

SOUTH DERBYSHIRE AREA FORUM

NEWHALL

February 3, 2016 at Stanton Village Hall

PRESENT:-

District Council representatives

Councillor Sean Bambrick (Chair), Councillor Paul Dunn, Councillor Mrs Linda Stuart, Councillor John Wilkins.

Frank McArdle (Chief Executive), Tom Sloan (Clerk).

Derbyshire County Council representatives

Councillor Sean Bambrick, Councillor Paul Dunn.

Parish Council / Meeting representatives

None.

Members of the public

Pat Bambrick, Marianne Biddle, Ron Hughes, Alan Jones, Helen Kreft (Burton Mail), Mike Lacey, C Maddock, Mick Mulgrew, Councillor Pat Murray, Jim Seaton, Elaine Tagg, Ron Trim, Councillor Neil Tilley, Geoff Tubey, Councillor Bob Wheeler, Barry Woods, Joan Woods, Councillor Mrs Sandra Wyatt.

NA/20 **Apologies for absence**

Alan Argent, Colin Dobson, Pamela Foy, Richard House, Paul Jameson, Bill Parker, Councillor Robert Pearson, Councillor Kevin Richards, Heather Wheeler MP.

NA/21 **Declarations of interest**

None.

NA/22 **Chairman's announcements**

None.

NA/23 **The minutes of the meeting held on November 4, 2015**

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true record.

NA/24 **Report back on issues raised at the last meeting**

Demolished hostel in Plummer Road, Newhall

A resident had complained about the state of land in Plummer Road, years on from the demolition of a hostel. Councillor Sean Bambrick reported that the land had been cleared of all the deposited three-piece suites, except for one. Councillor Paul Dunn said a report was being taken to Derbyshire County Council's cabinet in May to create a development company. Then plans could be drawn up for the land at Plummer Road.

NA/25 **Public questions on issues raised by residents**

A member of the public reported road signs in St John's Drive and Tideswell Green, Newhall, which had gone rusty and were in a dilapidated state. Councillor Neil Tilley added that a sign in Tennyson Avenue had been uprooted.

ACTION: Issues to be reported to South Derbyshire Council and a report back provided at the next area forum

A resident reported littering in Pine Grove. He thanked South Derbyshire District Council for its efforts in tackling the individual involved who had been seen on several occasions throwing rubbish out of a grey Seat car but the problem was ongoing.

ACTION: Issue to be reported to Neighbourhood Wardens and a report back provided at the next area forum

Councillor Dunn asked how much setting up a parish council for Newhall was going to cost. Frank McArdle said the actual cost had not been established and he could not give a figure.

A resident reported ongoing problems with dog fouling in Newhall Park. He said it was a small minority of dog owners who had caused problems. Councillor John Wilkins added that dog fouling was an issue in other parts of the Newhall and Midway area.

ACTION: Neighbourhood wardens to continue monitoring Newhall Park as part of their drive to reduce dog fouling

A Midway resident brought up the issue of a map showing the boundaries of the various Area Forums. He had asked on many occasions for a definitive map. Mr McArdle apologised to the resident on behalf of SDDC for the length of time it had taken to get a map showing the information requested. A map clearly showing the boundaries was given to the resident.

A member of the public asked if recycling was making money for the company involved with SDDC. Mr McArdle said a slowdown in the Chinese economy had

affected recycling and SDDC was in negotiations with its recycling company to find a fair price.

A resident announced that Newhall Skate Park was due to open, but that its official opening would take place at Easter.

A member of the public asked if road resurfacing near to a crossing in Bretby Road, Newhall, was to protect children crossing the road after the withdrawal of DCC crossing patrols. Councillor Bambrick said he hoped drivers would stop for a crossing regardless of whether a crossing patrol was present. He added that a crossing patrol at Newhall Infants School had been retained after private sponsorship was secured.

A resident asked if funding was available for solar panels to be put on the roof of the new community facility in Chestnut Avenue, Midway. Mr McArdle said he would take the idea to Stuart Batchelor, SDDC's Director of Community and Planning.

ACTION: Stuart Batchelor to provide a report back at the next area forum

A resident reported security fencing being ripped down at Newhall Skate Park and youths already using the equipment. He was concerned that grass would not grow because of the premature usage. Councillor Bambrick said he was confident the seeding would take.

NA/26 **County Council issues**

Councillor Dunn reported that the Women's Tour of Britain cycle race was coming through South Derbyshire, with DCC spending £125,000 to sponsor the northern leg of the race from Ashbourne to Chesterfield. The stage through Swadlincote was going from Nottingham to Stoke, with the route 99% decided and coming along Civic Way. Mr McArdle added that the uplift to a local economy from such an event was proven.

NA/27 **District Council issues**

Mr McArdle reported that SDDC's finances had stabilised in the previous two years. An increase in planning applications in what was the fastest-growing district in Derbyshire meant the council's income had grown and this would help defray the forthcoming cut in Central Government grant. SDDC would have to find savings of £1.5m a year in 2018-19 after it came 45th out of 383 local authorities in the list of grant cuts. SDDC came out so high on the list because it was a self-sufficient authority in an area of high growth and low unemployment. This would be a challenge the authority would meet head-on. SDDC had previously had to cut £3.1m, but managed this through efficiencies without cutting services. The latest round of cuts was also tempered by the prospect of being able to keep a higher proportion of Business Rates levied in South

Derbyshire. SDDC could also increase Council Tax for the first time in several years, with a 1.95% rise due to go before Full Council.

A member of the public asked what the impact of combined authorities would be on SDDC. Mr McArdle said the Government's offer would come through on February 25 before a debate on February 29. Councillor Bob Wheeler added that the Government was keen to devolve power to local authorities and it was time members of SDDC got their chance to debate the subject. Authorities on both sides of the political divide had already said they wanted no part of it, Councillor Wheeler added.

A resident asked that if South Derbyshire was one of the fastest-growing districts in the country, would infrastructure matching that growth be built as well. Mr McArdle replied that Section 106 agreements were reached with developers to pay for infrastructure and he pushed to get the money paid as soon as possible as a development starts.

A member of the public asked about progress of the golf course in William Nadin Way, Swadlincote. Mr McArdle said the golf course would happen and that land around where the golf course would be built had gone up in value – with some of that land belonging to SDDC. The greater Swadlincote area was now home to 41,527 people who needed facilities as well as housing built in sustainable areas. The population would be a boost to trade in the town and encourage more shops of a high value into the area.

Councillor Dunn said the public needed to be aware that SDDC's Revenue Support Grant from Central Government was going to be cut and that was the reason for putting up Council Tax. He did not want local councils to shoulder the blame for what was a Central Government cut.

A resident asked what was happening with the Thorpe Downs site. Mr McArdle replied that the site had been on the market for three months.

A Stanton resident asked why new housing estates automatically got a play area when the village of Stanton had nothing, with children having to go to Newhall for play equipment. Mr McArdle replied that a playing field with excellent facilities was part of the golf course development on land between Swadlincote, Stanton and Newhall.

A resident asked why a £6 rebate was paid to Council Tax payers in South Derbyshire with an increase on the horizon, with the rebate itself costing £45,000 to action. Mr McArdle replied that it was a political decision taken by councillors and that when the decision was taken, a future rise in Council Tax could not have been predicted.

NA/28 **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting would be held on a date to be announced.

CHAIRMAN

The meeting terminated at 8.35pm.