

SOUTH DERBYSHIRE AREA FORUM

AREA 3 – MELBOURNE AREA

Thursday, July 14th, 2016 at Shardlow Village Hall

PRESENT:-

District Council Representatives

Councillor Jim Hewlett (Chair), Councillor Neil Atkin.

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

Derbyshire County Council Representatives

Councillor Mrs Linda Chilton, Councillor Rob Davison.

Paul Jameson (Area Forum Liaison Officer).

Parish Council / Meeting Representatives

Paul Bickerton (Elvaston Parish Council), Rachel Cheshire (Barrow Parish Council), Wendy Earp (Melbourne Parish Council), Nancy Hawksworth (Shardlow & Great Wilne Parish Council), Jean Longley (Aston Parish Council), Alicia Mitchell (Shardlow & Great Wilne Parish Council).

Members of the public

None.

Election of chair

In the absence of Councillor John Harrison (Chair) and Councillor Peter Watson (Vice-Chair), Frank McArdle asked for nominations for Chair from the floor. Councillor Neil Atkin nominated Councillor Jim Hewlett.

MA/01 **Apologies for absence**

Councillor Mrs Hilary Coyle, Councillor John Harrison, Avril Record, Councillor Peter Watson.

MA/02 **Declarations of interest**

None.

MA/03 **Chairman's announcements**

Councillor Hewlett announced that Local Plan Part One had been adopted by SDDC and Part Two was currently being consulted upon.

MA/04 **The minutes of the meeting held on January 26th, 2016**

The minutes were proposed by Councillor Mrs Linda Chilton, seconded by Wendy Earp and approved.

MA/05 **Report back on issues raised at the last meeting**

Swarkestone Causeway Enforcement Project

Paul Jameson (AFLO) provided a report back on the project, stating that DCC was considering providing vehicle-activated signs (VAS) on main routes approaching the causeway. DCC had been obliged to review the project in light of police being unable to carry out enforcement. By the time of the next Melbourne Area Forum in the autumn, DCC would hopefully be in a position to provide clear proposals.

Councillor Rob Davison reported that he had spoken to Neill Bennett in DCC's Transportation Team and been told that the next step was a tendering exercise to see how much the signs would cost. A sum of £48,000 had been set aside for it. However, what the public needed to know was that these signs did not help with prosecutions and were merely a deterrent to HGVs using the route.

Mr Jameson provided the latest enforcement figures for the causeway since the previous meeting in January. Five drivers had been prosecuted for breaking the weight limit, paying a total of £1,400 in fines and £725 in costs. Another driver was due to appear in court for sentencing on July 14th and one further case was being investigated. Mr Jameson noted that several of the prosecutions were aided by photographic evidence provided by residents. Councillor Hewlett asked if a photograph and a statement from a resident were enough to bring a prosecution and Mr Jameson confirmed that they were.

Double yellow lines outside Melbourne Senior Citizens' Centre

Councillor Mrs Chilton had been tasked to raise the question with DCC but reported that the county council was no longer taking such measures.

Poor state of road in Thulston

Councillor Davison reported that he had notified DCC about the roads in Thulston in general terms. A large pothole opposite the Harrington Arms

had been fixed very quickly. Mr Jameson added that patching works were due to take place shortly in Ambaston Lane, Thulston.

Sandstone kerb stones at the Bay Tree, Melbourne

Councillor Hewlett said the issue centred around the replacement of a sandstone kerb with one made from granite which could withstand the weight of a truck. Sandstone kerb stones had repeatedly broken but been replaced like for like because of the constraints of Conservation Area policies. Councillor Hewlett reported that SDDC was currently without a Conservation Officer so a decision on the kerb would have to wait until someone was in position.

MA/06 **Public questions on issues raised by residents**

A resident complained about weeds being at least 5ft high on the 'old A6' before they were cut on the morning of the meeting. Weeds had also grown so high they had obscured the bus stop opposite the end of Thulston Lane. Before the recent cut, they had not been done at all in 2016, the resident claimed.

A member of the public reported a similar situation in Melbourne, saying the cuts got later and later each year.

Councillor Atkin reported complaints from around the Aston Ward in 2016 and linked accidents in Chell Lane to a lack of visibility from long grass on the verges. He questioned whether two cuts a year in rural areas was enough.

Mr Jameson confirmed that verge cutting was a DCC issue, with SDDC acting as agents. It was undertaken for safety reasons to ensure adequate visibility splays. The wet weather had worked against the county council this year, something several residents dismissed as an excuse.

A member of the public raised concerns about the state of a footpath running from Shardlow to Thulston which she claimed was overgrown with nettles and other weeds. It had also subsided in places. Another resident added that along a country lane between Shardlow and Ambaston, gullies for drainage had overgrown, presenting a hazard to pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.

Mr McArdle said he shared residents' concerns, living in a rural area himself. He did, however, believe the weather had been exceptional this year. He would seek some clarity on the situation regarding the number of cuts per year and report back to parish councils.

ACTION: Frank McArdle to raise issue with relevant SDDC department and seek clarity on the council's responsibilities

A resident said that road signs in the area were increasingly obscured by hedgerows and other vegetation and asked whose responsibility it was to clear them. Mr Jameson asked where and said if a sign was covered, a resident should ring DCC's call centre on 01629 533190 and the job would be assigned to a rapid response team. Currently, the team was limited by the bird nesting season.

A resident asked if there had been a rise in fly-tipping. They claimed there had been two loads of asbestos dumped in Barrow, one in the middle of the village and the other in Swarkestone Road. There was also the issue of continual dumping of furniture in Lowes Lane. Mr McArdle replied that SDDC was using every piece of technology it had available to combat the illegal dumping of waste. CCTV was being used and successful prosecutions brought as a result, some of which had attracted national publicity. However, the problem would never be eradicated as there would always be someone willing to take a risk to avoid paying to dump waste officially.

MA/07 **County Council issues**

Councillor Mrs Chilton said recent rainfall was a concern for Swarkestone Causeway, with the potential it had to damage what was an ancient monument. She would continue to beat the drum for the causeway, whose smooth operation was key for inward investment into South Derbyshire.

MA/08 **District Council issues**

Mr McArdle updated the meeting on the Community Governance Review taking place in Stenson Fields, Barrow and the unparished areas of Twyford and Stenson, where a range of options on redrawing parish boundaries was being considered. Letters containing a sizeable document were on their way out to every household in the areas affected. It contained numerous alternatives but Mr McArdle and his officers at SDDC could not make any recommendations to residents, it was for the public to have its say. The views of residents were needed by September, whereupon a second phase of the consultation would take place on the draft proposals. What had been decided would come into existence on April 1, 2017. A meeting would be held in the early part of September at a neutral venue – probably in Willington – to discuss the issue further. A resident thanked Mr McArdle for clarifying the review while Councillor Mrs Chilton agreed it was a complex issue which had been succinctly summarised. Councillor Davison asked how the public could make sense of such a complex document. He also warned that Twyford and Stenson was at great risk because if the new estate being built there was not absorbed into Stenson Fields, there would be no one to represent the new residents. That would result in Twyford and Stenson being governed by a semi-urban area. Mr McArdle replied that the

review was being conducted according to law. He asked for patience and reiterated the importance of people's responses to help his members reach the right decision. Councillor Davison asked if an FAQs sheet could be produced and Mr McArdle replied that it was impossible due to the constraints of the law.

Councillor Hewlett reported that an area of yellow hatchings in the car park behind the Lamb Inn, in Melbourne – where there used to be recycling bins – was now safe for parking. Motorists had previously been ticketed for parking there.

Councillor Hewlett added that the official opening of 45 new council houses, the first to be built in South Derbyshire since 1992, had taken place. A second phase would involve 11 more homes behind Swadlincote Fire Station which were currently being refurbished. There were also eight flats in Alexandra Road, Swadlincote, being considered for refurbishment.

MA/09 **Date of next meeting**

To be advised in due course.

Councillor Jim Hewlett
CHAIRMAN

The meeting terminated at 8.32pm.