

NEWHALL AREA MEETING

6th September 2001

PRESENT:-

District Council Representatives

Councillor Mrs. Mead (Chair) and Councillors Bambrick, Richards and Wilkins.

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

County Council Representative

N. Elliott (Emergency Planning).

Derbyshire Constabulary

W.P.C. M. Fearn.

South Derbyshire Council for Voluntary Services

D. Rider

Members of the Public

P. Askham, P. Bambrick, G. Baxter, M. Biddle, T. Biddle, A. Blyth, B. Blyth, D. Coulson, M. Coulson, I. Fern, S. Garland, G. Hall, M. Hilton, R. Holden, R. Hughes, D. Key, J. Kinston, C. Maddock, D. Mansfield, B. Marsden, G. Myatt, K. Parker, W. Parker, B. Pipes, C. Pipes, M. Richards, M. Rose, D. Tagg, V. Thornley, G. Thursfield, E. Tunnicliffe, C. White and B. Woods.

NA/1. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

The Meeting noted the appointment of Councillor Mrs. Mead as Chair at the District Council's Annual Council Meeting.

NA/2. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from District Councillor Dunn, District and County Councillor Routledge and R. House.

NA/3. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR**

It was agreed that District Councillor Richards be appointed Vice-Chair of Area Meeting for the ensuing year.

NA/4. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Area Meeting held on 21st February 2001 were noted.

NA/5. **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair advised that earlier in the day, she had attended a meeting at Chrysanthemum Court regarding the establishment of a Foyer Project and an official Open Day for the launch was to be held on 11th October 2001.

The Chair thanked all residents involved in the "Bread and Butter Project" recently undertaken in Newhall to ascertain eating habits and lifestyles. This area was the first project to produce a draft report on the findings and ideas

and the area had also produced the most input from local residents. In due course, it was intended to put the contents of the report into practice.

Mr. Rider from South Derbyshire C.V.S. advised residents that the mobile information service would be visiting Jacksons car park in High Street, Newhall on 11th September 2001 from 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.

NA/6. **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 former Guide Headquarters on land at Newhall Park, Councillor Wilkins advised that this building had the benefit of temporary planning permission granted in June 1992 which had expired in 1998 and had not been renewed. Accordingly, if the Friends of Newhall Park wished to acquire the building, this situation would need to be regularised. The Secretary of the Friends of Newhall Park advised that the Group intended to acquire the building on a licence and had already been awarded a grant towards work, which had now been suspended. It had been ascertained that the Guide Association did not intend to apply for planning permission and a meeting of the Friends of Newhall Park had been arranged during the next week, when a decision on whether to apply for planning permission would be made. If so, the remedial works could be continued but if any serious objections were raised, the Group may no longer wish to acquire the building. At the present time, several groups had expressed an interest in utilising the building and it was considered if it was in use more frequently, this may assist in reducing the level of the undesirable activities allegedly ongoing in that area of the Park.

With regard to land at the former Horse and Jockey public house, Councillor Richards advised residents that the land had now been fenced. He understood that many residents had walked across this land for twenty years or more, in which case an application could be submitted to the County Highways Authority for a public right of way across the land. However, this could take a substantial period of time to process but in the meantime, it would be necessary for residents to claim that they had walked across this land for twenty years or more.

NA/7. **REPORT OF THE LOCAL BEAT OFFICER**

W.P.C. Fearn, the local Beat Officer, advised that on 1st October 2001, a police surgery was to be held at the Rowland Memorial Methodist Church Community Hall, James Street, Midway from 6.30 to 8.30 p.m., when residents could call in with any queries. There would also be a crime prevention exhibition and the surgery would be advertised shortly.

W.P.C. Fearn advised that of the seven recent burglaries to properties in Newhall, five had been due to insecurity and accordingly, she suggested that windows should be closed if residents were not in the room concerned.

Following queries by residents, W.P.C. Fearn outlined her areas of responsibility together with the new telephone system now in operation. In response to a query whether the police were interested in occupying the pavilion on Newhall Park, W.P.C. Fearn advised that this had been investigated but the building was not suitable for use by the public as it

would require the investment of considerable funds to improve the premises to health and safety and equal opportunities standards. Other options in Newhall were currently under investigation.

NA/8. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE LOCAL DISCUSSION ITEMS**

A resident advised that a relative had recently been refused permission at the Bretby Civic Amenity Site to dispose of green waste and enquired where this could be taken instead. The District Council's Head of Community Services advised that details would be ascertained accordingly. Other residents advised that they had not experienced problems at the site but understood that a limit was imposed of five bags every three months. Arising from this matter, a discussion ensued as to the remaining period of the site and it was understood that this was for a further three years.

A resident referred to the major developments recently undertaken in the urban core together with those proposed and considered that a hospital was now required for South Derbyshire. Residents advised that doctors' surgeries and dentists in the area were currently fully accommodated and the District Council's Head of Community Services advised that the Primary Care Group controlled health needs in the locality. These were in the course of attaining Trust status, which would provide an ability to change the use of buildings to utilise for health services. It was noted that the District Council and the Primary Care Group were separate bodies and the Primary Health Board was advised of all new housing developments. Planning officers were also in contact with Primary Care Groups to assess associated health needs. Several local Councillors had expressed an interest in the membership of any Trust Board. In the meantime, residents were requested to feed any concerns through the District Council's Head of Community Services.

Further to previous complaints, a resident again expressed concern at the untidy condition of land at Meadow View Road/Oversetts Road, Newhall. Following complaints by himself over a period of six months, litter had been eventually cleared but there was now continual tipping on the land, together with vandalism. Vehicles had also been abandoned in this area and a public footpath from Fairfield Crescent obstructed. These various matters would be pursued with the authorities concerned.

A resident referred to an area of land at the side of Alma Road, Newhall, which the Council had levelled and seeded but was now heavily overgrown with weeds. The District Council's Enforcement Officer would be advised accordingly.

A resident referred to a motorcycle that she had recently witnessed on the bowling green at Newhall Park and enquired as to progress on the provision of a noisy sports area in the District.

A resident expressed concern at the amount of litter on Oversetts Road, in the vicinity of the fish and chip shop. This was considered to be a health hazard and it was noted that the subject of litter was to be addressed as a separate agenda item later in the Meeting.

A resident expressed her dismay at youngsters running across garage roofs, allegedly containing asbestos, at the rear of Cecil Road and also expressed concern at the behaviour of nearby Council tenants. In response, District

Council Wilkins encouraged the resident, together with any other residents concerned at such behaviour, to report the names and addresses of offenders to the District Council or the Police, as witnesses would be required in connection with any formal action to be taken.

A resident advised that the weight limit imposed through Newhall was being abused and it was considered that the signage in connection with this limit may be inadequate. This would be pursued with the County Highways Authority.

Further to previous discussions on the establishment of a Neighbourhood Forum for Newhall, a resident enquired as to any progress and he understood that funds were available through the Single Regeneration Budget scheme. The District Council's Head of Community Services understood that a bid had been submitted and the matter would continue to be pursued.

NA/9. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Residents would be advised of the date of the next Meeting shortly.

NA/10. **LITTER PROBLEMS IN NEWHALL**

Mr. B. Woods addressed residents on the problem of litter in Newhall, which he considered was worsening. He felt that litter pickers should be employed as in other areas of the District and that street cleansing should be undertaken more regularly. Due to this ongoing problem, he was of the opinion that tourism in the area was not an attractive proposition. He felt it necessary to set an example to youngsters and it was unfortunate that a park keeper, who used to control the park strictly, was no longer in post. Mr. Woods considered that Newhall was no longer an area to be proud of, although the after-development of the Nadins site would provide benefits. He reported that a member of the Friends of Newhall Park undertook a daily litter pick on the park, which was greatly appreciated. However, he encouraged residents to complain about the level of litter to the authorities in writing or by telephone, rather than only voicing their concerns to others.

District Councillor Wilkins advised residents that other areas in the District having the benefit of litter pickers had Parish Councils to assist in the funding of such a facility. It was suggested that the Old Post Regeneration Association or the Friends of Newhall Park may wish to organise a regular litter pick in association with the local schools.

NA/11. **COMMUNITY RESPONSE PLAN FOR CIVIL EMERGENCIES**

The Area Meeting received a presentation from Nick Elliott of Derbyshire County Council's Emergency Planning Division. He explained that increasingly, the public expected a proactive response to emergencies, irrespective of legal obligations and potential costs. The County Council was seeking to raise awareness of the roles and responsibilities of the various agencies and to highlight the potential for a new partnership approach where the community could help to protect themselves and each other during an incident. The document had been produced in conjunction with the Derbyshire Association of Local Councils and the County's Emergency Services. The document would be made available to town and parish

councils throughout Derbyshire to provide guidance on dealing with emergency incidents and the collation of local information.

It was stressed that the emergency services should always be contacted and details were provided of the County Council resources available to respond to incidents. Potential hazards and threats for Derbyshire included road and rail accidents, air disasters and terrorist attacks. There were a number of companies throughout Derbyshire which handled potentially dangerous chemicals and details were provided of those statutory and non-statutory hazardous sites throughout the County. The potential for football stadia disasters and incidents resulting from large organised events such as open air concerts was also recognised.

The Chair and residents thanked Mr. Elliott for the informative presentation.

NA/12. **BEST VALUE**

The Area Meeting received a presentation from Sandra Whiles, Head of Community Services at the District Council. Information had been circulated prior to the start of the meeting to provide a summary of the Best Value process. Mrs. Whiles gave an outline of the requirements placed on local councils by Best Value, the need to publish a Best Value Performance Plan and to establish a Best Value Review Programme to examine all services over a five year period. Details were provided of those reviews completed in year one of the Programme and those proposed for the current year which were either underway or due to start shortly. Each service would be subject to an inspection by an independent assessor appointed by the Audit Commission. The inspector would make a judgement on how good the service was and whether it would improve in the future. For South Derbyshire, the two services inspected to date were the Development Control function and Sheltered Housing and the results of both reviews were reported. Information was provided on the community consultation requirements for the Best Value Process.

NA/13. **CONSULTATION EXERCISE ON THE MODERNISATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH DERBYSHIRE**

Two documents had been circulated prior to the Meeting to provide information on this subject. Sandra Whiles, Head of Community Services at the District Council explained the options available to the Council in implementing the Government's Modernising Agenda. There had been widespread consultation through the publication "Which Way, Have Your Say". Some 32,000 copies of this document had been circulated through the local free newspapers. Consultation had also been undertaken with parish councils and details were provided of the responses to the consultation exercise.

Since that time a modernised committee structure had been introduced and information was provided on the key features of this structure. There was increased notice of meetings and new rights for the public including a question time slot at all meetings. Mrs. Whiles also explained the roles of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The new structure would provide for open and transparent local government.

MRS. J. MEAD

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 9.05 p.m.