

NEWHALL AREA MEETING

2nd May 2002

PRESENT:-

District Council Representatives

Councillor Mrs. Mead (Chair), Councillor Richards (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Bambrick, Dunn and Routledge.

S. Whiles (Head of Community Services), N. Betteridge (Members' Services) and B. Jones (Helpdesk).

County Council Representatives

Councillor Routledge and Mr. J. Waite.

Derbyshire Constabulary

WPC Fearn.

Members of the Public

P. Bambrick, D. Coulson, M. Coulson, I. Fern, L. Gadsby, G. Hall, G. Harrison, R. Holden, R. House, R. Hughes, C. Maddock, B. Marsden, G. Myatt, W. Parker, M. Richards, M. Rose, D. Tagg, V. Thornley, E. Tunnicliff, C. White, N. Willcox and B. Woods.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from District Councillor Wilkins, M. Dunn, J. Harrison and D. Mansfield.

NA/29. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Area Meeting held on 7th February 2002 were noted.

NA/30. **REPORT BACK ON ISSUES RAISED AT THE LAST MEETING**

The Meeting reviewed those items raised at the last Meeting and noted the progress made in each case. With regard to the proposed traffic lights at the A444/Park Road junction, County Councillor Routledge advised that he had in his possession a plan of the proposed design scheme for any residents who may be interested.

NA/31. **UNADOPTED ROADS**

Mr. J. Waite, Area Highways Manager, attended the Meeting to address residents on this issue, which had been raised by Mr. B. Woods. He advised that there were in excess of 500 private streets in the County and although it was difficult to assess accurately the costs of making up these streets to adoptable standards, an exercise in 1999 had revealed that the average cost would be approximately £80,000. Accordingly, the cost of bringing the 500 private streets up to adoptable standards would be approximately £40m. The Highways Act 1980 detailed methods in which this could be recoverable from the frontagers of a private street. It was emphasised that when properties were purchased, the purchaser's solicitor should advise the purchaser that the road was a private street and also advise of the associated implications, which should be reflected in the purchase price.

In addition to the costs outlined above, there were also costs which must be borne by the County Council. These included unrecoverable costs in any diversions of statutory authority apparatus (gas, electricity, etc) and the costs of processing the Private Street Works Code and designing the requisite works. In 1999, it was estimated that the average for these two elements amounted to approximately 75% of the cost of the works. Therefore, this would represent an additional sum of approximately £30m for the private streets in the County. The costs of works of making up private streets were borne by the frontagers which was based on the lengths of the individual frontages. Mr. Waite outlined the process involved and generally, the County Council would only consider processing an application for making up a private street if there was a significant majority in favour and willing to pay the requisite cost. Past experience had indicated that it was unlikely that a majority of frontagers were willing to contribute and in this regard, it was noted that residents of Alma Road, Newhall had been canvassed on three previous occasions.

The County Council had powers to undertake emergency works on a private street and to recover this cost from the frontagers through the Magistrates Court, if necessary. Currently, the County Council was endeavouring to reduce the backlog of maintenance works on the highways which it had a duty to maintain. Generally, these involved highways with a higher usage than private streets and therefore attracted a higher priority for both staffing time and funding.

Residents took the opportunity to ask several questions on various issues. In response to a query relating to the possibility of works being undertaken on Alma Road from Oakleigh Avenue to Ashleigh Avenue, Mr. Waite advised that it was hoped to undertake some works during the next few months to improve this stretch, following the recent availability of this year's budget. It was noted that if the whole stretch of Alma Road was ever made up to adoptable standards, it would be likely that traffic calming measures would be necessary. Councillor Richards suggested a joint initiative between the District and County Councils to improve the stretch of Alma Road from Oakleigh Avenue to Ashleigh Avenue. This was considered by residents to be an excellent idea, although Mr. Waite recalled a similar suggestion several years previously. It was noted that as at 1999, there were 15 unadopted roads in the Newhall County Electoral Division.

NA/32. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE LOCAL DISCUSSION ITEMS**

WPC Fearn advised that her new mobile telephone number was 07753 780567, which would be advertised widely in due course and also included in the Council's publication 'Tenants Extra'. Residents took the opportunity to ask several questions to WPC Fearn and she advised that when reporting incidents, residents should always be provided with a crime report number, even if the matter was not being reported for insurance purposes. A resident complained at the response time through the new call centre and it was felt that there may be a training need for the call centre relating to the above issues, which would be pursued. Following a discussion on the lack of police resources, residents were encouraged to express their concerns to the Derbyshire Constabulary Headquarters at Butterley Hall, Ripley.

A resident again referred to motorcycles encroaching onto the walk areas at the bottom of Oversetts Road, Newhall and Councillor Bambrick advised that this matter was now in hand following the recent availability of the new year's budget.

A resident expressed his thanks to the Clean Team for tidying the area of land at Meadow View Road/Oversetts Road, Newhall.

A resident referred to the recent continental market in Swadlincote town centre and enquired as to the level of advertising for this event. In response, Councillor Richards advised that the event had not been organised by the Council and all organisation and advertising had been undertaken by Market Initiatives. It was agreed that an insufficient level of advertising had been undertaken and in future, the Council would ensure that significant publicity was given to such an event.

A resident complained at a significant level of cats fouling on his property and the District Council's Head of Community Services advised that any similar legislation in place for dog fouling did not exist in relation to cats. This was a difficult issue to enforce and she suggested that the resident should leave details with the Helpdesk and she would arrange for an Environmental Health Officer to pursue the issue with the resident concerned.

A resident expressed concern at the level of gutter cleansing in Sunnyside, Newhall together with the manner of drain cleansing in that area.

NA/33. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next Area Meeting would be held at Stanton Village Hall on Wednesday, 7th August 2002 at 7.00 p.m.

NA/34. **HOUSING ALLOCATIONS**

The District Council's Head of Community Services spoke in general on this matter and encouraged any residents who may have individual complaints to leave details at the Helpdesk and she would then arrange for a visit by a Tenant Liaison Officer. It was reported that legislation required every Council to keep a Housing Register, which was a list of persons entitled to reside within the local authority area if they had a local connection with the area or a permanent job in the area. A person would also be entitled to join the Housing Register if they had lived in the area for a continuous period of 12 months or more during the last 10 years. Applicants and their households were housed according to their need, as defined by legislation, which meant that the Council could not decide arbitrarily to exclude them from their duty.

Allocations of property were made to those on the Housing Register through a points system to reflect the housing need of the person and their household. Points were awarded for such categories of age, medical conditions, overcrowding, etc and most authorities used such a system as it ensured fairness based on a person's need.

Each person or household on the Housing Register would be assessed to determine the size of the property suitable for their need. The Council could

not discriminate against a person or their household, although the Council had powers where someone had been convicted of a limited number of criminal offences. However, unless the offence had been committed from their Council property or whilst a Council tenant and they subsequently lost their home because of this action, the Council had a statutory duty to house them provided that they qualified to join the Housing Register.

The Council could not make an assumption as to whether a family may cause problems at some future point and could not refuse to house them on that basis. If any tenant caused a nuisance or annoyance or engaged in anti-social activities, the Council had limited powers to deal with them. Residents were reminded that these powers were reliant on the burden of proof of the wrongdoing and therefore any enforcement action could take a considerable time. Any persons experiencing nuisance by a Council tenant should contact the Housing Department with the appropriate details.

Residents took the opportunity to ask several questions and it was noted that it was not possible to consult neighbours on the allocation of a property, as the Housing Register dictated this issue. However, sensitivity was applied in appropriate circumstances.

MRS. J. MEAD

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 8.25 p.m.