

MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING BETWEEN SOUTH DERBYSHIRE DISTRICT
COUNCIL AND PARISH COUNCILS/MEETINGS

18th April 2007

PRESENT:

Representatives of South Derbyshire District Council

Councillors Whyman, M.B.E. (Chair) and Carroll.

Officers

F. McArdle (Chief Executive), M. Alflat (Director of Community Services), A. McCaskie (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), P. McEvoy (Head of Environmental Services), M. Roseborough (Partnership and Development Manager) and D. Townsend (Democratic Services).

Representative of D.A.L.C.

B. Wood.

Parish Council Representatives

C. Gerrard and B. Cowley (Egginton Parish Council), A. Plenderleith (Hilton Parish Council), K. Fairbrother and S. Jackson (Castle Gresley Parish Council), D. Buchanan (Newton Solney Parish Council), S. Bell (Findern Parish Council), F. Mitchell (Elvaston Parish Council), G. Taylor and C. Barker (Barrow upon Trent Parish Council), T. Statham (Melbourne Parish Council), B. Payton and N. Ireland (Etwall Parish Council), K. Overton and F. Crocker (Willington Parish Council), J. White (Overseal Parish Council), C. Bunston (Ticknall and Repton Parish Councils), R. Buxton (Hatton Parish Council), K. Bradford (Coton-in-the-Elms Parish Council) and H. Timms (Walton-on-Trent Parish Council).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from I. Reid (Deputy Chief Executive), M. Adams, T. Beresford, B. Freeman, N. Hill, L. Kolkman, C. Peck, R. Statham, C. Thurman and W. Wadsworth.

PC/49. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 24th January 2007 were received.

PC/50. **MATTERS ARISING**

Councillor Whyman advised the Meeting that complaints regarding the misuse of grass verges, raised at the previous Meeting, should be directed to Derbyshire County Council which was the local Highways Authority. Powers under the Town and Country Planning Act did not apply to adopted highways. In addition, if parked vehicles were causing a danger to highway safety, for example by obstructing drivers' visibility at a junction, the matter should be reported to the police.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services recommended that all Parish Councils should adopt the new Code of Conduct without amendment as soon

as possible. The District Council would circulate Register of Interest forms for completion by Parish Councillors. All originals should be kept by the Clerk and copies sent to the District Council's Monitoring Officer. It was confirmed that the existing Code of Conduct would remain in force until the new Code was adopted by individual Parish Councils. However, if this was not adopted by 1st October 2007, the new Code would be imposed. The new Code of Conduct could be viewed online at www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si-2007-index.htm

It was agreed that the Head of Legal and Democratic Services write to all Parish Councils advising of the decision of South Derbyshire District Council at the Council Meeting on Thursday, 19th April 2007 regarding the adoption of the new Code of Conduct.

The Director of Community Services gave an update with regard to Health and Safety courses. He advised that he was awaiting further details of possible free courses. However, there was a course available via the District Council at a cost of £35. B. Wood added that the County Council also offered courses that were relevant to specific areas.

It was agreed that the Director of Community Services would distribute further details of relevant Health and Safety courses when they became available. In addition, Parish Councils were requested to contact the Director of Community Services in cases where specific training was required.

B. Cowley again raised the issue relating to weeds and reported that she had still not received a satisfactory response.

It was agreed that the Director of Community Services would pursue this matter following the meeting.

PC/51. **CLIMATE CHANGE**

The Head of Environmental Services gave a presentation on work currently carried out within the District Council relating to climate change. He also highlighted the current Carbon Footprint Village Project being carried out in Walton-on-Trent.

A short film clip was shown - "An Inconvenient Truth", demonstrating the impact of the increase of carbon dioxide on global warming.

The Head of Environmental Services then gave further details on the Carbon Footprint Village Project. He added that the project endeavoured to measure, monitor and improve the village of Walton-on-Trent's carbon footprint. He added that within this project, 56 home surveys had been completed. 110 households had been assessed and 50 houses had received loft insulation, assisted by various grants.

It was added that the District Council wished to roll out this project to other villages, and anyone interested should contact Jane Liquorish on 01283 598719.

H. Timms of Walton-on-Trent thanked the District Council and Jane Liquorish for their work in this area.

PC/52. **SMOKE FREE LEGISLATION**

The Head of Environmental Services confirmed that Smoke Free Legislation would come into force on 1st July 2007. Virtually all enclosed public spaces would become smoke free.

A Smoke Free Officer would be appointed within the District Council, who would visit premises, and ensure that legislation could be enforced.

Further advice on Smoke Free England was available from www.smokefreeengland.co.uk and also from the District Council's own website on www.south-derbys.gov.uk. In addition, the Environmental Services Division could be contacted on 01283 595795.

It was agreed that any further information on Smoke Free Legislation be distributed to all Parishes when available.

PC/53. **PRESENTATION ON ARTS DERBYSHIRE – WEBSITE LAUNCH**

The Partnership and Development Manager gave a presentation to launch the Arts Derbyshire Website, which was a strategic arts partnership across the county of Derbyshire. This partnership had been active for two years, and provided a single point of contact for artists, venues and promoters. Examples of information available from the website were given. It was also confirmed that over 500 artists were currently registered.

Access to the Arts Derbyshire website was available via www.artsderbyshire.org.uk

It was agreed that the Partnership and Development Manager would distribute any further information, when available, to all Parishes.

PC/54. **GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER – “STRONG AND PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES” – IMPLICATIONS FOR PARISH COUNCILS**

This presentation was delivered by B. Wood (Derbyshire Association for Local Councils):-

- **Key areas 1 and 2**

It was confirmed that the Government intended to create strong and prosperous communities, and parishes had an important supportive role at a local level. In addition, it was recognised that parishes could help Principal Authorities identify where services may need improving.

- **Key areas 3 and 4**

A key aim was to have effective, accountable, responsive local government for which all levels were responsible. It was recognised that parishes were often recruiting grounds for County/District/Unitary Councillors and that they brought with them local experience.

- **Key area 5**

Local government was seen as a strategic leader/place shaper of which parishes were significant. The East Midlands Regional Assembly welcomed local views and had contributed a great deal of local opinion on the Regional Spatial Strategy Proposals to extend housing growth.

- **Key areas 6 and 7**

It was envisaged that parishes could be the eyes and ears of local government, and that they were often more aware of rural challenges than other less local agencies.

- **Key area 8 and 9**

Sustainable communities were as important for parishes and towns as for cities, and parish/town councils could help make Local Area Agreements and Multi-Area Agreements work effectively.

- **Local Area Agreements**

It was recognised that the principal lead authority should lead the Local Strategic Partnership and a community strategy could be developed, although regard should be paid to the Local Development Framework. There was an implied expectation that parishes/towns would work with the L.S.P. to determine priorities and targets to be set out in the Local Area Agreement. It was accepted, however, that further work needed to be completed in this area.

- **Multi-area Agreements**

This included issues which may cross political and administrative boundaries, where it was possible to develop multi-area agreements. Local parishes would be able to contribute to future projects.

It was confirmed that Parish Councils currently had a representative on the L.S.P. Concern was shown that Parish Councils were not receiving details of L.S.P. events.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services agreed to check distribution for L.S.P. information. In addition B. Wood requested that if individual Parish Councils required further information, they contact D.A.L.C. who would ensure that this information was distributed.

Councillor Whyman summed up by reiterating a will to improve the influence, power and decision-making of all Parish Councils. To achieve this, Parish Councils must demonstrate that they were quality Parish Councils.

PC/55. **QUESTION TIME AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Councillor Whyman briefly discussed the Development Control Engineering Project and further information was circulated to those present at the meeting.

It was agreed that this subject be given further consideration as an agenda item at a future meeting.

Other matters suggested as agenda items at a future meeting included Public Transport and the Code of Conduct. However, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services confirmed that further training on the Code of Conduct would be completed jointly with D.A.L.C. following the District/Parish Elections.

C. Barker queried the current position relating to public speaking at the Development Control Committee. Councillor Whyman advised that this matter would be reviewed in due course following the trial period of operation.

S. Jackson advised that part of the criteria to enable a Parish Council to become a Quality Council was that 80% of Members must be elected. She asked if this figure may be reduced in the future. B. Wood felt that this was very unlikely.

It was asked why there was a need to restrict each Parish Council to having two representatives at this Meeting. The Chief Executive and Councillor Whyman advised that it would be difficult to accommodate additional representatives and from the inception of the Meeting, it was agreed that each Parish Council would have a maximum of two representatives for future Meetings.

PC/55. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To be confirmed.

B. WHYMAN, M.B.E.

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 8.20 p.m.