

SOUTH DERBYSHIRE AREA FORUM

SWADLINCOTE

Wednesday, February 15, 2017 at Oakland Grange, Swadlincote

PRESENT:-

District Council Representatives

Councillor Steve Taylor, Councillor Mrs Kim Coe, Councillor Robert Coe, Councillor Stuart Swann, Councillor Mrs Sandra Wyatt.

Frank McArdle – Chief Executive.
Tom Sloan – Clerk.

Derbyshire County Council Representatives

Councillor Mrs Linda Chilton.

Parish Council / Meeting Representatives

Maureen Mycock (Hartshorne Parish Council).

Members of the Public

Chris Allen, Doug Allen, Michael Barsby, Helen Kreft (Burton Mail), Eric Lummis, S Mayer, J McEwan, Dave Sharpe, Emma Simpson (Rural Action Derbyshire), Ben Stuart.

SA/19 **APOLOGIES**

Jenny Burley, Helen Davis, Colin Dobson, Councillor Paul Dunn, Paul Jameson, Alan Jones, Mick Lunn, Councillor Gordon Rhind, Dot Shuttleworth, Councillor Trevor Southerd, Councillor Neil Tilley.

SA/20 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

SA/21 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chief Executive Frank McArdle wished chairman Councillor Gordon Rhind a speedy recovery from the illness which had forced him to miss the meeting. He also told the meeting that Derbyshire County Council (DCC) was now unable to supply an officer on a regular basis for future meetings.

He recorded his thanks to Paul Jameson for the work he had done at Area Forums to serve the public.

Mr McArdle asked for nominations for temporary chair from the floor. Councillor Stuart Swann nominated Councillor Steve Taylor and Councillor Sandra Wyatt seconded the motion.

Councillor Taylor took the chair and introduced Emma Simpson from Rural Action Derbyshire to give a presentation on the benefits of her charity's community gas and oil buying scheme. It aimed to save people money through collective bargaining with big suppliers. There was also a scheme to replace faulty or aging boilers free of charge.

SA/22 **THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON OCTOBER 3, 2017**

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

SA/23 **REPORT BACK ON ISSUES RAISED AT THE LAST MEETING**

Overgrown flower beds at the Tollgate Island

Councillor Taylor reported that the problem wasn't the flower beds themselves, but the condition of the brickwork planters. Another report back was needed.

ACTION: Report to be obtained into maintenance of the brickwork

SA/24 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON ISSUES RAISED BY RESIDENTS**

A resident said they were concerned about pedestrians crossing Castle Road near its junction with Princess Street, Castle Gresley. Visibility was poor with traffic coming at speed out of the Castleton Park estate and going up the hill. Could DCC come and have a look? Councillor Mrs Linda Chilton said DCC would ask for another refuge to be installed.

ACTION: Issue to be reported to DCC Highways

A member of the public asked if there was any further information available regarding the Woodville Regeneration Route. Councillor Taylor said he understood a capital injection from the Government was needed for the route. Specific funding could not yet be announced.

A resident complained about the flooding of the roundabout at the end of Civic Way, opposite the SDDC offices. Mr McArdle replied that to his knowledge repairs had been attempted by DCC on three occasions, but

the problem was believed to lie elsewhere and was in need of further urgent investigation by the Highways Authority.

ACTION: Issue to be reported to DCC Highways

Councillor Mrs Kim Coe reported that there was still flooding under the bridge in Occupation Lane, Woodville. Councillor Taylor added that the road had been closed for a couple of weeks and it had been expected that the flood would be sorted. However, work carried out by Leicestershire County Council (LCC) to shore up a bank had not worked. DCC was aware of the situation and a solution was being sought. The land which was causing a problem was in Leicestershire but not in LCC's ownership. A resident said drains needed clearing as they were full of silt and the problem was now worse than before. Another resident added that the issue had existed in Occupation Lane for at least 50 years. What was needed was a project to fill the dip in as the rail bridge which it used to accommodate was no longer extant.

ACTION: Issue to be reported to DCC Highways

A resident complained about the pedestrian crossing near a blind corner at the top of a steep rise on the Hepworths Retail Park. Mr McArdle said he would raise the issue with the new owners of the site. The resident also asked if a sign could be erected directing delivery lorries away from Coppice Side.

ACTION: Frank McArdle to raise issues in a meeting with Hepworths owners

Councillor Taylor reported that two developers in Woodville were choosing to use the pavement for their contractors' parking, rather than their own site. The sites affected were the White Hart site in Swadlincote Road and a site in Ashby Road adjacent to some allotments.

SA/25 **COUNTY COUNCIL ISSUES**

None.

SA/26 **DISTRICT COUNCIL ISSUES**

Mr McArdle informed the meeting that there was good news and challenging news for SDDC. Reserves were healthy but could only be used in a certain way to make sure they didn't run out when a rainy day occurred. In two years' time there would be an £800,000 deficit and efficiency savings were needed as Central Government funding was being reduced by £1.2 million by 2019-20. Council Tax could be raised and other charges levied could be increased. As one of the fastest growing districts outside the South East, South Derbyshire gained opportunities. The New

Homes Bonus brought money in, but that was going to be 'top sliced' to pay for DCC adult social care, as were the Business Rates. SDDC would attempt to do more with less by looking at different ways of working. Joint working with other authorities and the private sector could be considered. The new community centre in Chestnut Avenue, Midway, was a good example of working with the private sector and similar results could be achieved in other parts of the district. Houses were also being refurbished behind Swadlincote Fire Station.

On March 1, SDDC's councillors had been recommended to increase the Council Tax by 1.95%. A rise of more than 2% would have necessitated a referendum which would have cost more than any rise in the Council Tax itself. The rise meant that SDDC took 11% of the total bill from an average Band D property in the district.

Voluntary groups in the district would get an extra 1% if members agreed on March 1.

A resident asked what happened to those who attempted to avoid paying Council Tax. Mr McArdle replied that the recovery rate in South Derbyshire was almost 99%.

Councillor Mrs Wyatt asked what the recovery rate was on SDDC property rentals. Mr McArdle replied that the figure was higher than average but not as high as for Council Tax. People's ability to pay was considered. However, recovery was pursued on houses showing consistent non-payment.

SA/27 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was to be announced.

**Councillor Steve Taylor
Chair**

The meeting terminated at 8.20pm.