parking spaces on both Phase 1 and 2 during the building work. However, a local resident reported that complaints had been received stating that on Phase 1 some of the spaces were being occupied by workers from the site.

Mr. Price advised the Forum that he would speak with the Contractors on the site and Mr. Watkins would liaise with the Council to confirm when the Cardigan Place entrance to the car park would re-open.

Mr. Watson, the Council's Economic Development Manager reported that the bus station would be demolished and be replaced by extended bus lay-bys on the new alignment of Victoria Street. He explained that discussions had been held with Staffordshire County Council who were happy with the proposals for bus provision.

The Chairman reported that there had been many complaints in respect of the need for public conveniences within Hednesford. It was explained that the public conveniences in Hednesford which were maintained by the Town Council had now closed to make way for the new development.

Mr. Watson reported that there had been discussions with Tesco in respect of the public utilising their facilities when the store was opened. In the interim a temporary solution was required. He advised that Cabinet would consider a series of options at their meeting on 23 June, 2011 with a view to resolving the current situation.

A member of the public referred to the food store on Rugeley Road and was keen to know how this was progressing.

Mr. Watkins explained that planning consent had been agreed for a budget food store, although an operator had not yet been secured.

A member of the public raised concern in respect of pedestrian safety on the crossings at Market Street/Victoria Street.

Mr. Watkins referred to the detailed map and pointed out where the crossings would be situated. He advised that the current proposal involved a Zebra crossing near Market Street and a Toucan crossing near the park. The suitability of these was under review.

A member of the public asked if buses would be able to turn around in the absence of a new bus station.

Mr. Watson reported that the Council had consulted with Staffordshire County Council who was happy with the scheme; however he would look at individual services and if needed buses may need to be re-routed to resolve the problem. He also reported that requirements for pedestrian crossings was being looked at in detail and would report back to the next meeting.

A local town trader reported that people who visited the town centre and other traders were unaware of what developments were currently taking place.

Mr. Watkins reported that there was to be a hoarding around the Phase 1 construction and in the forthcoming weeks plans and images would be placed there for people to view.

Mr. B. Phillips, the Council's Head of Planning and Regeneration indicated that he was happy to make a presentation to the Traders Association in respect of the development, if needed.

9. Credit Union Survey

A survey had been made available at the start of the meeting to gauge interest in the establishment of a local credit union.

Councillor G. Ball requested that an Officer be available at the next meeting to discuss the possibility of establishing a credit union in the District.

10. Forward Agenda for Future Meetings

The Chairman reported that the next Forum was scheduled for Monday 5 September, 2011 and questions from members of the public should be submitted on the forms supplied.

11. Dates of Future Meetings

The Chairman confirmed the following date of the next Hednesford Community Forum:-

- Monday 5 September, 2011

CHAIRMAN

The meeting closed at 8.40 p.m.