

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL

**NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CANNOCK COMMUNITY FORUM**

MONDAY 1 SEPTEMBER 2008 AT 7.00 P.M.

IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PRESENT: Councillors:

Freeman, M.P. (Vice-Chairman-in the Chair)

Alcott, G.

Mitchell, C.

Bennett, Mrs. D.J.

Morgan, C.W.J.

Davis, Mrs. M.A.

Thomas, D.

Dixon, D.I.

Cannock Chase Council Officers:

Mr. P. Lloyd-Williams, Director of Governance

Mrs. W. Rowe, Senior Committee Officer

Philippa Carr, Domestic Violence Co-ordinator

Also Present

Mr. D. Botfield, Divisional Highway Manager, Staffordshire County Council

Mr. N. Miller, Staffordshire County Council Highways

Ms. M. Rollins, Chair of Chase PAIR's

Representatives from the Press

Local Residents (approximately 10)

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillors F.W.C. Allen and M.R. Green)

(Prior to the commencement of the meeting a minute silence was held as a mark of respect for Councillor B.J. Faulkner (Chairman of the Cannock Community Forum) who had recently passed away).

1. Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

Nominations were sought for the appointment of Chairman following the sad loss of Councillor B.J. Faulkner. Councillor M.P. Freeman was appointed as Chairman and Councillor Mrs. D.J. Bennett was appointed as Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

2. Notes

The notes of the meeting held on 9 June 2008 were agreed as a correct record.

With regard to Minute 3 Councillor Alcott advised that problems were still being experienced with regard to the speed of traffic along the Pye Green Road. He requested that information be provided to the next meeting outlining the following:

- Details of how many motorists had been caught speeding along the Pye Green Road in the last 12 months
- Details of how many motorists had been caught speeding by the Speed Cameras along the Pye Green Road in the last 12 months
- The accident figures along the Pye Green Road in the last 12 months

Councillor Alcott also stated that at the previous meeting he had raised the issue of the traffic lights by the Cemetery Road crossroads which only allowed 6 seconds for pedestrians to cross. He considered this should be extended to 12 seconds in order to improve the safety of pedestrians.

It was requested that representatives from Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire County Council (Speed Camera Partnership) be invited to the meeting to address these concerns.

With regard to Minute 2 Councillor Thomas asked whether the Deputy Chief Executive had investigated whether any funding was available in order to implement the traffic scheme along the Wolverhampton Road and surrounding area. The Director of Governance stated that he had been advised that the money allocated for the traffic scheme along the Wolverhampton Road and surrounding area had been spent on consultation. However, he confirmed that there was an outstanding sum of money in the Section 106 funds from the High Green Access and Area Improvement Scheme.

3. Items requested at previous meeting:

Update on Parking and One Way System for Wolverhampton Road and surrounding area

Dave Botfield, Staffordshire County Council advised the Forum that the County Council had now obtained funding to implement the one-way traffic scheme in the Wolverhampton Road area in this financial year. Residents in Wolverhampton Road, Newhall Street and Victoria Street had been consulted with the majority of residents being in favour of the proposed scheme. As residents in Victoria Street had raised concern regarding “rat-running” it was proposed that the entrance to the one way system would be backed up to Queen Street.

Detailed drawings were being prepared and it was anticipated that these would be on-site by Christmas. He confirmed that there were no proposals for residents parking within the scheme. However, further information on this issue would be made available under the agenda item relating to “Civil Parking Enforcement”.

4. Civil Parking Enforcement

The Forum received a presentation from Mr. N. Miller, Staffordshire County Council Highways Authority on Civic Parking Enforcement (CPE).

The presentation outlined that Cannock Chase Council would now have powers for parking enforcement and further powers for moving traffic offences were to be announced by Central Government. There would be a Penalty Charge Notice system for offences with motorists having a right of appeal to a Traffic Penalty Tribunal Adjudication Service. This new system would allow the Police to concentrate on criminality.

It was envisaged that the improved parking enforcement would increase the number of tickets issued from 7,000 per year by the Police to 80,000 across Staffordshire, with 9,000 being issued in Cannock Chase. This would lead to a better environment and prepare the way for growth in traffic and provide vital support to public transport. It was explained that the scheme would be self financing as the fixed fees payable under the Penalty Charge Notice would be spent on improving highways and highway safety in the

communities where the charges were issued.

Staffordshire County Council would be working in partnership with Cannock Chase Council, South Staffordshire District Council and Lichfield and Tamworth Borough Councils. A Staffordshire Parking Board and a Local Parking Panel would be established. Councils and their partners would decide the enforcement required and new traffic schemes would be introduced including residents parking zones.

The roles of the County Council, Staffordshire Police and the Local Parking Committee were outlined for the Forum's information.

The Forum was advised of the following advantages and disadvantages of Residents Parking Zones:

Advantages:

- Ensures available kerb space is for use by Permit Holders only
- Allows CPE Parking Attendants to take action against inappropriate parking
- Matches authorised parking to available kerb space
- If Residents Parking Zones applied and only appropriate areas chosen can solve residents parking problems

Disadvantages:

- There is a charge for Permits to contribute towards scheme costs and enforcement (expected to be in the order of £50 per year)
- Limited number of parking spaces available, residents may not be issued with as many permits as they want
- High levels of enforcement needed; this can only be provided when CPE powers are in force

The Forum discussed a number of issues arising from the presentation relating to Civil Parking Enforcement and the Residents Parking Scheme. Mr. Miller confirmed that any concerns regarding the Residents Parking Scheme would be addressed during the consultation process.

5. Presentation – Domestic Violence

The Forum received a presentation from Philippa Carr, Domestic Violence Co-ordinator, Cannock Chase Council and Mandy Rollins, Chair of Chase PAIRS Inter Personal Violence and Abuse Forum.

The presentation covered the following areas:

- Definition of Domestic Violence and sexual abuse
- Statistics
- Costs

The aim of PAIR's was to:

- Increase awareness within the community that domestic and sexual violence and abuse should not be tolerated
- To ensure that services were developed to meet victims' needs and agencies were able to respond appropriate
- To promote healthy relationships to children and young people to empower them to make positive choices and opportunities to disclose any abuse that may be affecting them.

It was explained that information packs were available which included useful helpline telephone numbers.

6. Changes to Electoral Arrangements

The Director of Governance read out the following statement:-

"Cannock Chase Council currently has 41 Councillors. A third of the Council seats are up for election every year. On the fourth year there are no elections.

The Council would like to know whether you would like this to change so that all 41 Council seats are up for re-election at the same time once every 4 years. A lot of councils already operate in this way. Some of the benefits and disadvantages of this change are mentioned below.

If the Council were to change from the current arrangements to elections for all Council seats every 4 years, this would mean that the next Cannock Chase Council election would be held in 2011 for all the seats. Those current councillors who would have been up for election in 2010 would have their term of office extended until 2011.

The advantages and disadvantages to having all council seat elections every 4 years are:-

Advantages:

- the Council has greater political stability as the turmoil of elections on a more frequent basis is reduced
- the cost of running elections is significantly less as it happens less often
- research has shown that more people vote when all 41 Council seats are up for elections rather than only some wards in the district

Disadvantages:

- the chances for a change of who is in control of the Council is reduced as elections are every 4 years
- there is less turnover in councillors and less regular opportunities for people to stand as councillors
- the cost of having to run elections more often

The Council is currently in the process of consulting local residents on the two options available and a questionnaire is available should you wish to respond. Please return your completed questionnaires to the Committee Officer at the end of the meeting or alternatively you can return them to the Council's PR & Marketing department at the address provided at the bottom of the questionnaire."

Following the statement, concern was expressed that it would be possible to complete and return a number of forms and it may be that the results of the consultation were not accurate.

The Director of Governance advised that the Council would decide what weight to apply to the results of the consultation exercise and Members would make their own decision He explained that the public consultation would be undertaken using the local press, Council's website, Members, Citizens Panel and Chase Matters.

7. The Members' Grant Aid Initiative Scheme

The Director of Governance read out the following statement regarding the Members' Grant Aid Initiative Scheme:

"Community groups and organisations have received a boost after their applications for grants from the Members' Grant Aid Scheme were approved by Cannock Chase Council's Cabinet on 17 July.

The groups and organisations to receive grants are:

- 1st Hednesford Scout Group - £100
- Cruse Bereavement Care - £34
- Bridgtown Community Centre - £375
- Chase PAIRS - £150
- Heath Hayes Cabin - £50
- Highfield Senior Citizens Club - £200
- Neighbourhood Watch (Brereton & Ravenhill, Cannock North, Cannock South, Cannock West, Heath Hayes East & Wimblebury, Hednesford Greenheath, Hednesford North, Hednesford South, Rawnsley, Western Springs - £2,855
- Prospect Village Residents Association - £60
- Relatives of Western Springs - £200
- Royal British Legion - £100
- Rugeley Police Boxing Club - £200
- Rugeley Rugby Club - £1,000
- Heath Hayes Neighbourhood Watch Speedwatch £165
- St Stephens Church Day Centre for Elderly People - £200

The aim of the Members' Grant Aid Initiative Scheme is to enable each Cannock Chase Council Member to put forward applications for funding in their particular ward that promotes the Council's objectives and priorities.

Each Member has an annual budget allocated to them to promote the CHASE objectives and the well-being of the residents within the district.

Applications can be made by individuals, organisations, charities, trusts, associations, partnerships or any other incorporated or unincorporated body.

A supply of applications forms will be available at the meeting. They are also available from Irene Tilsley, Accountancy Unit, Cannock Chase Council on telephone 01543 462621 or a "Grant Aid Application Form" can be downloaded from the Council's website.

Anyone wishing to apply for grant aid funding should submit their application form to the appropriate Ward Member who will then decide whether the application should proceed".

8. Forward Agenda for Future Meetings

The Chairman sought issues to be discussed at future meetings. Councillor Alcott had requested that information be provided outlining the following:-

- Details of how many motorists had been caught speeding along the Pye Green Road in the last 12 months
- Details of how many motorists had been caught speeding by the Speed Cameras along the Pye Green Road in the last 12 months
- The accident figures along the Pye Green Road in the last 12 months

(It was requested that representatives from Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire County Council (Speed Camera Partnership) be invited to the meeting)

In addition, the following items were requested to be included on the agenda for the next meeting:-

- Extension of parking facilities at Bideford Way Shops
- The reasons for the reduction in bus services in the District provided by Arriva – representatives from Staffordshire County Council and Arriva to be invited to attend
- Explanation as to why there were no facilities available for the recycling of Waste Cooking Oil

9. Dates of Future Meetings

The Chairman advised that Forum meetings were scheduled to be held as follows:

Tuesday 25 November 2008

Tuesday 24 February 2009

The Forum was advised that an there was exhibition situated in the Council Chamber on the Local Development Framework seeking the public's contributions to where development should be located in the District.