

REPTON AREA MEETING

23rd July 2002

PRESENT:-

District Council Representatives

Councillor Taylor (Chair), Councillors Bell, Evens, Sherratt and Mrs. Wheeler.

Ian Reid (Deputy Chief Executive), Mrs. D. Cook (Democratic Services Officer) and Mr. B. Jones (Helpdesk).

County Council Representative

Councillor Jones (Vice-Chair).

Parish Council Representatives

D. Adams (Hartshorne Parish Council), D. Tagg (Hartshorne Parish Council), A. Atkin (Newton Solney Parish Council), S. M. Evans (Repton Parish Council), R. Statham (Woodville Parish Council), A. Skipper (Repton Parish Council), R. Morrow (Willington Parish Council) and C. Warner (Willington Parish Council).

Members of the Public

J. A. Burley, Mr. and Mrs. J. Cownie, A. Gillespie, A. Kimber, J. A. Newman, J. Orme, J. Parker, N. J. Parry, J. Stamford, Mr. and Mrs. Varty, K. Vincent and Mrs. M. Whyatt

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillor Shadrack (Hartshorne Parish Council), Mr. D. J. Deboo, Mrs. Ellis, S. Smith (Woodville Parish Council) and District Councillor Bladen.

RA/1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 25th April 2002 were noted.

RA/2. REPORT BACK ON ISSUES RAISED AT THE LAST MEETING

The Chair reviewed those items raised at the last Meeting and explained the progress made in each case.

With regard to the poplar trees at Mill Hill, Repton it was noted that one of the Council's Development Control Officers had inspected the trees and deemed that they were near to the end of their lives and could possibly be a safety hazard. The trees were also lifting the footpath tarmac and causing a trip hazard and therefore the matter had been referred to the County Council for action.

RA/3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE LOCAL DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mr. Orme advised that at Findern Lane, Willington there was no footway for approximately 250 yards of the highway adjacent to the Chellaston Cottages and level crossing. Mr. Orme was concerned that this presented a danger to

pedestrians and accordingly it was agreed to write to Derbyshire County Council regarding this matter.

Although outside the remit of the Repton Area Meeting, Mr. Orme advised that the main road through Stenson Fields also had no footway for approximately half a mile and again reiterated his concern for pedestrians. It was agreed to report this matter to Derbyshire County Council and ask them to correspond directly with Mr. Orme in this regard.

Concern was expressed regarding the speed of traffic on Milton Road, Repton particularly, as there was a school nearby and Inspector Hargreaves noted the comments.

Councillor Wheeler advised that Councillor Walter Burrows had recently met with Repton Parish Council and had confirmed that £25,000 had been reserved in the County Council's budget for a gateway traffic calming scheme for Repton including school safety zones.

Mr. Orme referred to a recent traffic census carried out by Derbyshire County Council at Willington. He expressed concern regarding heavy traffic which used the weight restricted zone to access metal works in the village and emphasised that such heavy traffic would be exaggerated if the Willington Power Station site was developed. He felt that the traffic census was not wholly representative of the breach of weight restriction traffic travelling through the village. It was agreed to communicate the comments of Mr. Orme to the appropriate persons at Derbyshire County Council.

RA/4. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was reported that a date for a future Meeting had yet to be arranged. Accordingly, the Council would write to advise those concerned as soon as a date was confirmed.

RA/5. DIVISIONAL POLICING CHANGES - A TWELVE MONTH UPDATE

Inspector Hargreaves was in attendance at the Meeting to report on this matter. He reminded those present that Divisional Commander Hurrell had addressed the Meeting in April 2001 and outlined a history to changes which had taken place since then. He stated that traditionally the police had acted alone but this had changed in the 1990's with the introduction of the Crime and Disorder Initiative. Crime and Disorder promoted inter-agency working because communities alone could not tackle crime. A divisional review across the County of Derbyshire (but particularly in South Derbyshire) was carried out accordingly. The South Derbyshire police section was made coterminous with the boundaries of the District Council. This meant that all the police work carried out in the District was with one local authority and resulted in effective Crime and Disorder Partnership working.

Inspector Hargreaves advised that a beat constable scheme had been introduced covering particular areas. A two-tier policy on policing had also been established. Reactive officers were also in place (each shift currently consisted of a sergeant plus eight officers but there was a minimum requirement of four officers). Beat officers had also been introduced to tackle local problems and there were ten such officers for the South Derbyshire area. Four beat officers were located in the urban area and six beat officers were located in the rural areas. The role of the beat officers was to establish links in the community and to be a local contact point and deal with ongoing problems. Beat officers had set up 'sub watch' schemes and were working

with young people. A local crime team was being piloted in Willington and Melbourne and this group would aim to identify and address problems arising in these villages.

In February 2002 two rural officers had been introduced into South Derbyshire. These officers covered the whole of South Derbyshire but particularly the rural aspects. Their remit was to work with farmers and landowners.

In January 2002 a call handling department was introduced where all calls were forwarded to a centralised location in Derby and should be answered immediately. A larger volume of crime was therefore being reported. A mobile police station had been allocated to South Derbyshire and a rota for the mobile station was provided on the Area Meeting helpdesk for information. All beat officers had been furnished with mobile phones and could be contacted on these phones by members of the public.

Inspector Hargreaves emphasised that the police needed to know where the issues were and it was important that people reported crime as all calls were logged. Statistics were examined on a weekly basis to identify trends and crime “hotspots” and resources were targeted accordingly.

Inspector Hargreaves reported on the long-term staffing plan. He advised that ideally he would like to see beat officers in post for a minimum of three to five years but had to accept that officers wished to move on in order to improve their career prospects. Therefore, beat officers would change from time to time. He noted that the Goseley estate area in particular had seen three different beat officers in the last twelve months. The Chief Constable was currently applying for funding to recruit additional police for the County but obviously there would be an induction period for new officers and a long training period before new recruits would be fully operational. Inspector Hargreaves advised that ideally he would like to involve more special officers in working with local beat officers.

The Chair referred to the issue of nuisance motor cycles and asked what action the police could take. It was noted that this was a real problem at the Goseley estate/Woodville area. Inspector Hargreaves advised that one problem facing the police was catching such motor-cyclists. Accordingly, any information which could be provided such as driver details and registration numbers would be useful in tracking down individuals. The police had no power of arrest on this matter but could report individuals for summons. Even if the vehicle was operating off-road the police had little power to deem the vehicle unroadworthy. Inspector Hargreaves advised that when such matters went to court individuals received points on their licence and it was a case of waiting for these points to build-up in order to prevent the driver motor-cycling again. Inspector Hargreaves felt there was a need for a facility to be provided in order to allow such motor-cyclists to ride somewhere appropriately.

Councillor Sherratt advised that ideally he would like to see beat officers in post for a minimum of twelve months and Inspector Hargreaves supported the principle and agreed to raise this issue where appropriate.

A resident queried how affective neighbourhood watch schemes were currently and Inspector Hargreaves advised that schemes had not been operating successfully in the past and therefore a Crime Zone Initiative had been started. The police would soon be writing to all neighbourhood watch

schemes regarding this initiative and to advise them that the £45 joining fee was being abandoned.

A general discussion took place with regard to what a deemed a dog to be under “proper control” in a public place.

The Chair asked what mechanisms were in place for a beat officer to pass on information to a new beat officer taking over their particular post. Inspector Hargreaves advised that he preferred a period of “shadowing” when beat officers did change and agreed to pursue the idea of a centralised list of contacts being established in order to be passed on from one beat officer to another.

The Chair thanked Inspector Hargreaves for an informative presentation.

RA/6. CONSULTATION ON COUNCIL’S BUDGET

The Area Meeting received a presentation from Ian Reid, Deputy Chief Executive at the District Council. The Finance Consultation sought to follow-up presentations made at the last budget round in January and provide the next stage in developing budget consultation. It sought to raise awareness about the cost of current services, the spending pressures which the Council faced and to seek feedback on priorities. The annual cost of general fund revenue services amounted to £9.61million. A breakdown was provided of the cost of Environmental Services, the Community Services and Finance and Management Services. Details were given of current capital spending from the general fund which amounted to £1.1million this year. To provide a context, it was shown that South Derbyshire’s expenditure amounted to only 11% of the resources generated through Council Tax. Current spending pressures were reported and an outline given for the Council’s key aims. Feedback was sought about the Council’s priorities and whether residents would be prepared to pay increased Council Tax for service improvements. A questionnaire had been circulated to gauge residents’ views and it was hoped that these could be completed and returned either at the end of the meeting or using the free post reply service. Details were also provided of those revenue and capital spending proposals put forward by Members and Officers. This included details of those schemes submitted for approval to the Finance and Management Committee and those other schemes considered but excluded due to insufficient resources.

A general discussion took place with regard to the closure of public toilets, particularly in Willington and a number of residents of Willington expressed concern that they were being “charged twice” for toilet provision.

A resident asked that should the pedestrianised area of the Swadlincote town centre be re-developed that consideration be given to the needs of disabled people. A general discussion took place regarding the type of shops in Swadlincote and how the Council could try to influence the development of the town centre.

The Chair thanked all those for attending.

S. TAYLOR

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 8.45 p.m.