

Central Area Committee – 4 December 2007

Minutes of the meeting of the **Central Area Committee** held on **4 December 2007** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr D G Stansby
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs C A Weston

Cllr Mrs L A Butcher
Cllr M R Carter
Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn

Cllr J R F Mason
Cllr M G B Starke

ALSO PRESENT

Cllr Mrs M A Weir - Hawkwell Parish Council
Cllr B Hazelwood - Hockley Parish Council
Cllr Miss A Marriott - Hullbridge Parish Council
ACI A Parkman - Essex Police

OFFICERS PRESENT

A Bugeja - Head of Legal Services
R Evans - Head of Environmental Services
P McKenna - Woodlands & Environmental Officer
M Power - Committee Administrator

412 AREA COMMITTEE – INITIAL BUSINESS

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from District Councillors Mrs R Brown, P A Capon, Mrs L M Cox and K H Hudson.

Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

413 COMMUNITY FORUM

No requests for information had been received in advance of the meeting. A question had been received at the meeting from J Edwards, Hockley regarding bye laws relating to dogs on leads in Marylands Nature Reserve. The Marylands Nature Reserve was managed and under the control of Hockley Parish Council. Model bye laws that regulated the use of open spaces provide that dog owners should exercise control of dogs but do not necessarily stipulate that they must be kept on leads. Those parts of the woods that were in private ownership were not subject to bye laws. A presentation by the District Council at the Committee's last meeting on

proposed dog control orders raised the possibility of introducing measures to tackle the issue of irresponsible dog owners.

414 SPOTLIGHT ISSUES

(1) Update on Crime and Disorder in Hawkwell, Hockley and Hullbridge

Acting Chief Inspector Andy Parkman reported that there had been an improvement across the District in terms of reported crimes and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) figures. The Government three-year crime reduction target for the District of 13.5% was likely to be exceeded, as the District was currently 3% under target for the year to date, which followed on from a 10.2% reduction in the previous year.

Regarding ASB figures, Rochford District was consistently achieving under its weekly target of 69 reports of ASB's and since April 2007 the District had seen reports reduce significantly, by 23%.

Andy Parkman gave an overview of the issues that had been raised through the Neighbourhood Action Panels (NAP's). The priorities identified through the NAP's were as follows:-

Hullbridge NAP

- Speeding traffic along Ferry Road and Poole Lane
- Youth nuisance in the nature reserve area in Hullbridge
- Parking issues outside Ferry Pharmacy, Ferry Road.

Hockley NAP

- Speeding vehicles in Greensward Lane
- Poor driving behaviour in Southend Road, Hockley
- Youth nuisance in Spa Road.

In an attempt to increase public awareness of NAP's, it is likely that in future details of the various NAP's will be available on the Police Authority website.

Responding to questions, Andy Parkman advised:-

- That in respect of the recent survey relating to anti-social behaviour carried out by the Police in the Hawkwell Park Drive area, of the 400-450 questionnaires delivered, approximately 65 had been completed. Although this was a disappointing return rate, the Police had been advised by some residents that they had not completed the questionnaires because the number of ASB's had dramatically fallen in the Clements Hall area. Details of the outcome of the questionnaire would be available at the next Central Area Committee.

- That, a notice would be supplied by the Police giving contact details and photos of the policing team for the East Hawkwell area, similar to the one that had been supplied in respect of the West Hawkwell area. The information would also be posted to residents.
- That the matter of lorries becoming stuck along Watery Lane would be investigated and reported back to the Committee.
- That regarding the apparent noticeable reduction in ASB's in Hockley town centre, feedback would be provided on whether this was in any way due to the new bowling alley on the industrial estate in Hockley.
- That the Police had been offered the use of a building, which was currently being built by Hockley station. If utilised, it would be as a drop off point for officers and possibly for neighbourhood beat surgeries. It would not be a satellite police station and would not be regularly manned.
- That CCTV evidence could be admitted as evidence in court, although it had been shown that a large percentage of CCTV footage was ineffective because the individuals concerned wore 'hoodies' to disguise their appearance. Hand-held digital cameras had proved to be very effective when used by Police in the District.
- That, regarding the siting of a community shelter on the Clements Hall Recreation Fields (see item 14/07 on the Update), the Police would assist in engaging with youths if any issues arose.

(2) Update by Patrick McKenna, Woodlands & Environmental Officer, on the Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park

The Committee received a presentation detailing the background history to the development of the country park facility at Cherry Orchard. The consultative process was continuing to identify the facilities that various user groups would like to see in the park. To date approximately 1600 questionnaires had been completed by residents throughout the District through Rochford District Matters and website surveys.

The Country Park was now well used and the first phase of development had been successfully completed. This had included the planting of trees and a hay meadow as well as the construction of a lake. It had been identified on the District Council's Core Strategy that there was potential to extend the park to the west and east of the current boundaries. A planning application for change of use to a Country Park and for vehicular access from the B1013 had recently been granted. An outline design would be presented to Members for their input and discussion would continue to take place with the various user groups.

Responding to questions, Patrick McKenna advised:-

- That at present maintenance costs for the Park were small as the woodlands were becoming more established.
- That the land for the existing Country Park had been acquired from Essex County Council. The additional areas of land to the east and west of the existing area, marked as A and B on the map, were in private ownership at present. The District Council would aim to purchase this land on behalf of the Council and had authority to use Compulsory Purchase powers. Consultation would continue with various users of the Park.
- That the consultation process to date had indicated that people would like to see a car park and toilets; if there was a wish for facilities at the proposed car park from the B1013 to accommodate a horse box and a bridle path to link the car park to the Park's existing bridle path, this also would be considered. The horse riding community requested that they be included in the consultation process.
- That a suggestion by a resident that the existing path should be divided to accommodate both walker and horse rider would be noted.

415 CENTRAL AREA UPDATE

The Committee received the Central Area update.

Replacement of Footpath 12 adjacent to Brandy Hole on the River Crouch (11/07)

The replacement of this footpath had been the subject of ongoing discussions for some time between the respective Parish Councils and County Highways, as the authority with responsibility for the footpath network. The availability of resources to fund this work had delayed its progress but a Rights of Way Improvement Plan was being formulated by Essex County Council to enable schemes to be appropriately assessed against set criteria and resources allocated accordingly. The indications were that this scheme was likely to be given a high measure of priority. In response to a question, it was confirmed that the intention was to divert the path from Hullbridge where it entered the river, down to the Dome Mobile Home site and to Fambridge. When the footpath had been repaired, residents of the Dome Mobile Home site would be able to walk to Hullbridge town centre along the riverbank.

Possibility of opening a route for horses on the western side of Clements Hall (12/07)

There was a need to investigate different types of barriers to separate pedestrians from horse riders. The matter was still being discussed and, in finalising any scheme, there would be an opportunity for people with an interest to have an input.

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

Following discussion, it was confirmed that subject to certain size limitations a shelter is likely to benefit from permitted development rights so as not to require express planning permission. Funding was currently being sought and it was agreed that local public consultation regarding the exact location for siting the shelter must now be a priority.

Bus service over Coventry Hill to connect with other routes (15/07)

District Cllr D G Stansby and Parish Cllr Mrs M A Weir had raised the issue at a meeting of the Essex County Passenger Services Committee, where it was agreed that the matter would be brought to the attention of the appropriate bus companies.

Watery Lane and Beeches Road traffic flow (17/07)

The Committee discussed the progress report from County Highways and agreed that the Highways Engineer should be asked for a full written report as to why no action was to be taken in this regard. The Committee wished the issue to be addressed as a specific agenda item at its meeting on 22 January 2008, where there would be a County Highways presence. This would give residents the opportunity to make representation on the matter. It was felt that one solution would be to erect large notices at both the Hullbridge and Battlesbridge ends of Watery Lane warning of the road's unsuitability for heavy goods vehicles.

It was agreed that as the issue crossed area committee boundaries, the Chairman of Rawreth Parish Council should be invited to speak on the issue at the January 2008 Central Area Committee meeting.

Following discussion, it was decided that the matter also be referred to the Executive Board for its input.

Resolved

- (1) That the County Council be formally requested to give the scheme for a replacement of Footpath 12 adjacent to Brandy Hole on the River Crouch a high degree of priority and progress the project having regard to the criteria set out in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
- (2) That the Central Area Committee receives a report from Essex County Highways on the Watery Lane and Beeches Road traffic flow issue and that it forms an agenda item at the Central Area Committee on 22 January 2008.

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- (3) That the matter be referred to Executive Board and that County Highways provides a written report prior to this explaining the reasons why they did not intend to take any action in the matter.
- (4) That the Chairman of Rawreth Parish Council be invited to speak on the matter of the Watery Lane and Beeches Road traffic flow at the Central Area Committee meeting on 22 January 2008.

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm.

Chairman

Date

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