

East Area Committee – 25 July 2007

Minutes of the meeting of the **East Area Committee** held on **25 July 2007** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr C G Seagers

Cllr Mrs T J Capon
Cllr J P Cottis
Cllr T G Cutmore

Cllr T E Goodwin
Cllr K J Gordon
Cllr Mrs S A Harper

ALSO PRESENT

Cllr Mrs M J Webster - Executive Board Member for Leisure, Tourism and Heritage
Cllr Mrs P Shaw - Ashingdon Parish Council
Cllr Mrs I Knight - Barling Magna Parish Council
Cllr P A Capon - Stambridge Parish Council
Cllr V Newby - Canewdon Parish Council
Cllr D Whittingham - Paglesham Parish Council
Cllr Mrs M Vince - Rochford Parish Council
Cllr B Summerfield - Sutton Parish Council
Insp A Parkman - Essex Police
L Harvey - County Highways

OFFICERS PRESENT

Y Woodward - Head of Finance, Audit & Performance Management
S Fowler - Head of Information and Customer Services
D Byrne - Waste Management Officer
J Whitlock - Planning Manager
M Power - Committee Administrator
S Worthington - Committee Administrator

266 AREA COMMITTEE – INITIAL BUSINESS

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from District Cllrs R S Allen and Mrs B J Wilkins and Great Wakering Parish Cllr G W Wright.

Appointment of Vice-Chairman

Cllr T E Goodwin was appointed Vice-Chairman of the East Area Committee.

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for the East Area Committee were noted. The Chairman stated that suggestions for the content of future agendas would be welcomed.

267 COMMUNITY FORUM

Green Waste Collection – Canewdon

A member of the public advised that the green waste collection from the village hall in Canewdon, which was scheduled for alternate Saturdays, had failed to arrive on Saturday 21 July. It was suggested that an apology should be sought from the company. As this appeared to be not the first time the company had failed to meet its commitment, it was felt that the Council should not pay for this particular collection. Parish Cllr V Newby offered to give his mobile phone number to the contractor, so that he could be contacted in case of a future breakdown in service and could inform residents waiting at the collection point.

On a related matter, Stambridge Parish Council felt that the collection point for green waste at the Shepherd and Dog pub in Canewdon was not sufficiently close to the village. The Chairman assured the meeting that such concerns would be raised as an issue with the Executive Board as appropriate. It was agreed that some of the signage relating to both location and timing at the collection points could be improved and made more visible.

Junction of Brays Lane

Concern was expressed by a member of the public that the T-junction at Brays Lane, and the siting of the bus stop on the corner, presented an obstruction to car drivers in terms of visibility and a danger to pedestrians, in particular to children leaving King Edmunds school. Although railings had been erected to protect people standing at the bus stop, concern was expressed that people waiting at the bus stop obscured the view of drivers turning out of Brays Lane. The County Highways Officer advised that the area had been seen as a problem to drivers for many years and that a T-junction had been viewed as the best solution to the problem. The scheme had been safety audited. Re-surfacing would take place this summer.

Traffic at North Street, Rochford

In answer to concern that the siting of the bus stop in North Street, Rochford caused an obstruction, the County Highways Officer advised that she would make enquiries of the designers as to whether anything could be altered. She added that there were only four buses along this route each day and that its positioning did assist in slowing the speed of traffic. If the bus stop had been sited adjacent to the footway the tendency for other drivers to park there would force pedestrians to have to walk in the road to get to the bus.

Rochford Station – vegetation spraying

In answer to concern expressed by a member of the public, it was agreed that the spraying of weed killer around posts and edges along Bradley Way near Rochford railway station in strong wind would be looked into.

The Chairman thanked the members of the public for their input.

268 SPOTLIGHT ISSUES

(1) Update on Crime and Disorder in the East Area

Reported Crime – April to June 2007

Inspector A Parkman circulated figures on the RDC basket of crimes and anti-social behaviour (ASB) for the East Area for the period April to June 2007.

It was noted that, apart from criminal damage, common assault, theft of cycles and vehicle interference, there had been a reduction in all crime types in this period compared to the same period in the previous year.

In respect of anti-social behaviour, the figures for April, May and June 2007 again showed a significant reduction compared with the same period in 2006. Reports had reduced from 303 in the 3-month period in 2006 to 231 in the corresponding period in 2007. In answer to a Member question, Inspector Parkman advised that it was a Home Office requirement that the figures be broken down into specific separate categories of anti-social behaviour.

It was requested that, in future, the crime figures for Hawkwell North and Hawkwell South be included in the figures to be reported to the Central Area Committee.

In response to questions, the Committee was advised of the following:-

- Regarding the concern that insufficient action was being taken to address the problem of drugs-related activity in the District, it was often a matter of the best use of resources. Incidents involving drugs were sometimes better dealt with as a planned offensive, rather than responding immediately to individual reports.
- The Police would look into a specific instance of alleged drug dealing outside Mason's Bar in Rochford.
- The possibility of including drugs-related crimes in the figures for future meetings would be considered.
- In response to a Member question, Inspector Parkman advised that the 'animal problems' detailed in the report were likely to be cases of dog fouling and barking. Essex Police fully supported the new measures contained within the recently introduced Animal Welfare legislation and an officer from Essex Police would be attending a course on the new legislation.

- The Police were aware of residents' concern regarding a number of possibly unroadworthy vehicles carrying loads of scrap metal along Canewdon Road and Pudsey Hall Lane.
- If a number of calls were made relating to one instance of a nuisance, this would be recorded in the figures as just one call-out.

Neighbourhood Action Panels

Inspector Parkman advised that the Government had tasked the Police with the introduction of Neighbourhood Action Panels (NAPs) to make police officers more accessible to residents and more in touch with specific local issues. He advised that the NAPs comprised a cross section of the local community and were aimed at identifying key issues that affected them, possible solutions to the problems identified and monitoring progress.

Matters that had been identified as local priorities for the East Area included:-

Rochford

- Youth nuisance in St Mark's Field, St Clare's Meadow, Stilwells and Doggetts Close
- Youth nuisance in Golden Cross Parade
- Youth nuisance in Rochford Square

Canewdon

- Youth nuisance at Canewdon Church
- Youth nuisance at the Memorial Hall in Ashingdon
- Speeding in Ashingdon Road and Canewdon Village

Great Wakering

- ASBs (underage drinking and drug use) on the Recreation Ground, Great Wakering, Vandalism at High Street, Great Wakering
- Speeding vehicles

The issue of CCTV was raised and Inspector Parkman agreed that a register detailing private and business CCTV installations could be of use to the Police. At present Rochford District Council held a register of public CCTV installations.

In response to questions, Inspector Parkman advised that CCTV and street lighting were only two options of many that could be employed in crime reduction, and were not necessarily suitable for all locations and types of crime.

(2) Update on Highways Matters within the East Area

Ms L Harvey provided an update on works planned for the area in the forthcoming weeks:

Shopland Road at Belchamps bends: there will be a road closure on 10 August with warning and diversion signs in place.

There will be surface dressing on Shoplands Road from Sutton Road to Butlers Farm bend.

Star Lane, Great Wakering: renewal of kerbs and resurfacing; programme date to be arranged.

West Street, (Ashingdon Road to Bradley Way), Rochford: late August.

Stonebridge junction alterations, Barling: no programme date yet.

Poynters Lane, Great Wakering: the possibility of hard-standing at the bus stop and refuge points along the road to assist pedestrians will be investigated.

In response to questions, the following was noted:-

- High bus kerbs in lay-by in Dalys Road had been completed.
- An opportunity for Parishes to schedule a visit by County Highways was offered each year. County Council officers would walk around the Parish with Parish representatives to identify minor works that needed doing.
- County Highways would meet with the Clerk of Stambridge Parish Council and Cllr P A Capon regarding the overgrown vegetation along the footpath from the primary school to the Memorial Hall, which was preventing people from using the footpath when walking from the school to the village.
- The reason that the Parish Council was not given advance notice of a road closure by the Cherry Tree pub on the Stambridge Road was that it was an emergency situation requiring immediate action to be taken.
- County Highways would arrange a visit with Cllr T E Goodwin to survey the High Street bus stops in Great Wakering in respect of the problems experienced by the elderly in stepping onto buses from the low kerbs that existed at bus stops in this Ward.
- The County Highways Officer would report back to the next meeting regarding complaints about the speed of traffic down West Street and South Street, Rochford.

- Recent work to construct a footway to the village hall in Canewdon had uncovered a cable, which was now lying visible in the ditch and was dangerous.
- Due to the amount of work needed to repair the roads to Wallasea, this was being treated as a special case. Once a comprehensive survey had been undertaken a request for specific funding would be made.
- A tree that was overhanging the highway on Stambridge Road, Canewdon by the 30mph sign, which was becoming dangerous, would be inspected.
- The Public Rights of Way Officer from County Highways, would be asked to deal with the obstruction of the public footpath through the boat yard, Paglesham East End.

(3) Environmental Campaign – Update

Ms Byrne advised that Rochford District Council's environmental campaign, launched in September 2005, had involved Councillors, local residents and local volunteer groups. The campaign had tackled hot spots around the district for dog fouling, graffiti, fly-tipping and litter dropping. During the first phase of the campaign much had been done in terms of publicity, with leaflets delivered and publicity in Rochford District Matters. In addition, identified hot spots were monitored.

The second phase of the campaign had sought to comply with the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. Volunteers had taken an active part in the work, including Rivercare and two local churches. 994 tasks were completed during the course of the campaign in the period from September 2005 to June 2007. 853 sites (excluding those with graffiti) had been tackled around the district. Graffiti had been removed from 467 sites.

Pavements had been washed, waste had been removed and 54 signs had been placed around the District publicising the monitoring of hot spots. 62 un-taxed cars had been towed away, with 26 subsequently scrapped and the remaining 36 resulting in fines paid by their owners. 41% of tasks completed during the campaign had been carried out in the East Area of the Rochford District. Fly-tipping in Star Lane, Great Wakering took between two and three days to clear up.

Regarding recycling for schools, of the 7 schools in the East area, 6 had expressed an interest in taking part in the District Council's recycling collection service. In relation to recycling at the Sutton Hall Music Festival, it was noted that collections had taken place on the Saturday and Sunday and a total of 32 wheelie bins and 10 euro bins had been collected.

In response to questions, the following was noted:-

- Rochford District Council was a collection Authority, and Essex County Council was the disposal Authority for the District. The Sutton Road

Amenity Site would accept rubbish from private residents from Rochford District and a refund of the cost involved could be obtained from Essex County Council. The policy on business waste at civic amenity sites could be made available at the next East Area Committee meeting.

- North Street in Rochford could be added to the list of pavement washing sites.
- Although there was no provision in current contracts for a collection service for plastic, consideration was being given by the District Council to this being part of the new waste management, street cleansing and grounds maintenance contract that would take effect on 1 April 2008.
- In addition to schools, independent nursery schools in the District could be possible participants in the recycling collection service as they produced a similar type of waste.

The location of the dog bin in Stambridge Road outside the Memorial Hall grounds was not considered practical; a request was made that it be moved either nearer to the gateway or onto the other side to accommodate people walking back towards the village. Requests were made for an additional dog bin in Gardiners Lane, Canewdon as the existing one was often full and had a broken lid and for a dog bin as close to the junction of Ash Tree Court and Stambridge Road as possible. There was also a question about the possibility of dog bins being provided by parishes but emptied as part of the Council's arrangements.

(4) Consultation on Tourism

Cllr Mrs M J Webster, Executive Board Member for Leisure, Tourism and Heritage, emphasised that the District Council wanted to attract more people into the District and was working hard to highlight the history of the area. Residents were urged to get in touch with Cllr Mrs Webster to share any ideas they might have for events to celebrate and help encourage more people to visit the area.

In response to questions the following was noted:-

- The benefits of partnership with other bodies, such as Essex Wildlife Trust and the RSPB, were emphasised, particularly in terms of Wallasea Island. Barling Magna Parish Council had been in contact with the RSPB and several wildlife associations, but to date had received no reply.
- It was hoped that a celebration to mark the centenary of the Battle of Ashingdon could be arranged. Ashingdon Parish Council was hoping to plan something to commemorate the battle. The option of a joint venture with Maldon District Council to celebrate the battle was also raised, as well as the possibility of a public work of art being commissioned to commemorate the battle.

- District and Parish Councils could achieve more if they worked together.
- The 750th anniversary of Rochford Market was to be celebrated, in honour of which a Brewery had agreed to launch a special beer.

(5) Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans: East Area

The Head of Finance, Audit and Performance Management advised that a number of written points had been received on this item and that a reply would be given at the next meeting of the East Area Committee.

Mr Whitlock advised that there were seven conservation area appraisals relating to the East Area of the District. These appraisals had been provided by a specialist team at the County Council for Rochford District Council and formed part of the evidence base of the Local Development Framework, although they were not statutory documents. In response to Members' observations on some of the recommendations and management plans, Mr Whitlock advised that these had been prepared by conservation specialists focussed solely on conservation ambitions. In practice, many of the ambitions are unlikely to come to fruition, as they require significant investment and/or the commitment of other agencies or land owners and balancing against other factors.

During discussion, the following comments were made:-

- With regard to Canewdon High Street, the Planning Manager advised that the specific detail relating to improvements to enhance the public realm would be investigated once the appraisals were accepted.
- The changes to the boundary of the Canewdon High Street conservation area proposed in the report could be supported by the Committee. In the paragraph headed Re-Development, the statement that infill in the gardens, particularly on the north side of the High Street, should be avoided, should be more strongly worded.
- Rochford District Council was investigating whether it would be appropriate to re-introduce the Local List.
- Funding in respect of Shopland Churchyard was desperately needed for the continued upkeep of this Norman church, which was falling into disrepair. All gravestones in the churchyard needed to be shored up as they were dangerous. The suggestion in the report that the churchyard be re-used as a burial ground was regarded as unacceptable.
- With regard to the Foulness Churchend Conservation Area Appraisal, it was suggested by Members that the wording on future development of the conservation area be strengthened to the effect that new development must be avoided. The Planning Manager advised that general planning policy would deal with this point.

269 EAST AREA UPDATE

The Committee noted the report of the Head of Finance, Audit & Performance Management providing information on some items of local interest.

A more detailed report would come back to the next East Area Committee on the development of youth facilities in Great Wakering.

The meeting closed at 9.55 pm.

Chairman

Date

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