

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL

RUGELEY AND BRERETON COMMUNITY FORUM

NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON

TUESDAY, 19 APRIL 2005 AT 7.00 P.M.

AT ST. PAUL'S NEW CHURCH HALL, LICHFIELD STREET, RUGELEY

PRESENT: Cannock Chase Council Forum Members

Councillors

Grocott, M.R. (Chairman)

Easton, R. (Vice-Chairman)

Molineux, G.N.

Stanley, N.K.

Whitehouse, Mrs. G.M.

Williams, A.

Williams, B

Cannock Chase Council Officers

Mr. P. Garbett - Head of Planning

Mr. S. Conroy - Regeneration

Mr. J. Heminsley - Development Landscape and
Conservation Manager

Mr. R. Chumley-Roberts - Regeneration

Representatives from the following organisations:-

Staffordshire County Council

Rugeley Town Council

Press

Local Residents (approximately 12)

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D.N. Davies and Staffordshire Police).

1. NOTES

The Notes of the meeting held on 25 January 2005 were agreed as a correct record.

2. HIGHWAYS ISSUES ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Condition of Pavements in Rugeley Town Centre

Mr. John Debens, Staffordshire County Council, reported that the pavements in the town centre had been inspected and that although the pavements appeared to

be in good repair, there were areas where standing water existed and these would receive attention.

Local residents, together with Members of the Forum, indicated that the problem existed near to the open market at the bottom of the town centre. Gaps had appeared between the brickwork causing problems for pushchairs, wheelchairs and shoe heels.

Poor Lighting in St. Michael's Area, Brereton

Mr. Debens reported that there were a number of streets in the area which would have streetlight improvements undertaken within the next seven year period. The programme of works was proposed as follows:-

Roads West of Main Road, Brereton

Coalpit Lane	(IARP Phase 14 – Sept – Nov 2006)
Wattfield Close	(IARP Phase 14 – Sept – Nov 2006)
Redbrook Lane	(IARP Phase 14 – Sept – Nov 2006)
St. Michael's Drive	(IARP Phase 14 – Sept – Nov 2006)
Birch Lane	(AARP Block 01 – 2008-2012)

Roads East of Main Road, Brereton

Lodge Road	(IARP Phase 14 – Sept – Nov 06)
Seabrook Road	(AARP Block 01 – 2008-2012)
Priory Road	(AARP Block 01 – 2008-2012)
Coalway Road	(AARP Block 01 – 2008-2012)
Thompson Road	(AARP Block 01 – 2008-2012)

IARP = Initial Asset Replacement Programme

AARP = Annual Asset Replacement Programme (Installation dates to be established)

A local resident indicated that the lighting in the alleyway between Redbrook Lane and The Green, next to the supermarket, was in poor condition and needed to be upgraded to include better lighting. In addition, a number of alleyways in the St. Michael's area required hedgerows to be cut back in order that the existing lighting was more effective.

Improvement Scheme for Access to the Pear Tree Estate – Progress Report

Mr. Debens reported that the scheme was continuing to be developed and there was very little to report since the last meeting of the Forum.

Rugeley Eastern Bypass – Progress Report

Mr. Debens reported that the construction of the bypass was currently underway and that a Community Liaison Officer, Susan Moss (tel. 07786 667625) had been appointed.

It also was reported that the northern part of the bypass passed through a biological site of interest and that arrangements were in place to protect the local habitat of the site.

A local resident requested that any old tyres from the heavy plant machinery could be donated to local schools to use as playground material.

3. PLANNING ISSUES ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Anti-Social Behaviour at Chetwyn Coppice – Progress Report

Mr. John Heminsley, Cannock Chase Council, reported that this matter was raised at the Cannock Chase AONB Advisory Partnership Meeting on Wednesday, 26 January 2005. The Advisory Partnership included representatives from the Local Authorities (District and County Councils), Forestry Commission, Parish Councils and representatives of various interest groups.

The issue of motorbikes being ridden on and around the Cannock Chase AONB was a matter of concern in other areas as well as Chetwyn Coppice. The Forestry Commission as landowners were aware of the problem which breaches the Forestry Commission bylaws. Unfortunately, they do not have the resources to police all their landholdings to deal with such behaviour all the time. Future work of the AONB Advisory Partnership and the AONB Unit, in implementing the AONB Management Plan, would include education and awareness raising to inform people of the importance of Cannock Chase and of the need to respect the countryside.

In addition, the matter was also raised at a meeting on 22 February 2005. This meeting between representatives of the AONB Partnership, Staffordshire Police, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service and Crimestoppers was held to discuss what can be done to reduce anti-social behaviour in the AONB.

Whilst the emphasis would be on prevention of arson and dumping cars, other forms of anti-social behaviour will be tackled. Information leaflets giving relevant telephone numbers would also be distributed and Staffordshire Police agreed to be the central point of contact for complaints (Tel: 0800 555111). Furthermore, an education/activity programme was being worked on to look at ways of involving young people in the Chase in a more positive way.

Proposed Development at Wellington Drive, Rugeley – Progress Report

Mr. Heminsley reported that the Council were currently progressing the final design proposals for the proposed development at Wellington Drive. The development comprises of restaurant, shops and car parking.

4. POLICE ISSUES ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chairman, Councillor Grocott, advised the Forum that representatives from the Police would not be attending to deal with those issues arising from the previous meeting due to the General Election taking place on 5 May 2005. It was reported that the Police had provided the Forum with the following items outstanding from the previous meeting.

Problems with Parking at St. Michael's Shops/Junction

The Police have advised that they have received a number of complaints regarding parking outside the shops and that they would be continuing to monitor the situation.

Problems with Motorbikes at Land to the Rear of Madden Close/Sutton Close

The Police have advised that they are aware of problems of off-road motorbikes causing problems on the Chase at the rear of Madden Close/Sutton Close.

Unfortunately, they have very little capacity in being able to deal with off-road motorbikes due to health and safety requirements restricting the way in which the Police can apprehend criminals "in the act".

They have advised that anyone with information on the identity of those involved or a description of the motorbikes concerned should contact PC Norman on tel. (01785) 234317.

5. ADOPTION OF SURFACE AND FOUL WATER SEWERS AT THE PEAR TREE AND DRAYCOTT ESTATES IN HAGLEY

Mr. Bob Chumley-Roberts and Mr. Scot Conroy of the Council's Regeneration Service provided the Forum with background information on the sewer system on the Pear Tree and Draycott Estates. It was reported that both estates consisted of both public and private sewers. As the responsible authority, Severn Trent Water were responsible for the upkeep and repair of public sewers. Private sewers, on the other hand, were the responsibility of the owner/occupier of the property. In order for private sewers to be adopted by Severn Trent the sewers must be of a certain standard, known as an adoptable standard. The sewers on the Pear Tree and Draycott Estates were not up to an adoptable standard and therefore could not be adopted by Severn Trent Water.

It was also reported that the layout and size of the sewers caused a number of problems on the estate. The landscape of the estate and the subsequent layout of the sewer system meant that sewers became frequently blocked.

The Forum discussed what options could be pursued in order to resolve the situation. One option discussed was to replace the existing sewer system with a system which was of adoptable standard. However, it was estimated that the cost of such works could run into a significant amount of money. There were also issues around the type of waste deposited into the sewerage system by

residents. It was suggested that leaflets could be posted to them advising them of the most appropriate waste to deposit.

Although the Forum recognised that there was no short-term solution to the problem, it was agreed that officers from the Council would explore what options could be pursued in order to try and resolve the situation.

6. OVERHANGING TREES IN THE HAGLEY WARD

Mr. Debens reported that the County Council were aware of problems with overhanging trees within the Hagley Ward and that maintenance works were scheduled to take place. The Forum advised that the following areas were of a particular problem:-

- Pear Tree Crescent
- Davey Place
- Bedford Place
- Hollyoake Place
- Madden Close
- Bottom of Burnthill Lane

It was also reported by a local resident that the public footpath which stems from the bottom of Huntsmans Walk to the football pitches at Green Lane required clearing.

7. FORWARD AGENDA FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Suggestions of issues to be discussed at future meetings of the Forum were sought. It was explained that appropriate representatives would be invited to attend and debate the issues and answer any questions.

It was agreed that the following items be included on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting of the Forum and that appropriate representatives be requested to attend to respond to these issues.

- What is the name of the contractor responsible for grounds maintenance?
- With the amalgamation of Western Springs Infants and Junior Schools, are there any proposals for the buildings and surrounding school grounds?
- Request for communal skip in Madden Close and Sutton Close, Rugeley.
- The need for a cycle path from Rugeley to Stafford to get to the National Trust Centre.
- The need for road markings at the junction of Burnthill Lane/Hill Street, Rugeley.
- Why are the Planning Officers failing to conserve and enhance the Cannock Chase AONB?

- Why are AONB Unit Officers not routinely being asked to supply views/objections regarding all AONB area planning applications in the same way as the Highways Agency etc?
- Why are Planning Officers trying to classify obviously rural areas as urban/suburban and therefore invoking PPG3 procedures with town density characteristics, even in AONB locations?
- Why do Planning Officers not assist residents in their defence against planning applications to the same degree as they assist developers in achieving the application?
- Why are the Planning Office not using Computer Aided Design software to portray the submitted development as an aid to their own and Councillors' decision making? The cost could be recovered by an increase in the planning application fee. This could prevent yet more of the problems arising that have been so obvious in the past years.

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The following dates of future meetings of the Forum were noted:-

- 13 July 2005
- 31 October 2005
- 25 January 2006
- 25 April 2006

CHAIRMAN