

## Central Area Committee – 17 June 2008

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Minutes of the meeting of the **Central Area Committee** held on **17 June 2008** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr Mrs C A Weston

Cllr M R Carter  
Cllr Mrs L M Cox  
Cllr M Maddocks

Cllr D G Stansby  
Cllr J Thomass

### **ALSO PRESENT**

Cllr B Hazelwood – Hockley Parish Council  
Cllr Miss A Marriott – Hullbridge Parish Council  
A Prophet – Essex Police

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

G Woolhouse - Corporate Director (External Services)  
A Bugeja - Head of Legal Services  
M Power - Committee Administrator

Representing the Hockley Parish Plan Group: D Fryer-Kelsey

## **208 AREA COMMITTEE – INITIAL BUSINESS**

### **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs R Brown, Mr P A Capon, Mrs H L A Glynn, K H Hudson, J R F Mason, P R Robinson, M G B Starke and Ms S A Thallon.

### **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **Appointment of Vice-Chairman**

Cllr M R Carter was appointed Vice-Chairman.

At this point the Committee adjourned the formal meeting to move into the community forum to hear contributions from members of the public.

## **209 COMMUNITY FORUM**

Requests for information had been received in advance of the meeting and a document summarising these, together with further questions received, is appended.

In the respect of the question received from K Ilott regarding the removal of disabled parking bays in Spa Road, it was advised that the matter had been

looked at by the relevant access groups and the District Council and a decision had been made as to the appropriate location for the bays. The County Council had advised that any future requests would be considered on their merit.

In respect of the question received from K Illot regarding visibility problems at the entrance to the Somerfield car park in Spa Road, Hockley, it was advised that any concerns about safety in the location could be raised with the County Highways District Engineer, who would be in attendance at the next meeting.

Regarding the question raised at the meeting by K Muncer in respect of the 'MASSIVE Project', the Chairman advised that she would talk direct with Ms Muncer after the meeting to establish the situation regarding Conservative Party support of the Project. In response to a question relating to funding, the possibility of inclusion of the Project as a subject for discussion at the District Council's Member 'Budget Awayday' was suggested.

Regarding the question from 'vinvolved', it was stressed that a wide range of opportunities existed in the District for young people to get involved in schemes and volunteering. Money was available in the budget and there was liaison with Rochford Youth Council to understand what young people would like. Contact had been made with 'vinvolved' and discussions would take place direct with the Council.

Responses to the two questions from D Fryer-Kelsey were detailed in the appendix.

Whilst it was appreciated that parents and other adults often experienced difficulties becoming involved in youth work because of administrative issues,, it was recognised that child protection procedures had to be observed. The District Council could provide information about how to become involved in youth work and the appropriate people to contact.

At this point the Committee re-convened into formal session.

### **210 SPOTLIGHT ISSUES**

#### **(1) Update on Crime and Disorder in the Central Area**

Figures relating to reported crimes and anti-social behaviour (ASB) for the central area of the District had been previously circulated.

District Commander Andy Prophet reported that in the past 3 years the District had seen a 33% reduction in recorded crime; this significant success could be attributed to the Council and other partners as well as the Police. Recorded incidents of ASB had fallen by 25% over the three year period. During the last 2 months there were 90 crimes reported across the Central area of the District, compared with 95 the previous year and 94 ASB incidents compared with 132 during the same period last year.

Although the figures were very positive, the public's perception of crime levels were often different from the reality and was an issue that had to be addressed.

The two areas that were of particular concern in the Central area were Clements Hall and Plumberow Mount in relation to the activities of young people. These issues were being addressed and it was recognised that young people needed to have organised activities in the evening. An initiative was being developed to educate young people regarding their role as part of the community and how their actions affected the community as a whole.

The previous month had seen 9 burglaries in the Central area, with only 3 of these being regarded as 'traditional' burglaries, the remaining 6 being 'domestic' burglaries.

In response to questions the following was noted:-

- In respect of nuisance and ASB behaviour in the Clements Hall playing field area, the Police now operated a '24/7' policing cover for the District which enabled a greater likelihood of a quick response for getting out to Clements Hall playing field when called. There were now pre-planned operations in respect of Clements Hall and other 'hot spots' on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings from 7-12 pm.
- In partnership with other agencies, the issues involving lorries speeding down Watery Lane had been addressed and the Police received regular updates from the Neighbourhood Action Panels. Any incidents that occurred were addressed at the time.
- The Hockley Retailers against Crime had enjoyed a level of success to date and initiatives relating to information sharing were being introduced and developed. Shopkeepers could take preventative action and call in the Police if necessary.
- Regarding the benefits of installing CCTV in Hockley village centre, whilst it was recognised that it could be beneficial and lead to some convictions, this had to weigh against installation and monitoring costs and whether it would be appropriate for the area in question.
- Improvements had been seen in Plumberow Mount since the Parish Council had locked the gates to the playspace. Although there were still incidents of children getting in, 'no trespassing' signs had been erected and parents of the children concerned were contacted by the Police. In the longer term better quality high fencing could be erected. Funding had been received from the Rochford CDRP.

**(2) Hockley Parish Plan**

The Committee received a presentation from the Hockley Parish Plan Group on the draft Hockley Parish Action Plan by David Fryer-Kelsey, Chairman of the Hockley Parish Plan Group.

A questionnaire had been sent out to households and consultation was due to be completed in the third quarter of 2008.

In response to questions the following was noted:-

Under Action Point 4 of the Plan regarding why buses no longer stop/pick up outside Hockley library, it was confirmed that the bus stop had been removed because of dangerous traffic conditions. However, Arriva had confirmed that, unless there was an objection from Hockley Parish Council, drivers will stop outside the library to let people off the bus and that notices have been put on buses to this effect. It was added that the Parish Council was trying to get the bus stop reinstated although the County Council had questioned whether this particular bus stop had actually ever been recorded as a bus stop.

**211 CENTRAL AREA UPDATE**

The Committee received the Central Area Update.

**The possibility of extending the white lines (or introducing studs, beyond the white lines already introduced near Bullwood Hall to Fountain Lane). (08/07)**

Cllr J Thomass confirmed that this issue has been progressed.

**Replacement of the length of footpaths 8 and 9 adjacent to Brandy Hole on the River Crouch, which has suffered coastal erosion (11/07)**

Confirmation of land interests would be a matter for the County Council to progress as part of the statutory procedures if the proposals are supported. A further request was received that horse riding interests be included in any coastal path that was provided.

**The possibility of opening a route for horses on the western side of Clements Hall to come out at Hawkwell Park Drive and join the bridleway to Park Gardens (12/07)**

It was advised that consultation had now been completed and, whilst the Essex County Council Public Rights of Way officer saw great merit in the proposal, he had some concerns relating to the design and details of the proposal that would need to be resolved before the scheme could be given consideration for funding. The matter would be progressed with County Highways and be brought back to the Central Area Committee.

**Siting of a community shelter on the Clements Hall Recreation Fields (14/07)**

It was advised that it was the responsibility of the Parish Council to effect the works in respect of the shelter and that a start date of June 2008 had been proposed.

**Encouraging bus companies to operate a service over Coventry Hill on weekdays hourly to Hockley Spa, Rochford/Ashingdon, Rayleigh Rail Station to connect with other routes to the hospital or Southend Travel Centre (15/07)**

The County Council had considered this matter but indicated that there is no immediate solution to increase accessibility.

**Cars being driven in an inappropriate manner in the Clements Hall Leisure Centre car park (10/08)**

Virgin Active had advised that the car park gates were locked at night. The back gate was always locked and the front gate was locked when the late Duty Manager left the building. The cleaners opened half the gate first thing in the morning and the early Duty Manager opened them fully when he arrived.

**Investigation with regard to two derelict caravans on the Clements Hall recreation fields and demolition of a maintenance shed on the field (11/08)**

Steps were being taken to identify the precise location of the caravan in order that appropriate action could be taken. A meeting is being arranged with a resident to try to resolve the matter.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....

If you would like these minutes in large print, braille or another language please contact 01702 546366.

**Question**

K Ilott, Hockley

I would like to ask if a mirror could be installed opposite the Somerfield car park entrance in Spa Rd Hockley. Although the bus layby has been altered, buses still block motorists' view of the road when exiting either the Somerfield or Alldays car parks. Some motorists speed through this road. I have witnessed many near misses and it may possibly be the most feasible and cost effective option to prevent an accident.

K Ilott, Hockley

Disabled parking bays have been removed from the 'chinese takeaway side' of Spa Rd. It would benefit disabled residents if at least one bay could be reinstated. Would also like to discuss putting in disabled bays at other shop locations in Hockley e.g. Broadlands Rd and Plumberow Ave.

G Wooton, Rayleigh

Recent closures at Warriors Swim Centre in Southend have increased pressure on Clements Hall, which is already very busy at peak times. What assessment has Rochford Council made (or does it intend to make) of the impact on Clements Hall, and Rochford District in general, of the planned closure of

**Response**

Visibility problems at this entrance/exit do crop up now and again but a mirror is not an option to be recommended. Indeed mirrors are in themselves considered a danger because the view in them is distorted. I believe in this busy area there is too much going on to be absolutely sure that the image seen in a mirror would be accurate enough to allow safe egress. Although some drivers may not feel totally comfortable in the manoeuvre there are no accidents recorded to substantiate a problem. Traffic speeds in the road are low and a careful and timely manoeuvre should allow access both in an out in a safe manner.

The disabled parking, which was on the south side of Spa Road, was replaced by limited waiting in May 2007, and relocated to Bramerton Road. This was requested by the District Council and supported by the Parish Council and Disabled Access Group. All future requests for disabled parking should be put the District Council, who will consult with representatives from the Parish Council and Disabled Access Group to gain their views. Assuming that a proposal is met with support from both parties, the request would be forwarded to the County Council to be considered as a future scheme when funds became available.

Rochford District Council (RDC) has no plans to undertake a study of the usage of Clements Hall. Virgin Active, as management contractor, would complete any such work.

Virgin Active has commented as follows:-

'With the closure of Warrior swimming pool earlier this year we had an increase

**Question**

Warriors?

**Response**

in usage of the pool facility. As a result, we implemented new procedures to monitor usage and ratios and increase on staff levels, both of which worked well.

We have had no complaints regarding how busy the swimming pool was as the procedure we had implemented helped manage this for us.

With the increase of swimmers using Clements Hall swimming pool this still didn't affect any of the timetabled activities we have at present'.

Secondly, Southend Council has recently announced a review of swimming provision in its area. How does Rochford Council intend to contribute to that review so that the needs and views of Rochford District residents are reflected? Obviously many of us use facilities in both districts.

RDC has offered its input into the study. However, as Southend Borough Council is a unitary authority, it has no responsibility to include RDC in its plans.

The wider issue is the lack of public swimming provision in Rayleigh. If Clements Hall is hit by an exodus from Warrior Square then it will be even more difficult for Rayleigh and Hockley residents to find a large pool to go to. It would be useful to know whether the building of a public pool in or near Rayleigh will be given further consideration in future, in the light of changes at Warrior Square and in Southend generally.

The lack of swimming provision in Rayleigh has been reviewed on numerous occasions, most recently as part of the Sportsessex Facility Strategy. The report showed that although there are sufficient pool facilities in the District, access could be addressed. There are no plans for a Council built pool anywhere in the District.

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### Question

A Bond, involved, Southend

What youth volunteering/activity provision currently exists in the area?

### Response

A brief response was given at the meeting and involved would be in further contact with the District Council regarding youth volunteering/activity provision in the District.

K Muncer, Hockley

In recent by-elections the Conservative Party literature stated they were working with the 'Massive Project'. What exactly are they doing?

The Central Area Committee Chairman would talk direct with Ms Muncer to establish the situation regarding Conservative Party support of the Project

D Fryer-Kelsey, Hockley

In light of the need for more seats in Hockley Woods, could the Woodlands section make up some benches from timber felled in the woods? Benches carved out of large tree trunks or made from large sections of timber. These would be attractive, relatively cheap and difficult to damage.

There would be an opportunity in the preparation of the management plan for public comment and views. The District Council would provide Mr Fryer-Kelsey with a definite answer once the matter had been investigated.

D Fryer-Kelsey, Hockley

I understand the Woodlands section is preparing a five year management plan for the woods in the Hockley area. Will they take note of the Hockley Parish Plan when drawing up? Would it be possible for the residents to have some input to this plan by publishing the proposals before they are submitted and asking for comment?

The request would be passed to the Council's Woodlands section, who would respond direct to Mr Fryer-Kelsey.