

REPTON AREA MEETING

27th January 2004

PRESENT:-

District Council Representatives

Councillor Taylor (Chair), Councillor Bladen (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Ford, Mrs. Hood, Isham, Jones and Mrs. Wheeler.

T. Neaves (Chief Finance Officer), D. Cook (Democratic Services Officer) and B. Jones (Helpdesk).

County Council Representative

Councillor A. Jones.

Derbyshire Constabulary

Sergeant A. Wright.

Parish Council Representatives

R. Statham (Woodville Parish Council), D. Adams (Hartshorne Parish Council), J. Burley (Hartshorne Parish Council), K. Gibbs (Willington Parish Council), S.M. Smith (Woodville Parish Council), D. Roberts (Repton Parish Council), R. Paulson (Repton Parish Council).

Members of the Public

C. Bailey (Woodville Parish Council), R.G. Fairbrother, D.E. Jenkinson, A. Kimber, Mr and Mrs Cownie, C. Combs (Burton Mail), H. Wood, A. Gillespie, N. Parry, A. Gifford, J. Orme, M. Gee (Woodville Parish Council), S. Brookfield, D. Tagg, C. Manifold.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillor Atkin (Newton Solney Parish Council), Councillor D. Brookfield (Newton Solney Parish Council), Mr. Vincent and Mrs. J. Stamford.

RA/20. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 23rd October 2003 were received.

RA/21. **REPORT BACK ON ISSUES RAISED AT THE LAST MEETING**

The Chair invited the Democratic Services Officer to provide an update on matters raised at the previous Meeting. With regard to various traffic issues at Woodville, she read out a detailed response received from Mr. P. Leigh of Derbyshire County Council covering several of these matters. The Chair advised that this response was good news on the various issues but the schemes referred to now needed implementing. S. Smith (Woodville Parish Council) referred to the traffic problems in Woodville and emphasised that these would only be worsened following the completion of the new housing estates.

With regard to the litter problems at Twyford Road, Willington Recycling site and recycling bins not being locked the Democratic Services Officer read out

a response received from the Recycling Officer. This response advised that litter problems could be reported free of charge on the Clean Team line (0800 5872349). The Officer also stated that the litter bin provided for the carrier bags was not being used to its full potential. Several residents disagreed and stated that the litter bin at the Willington Recycling Centre was not large enough. The Meeting was advised that the Council had experimented with locking recycling banks in the past but some patrons had still placed bottles and cans at the side of the recycling banks creating a litter problem. It was reported that the Council had installed some large signs at recycling centres at Hatton and Church Gresley and since then a noticeable improvement in waste dumping at these centres had been noted. It was suggested that if Willington Parish Council was in agreement, a similar sign could be provided at Twyford Road in the new financial year. Councillor Ford welcomed such a sign and requested its installation as soon as possible.

With regard to the hazardous parking outside Newton Solney Village Hall, Sergeant Wright advised that liaison had taken place with the Parish Council on this matter and no further complaints had been received.

With regard to cars parking outside the post office and Spa Shop on single yellow lines at Repton, Sergeant Wright advised that liaison had taken place with the local Police Constable. This problem would be dealt with by the issuing of fixed penalty tickets if initial warnings were ignored. Councillor Wheeler advised that the news of fixed penalty tickets being issued had not circulated and the parish council were very concerned about this problem. It was suggested that the issuing of fixed penalty tickets be publicised as a deterrent to motorists parking in this area.

With regard to cars parking on the zigzag outside the newsagents/chip shop at Woodville, Sergeant Wright advised that monitoring of this area had taken place and no such incidents had been noted. Representatives advised that such parking was still a problem particularly during the early morning and the teatime slots when people tended to collect their newspapers. Accordingly, Sergeant Wright agreed to action this matter further.

Councillor Statham advised that Woodville Parish Council had received a response from Derbyshire County Council regarding the erection of railings to the Puffin crossing at Hartshorne Road, Woodville. Accordingly, the Meeting was advised that Derbyshire County Council had undertaken to make up the railings on the Library side of the road.

RA/22. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE LOCAL DISCUSSION ITEMS**

A. Gifford referred to the speed ramps at Oaks Road/Hall Lane, Willington and asked how effective such ramps had been based on the data they were installed upon. It was agreed to write to Derbyshire County Council seeking a response. A resident of Repton Road, Hartshorne reported on the installation of speed bumps on Repton Road and advised that they had been very successful. He stated that most traffic was now passing along the road at an average speed of between 25 and 35 miles per hour.

R. Paulson queried what would happen if the new recycling box which had been distributed to particular households in the District was stolen. It was agreed to seek a response and report back to Mr. Paulson accordingly.

Mr. Paulson expressed concern that Police cars were using Repton as a response route, and travelling at excessive speeds through the village. He expressed concern regarding the dangers to other road users and pedestrians arising from this action. Sergeant Wright reported that the Police did not have any particular definitive route for attending incidents and that the nearest Police car would attend whenever possible. Mr. Paulson requested that the Police consider speed and its necessity against the interests of residents of the village. Sergeant Wright advised that this would be an issue if the Police were not driving safely and noted the comments made with a view to monitoring the situation accordingly.

Sergeant Wright referred to the lack of use of the Police bus and reported that the bus no longer “parked up” in villages but travelled around particular villages. The rota for the bus would be issued to parish councils. A general discussion took place regarding the lack of availability of the bus rotas and accordingly, Sergeant Wright agreed to ensure that parish councils received a copy of the rota and that the rota was placed at the Helpdesk at Area Meetings. J. Burley advised that the rural beat officer for the village of Hartshorne (PC Staley) had not been seen for some time. Sergeant Wright advised that this particular Officer covered Repton, Newton Solney, Ticknall, Melbourne and part of Hartshorne. He agreed to ensure that parish councils were made aware of the beat officer timetable.

A resident questioned the use of motorised scooters and was advised by Sergeant Wright that a girl in Newhall had recently been arrested on public nuisance offences for persistently riding such a scooter after being warned not to do so. He advised that a Driving License and insurance was needed to use such a scooter and failure to comply was against the law. He hoped that the case against the girl at Newhall would be successful and receive much publicity. He also advised, in response to a question from Councillor R. Statham that such scooters could be confiscated by the Police if the offenders were persistent.

Mr. Orme referred to the boundaries for the Area Meeting being inconsistent with the new District boundaries and was advised that the Council had decided to await a change in County Council boundaries in 2005 before reorganising such Area Meeting boundaries. Councillor Wheeler made a suggestion that the Area Meetings be based on the new County boundaries from 2005 and it was agreed to advise the Chief Executive accordingly.

Mr. Orme referred to a recent letter he had received from the Planning Department of the District Council regarding the Council’s Local Plan and the Public Inquiry. This letter stated that “Although the canal was designated a Conservation Area, Willington, unlike many of the other villages within the District did not have a definable historical core that established its character. There were some Listed Buildings but the bulk of the development consisted of suburban housing estates that had been dominated for the past fifty years by the high buildings and cooling towers of the power station. The redevelopment of the site provided an opportunity to stamp a character on the village through the construction of buildings reflecting the local distinctiveness of South Derbyshire in accordance with Policy ENV21”. Mr. Orme asked for clarification as to what “stamp a character” meant and, it was agreed to seek advice from the Local Plans Manager and respond to him accordingly.

RA/23. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was reported that the next Meeting would be held on Thursday, 13th May 2004 at the Woodville Infants School.

RA/24. SHARPE'S POTTERY

A presentation was made by Mr. John Oake on the restoration of the Sharpe's Pottery Centre. Originally, as part of the Single Regeneration Budget Scheme it had been intended to provide a heritage facility on the Swadlincote Woodlands Forest Park. Ultimately, such a scheme was not considered sustainable and the Sharpe's Pottery buildings in West Street were identified as a possible alternative location. Some works were undertaken to safeguard these Listed buildings and bids were made to the Single Regeneration Budget and the District Council. A feasibility study was undertaken and a £950,000 scheme was devised for a modest Visitor Centre. This included an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for £600,000. The application was not approved but the HLF felt that a more ambitious scheme should be submitted. A revised scheme costing £1.75 million was submitted and subsequently approved. Mr. Oake spoke of the requirement to achieve museum status and the premises were now open six days each week. He referred to the day-to-day funding for the centre and that it cost approximately £60,000 per annum to run. The centre had attracted over 17,000 visitors in its first year and there was confidence that it would meet its running costs without further District Council support. The Chair congratulated Mr. Oake and others involved in the delivery of the Sharpe's Pottery Scheme.

RA/25. CONSULTATION ON THE COUNCIL'S BUDGET

The Meeting received a presentation from Mr. T. Neaves, Chief Finance Officer. He explained the aims of the consultation exercise and gave an overview of the topics covered in the presentation. Feedback from previous consultations had identified reasons for key priorities and the other aims that the Council should pursue. The total cost of services plus some £8.7m and a series of charts showed the costs of Environmental Services, Community Services and Finance and Management services. Details were given of the services provided by Derbyshire County Council and the Police Authority together with a chart showing the respective proportions of council tax income that funded these services.

Mr. Neaves explained how the Council managed its finances, focusing on a three year medium term. The Council's current financial position was stable with improving levels of reserves. However, there was a need for caution as the Council was spending more than it received in income at present. This was again demonstrated by graphs. Mr. Neaves then explained the financial constraints that the Council faced, levels of Government grant and how this affected the level of council tax increase. The budget proposals were reported and these sought to maintain existing services and to provide additional resources for service improvements and additional investment in Council building and major projects. The Council sought to provide better services for a growing population and to improve local facilities.

Councillor D. Adams referred to the Council's play areas and advised that a Council Officer had advised him that there was no finance available to

improve such play areas. Mr. Neaves advised that budget proposals had been included within the forthcoming budget in order for improvements to play areas to take place.

Mr. J. Orme referred to an issue regarding the public toilets at Willington and the “surcharge” on the residents of Willington for such a provision. The Chair advised that there were no plans to change the arrangement regarding the toilets at Willington but the Council was looking to prioritise services by way of its Corporate Plan focusing on the needs of communities. Mr. Orme suggested that the toilets should be serviced by Derbyshire County Council as, in his opinion, the sole purpose of the toilets was to service the County Council’s picnic area. Mr. Paulson advised that he felt that the provision of public toilets required re-consideration. Mr. Neaves explained in detail the scoring system which had been used to devise Council spending priorities.

Mr. Cownie referred to the Council spending more than it was receiving in income and Mr. Neaves explained the Council’s three-year financial planning process. He advised that the Council currently had over and above the level of reserves it required and was therefore looking at “giving back” these reserves to the community. Mr. Gifford asked that the Council did not forget the issues that had been put to one side during its financial crisis.

In response to a question from Mr. Statham, Mr. Neaves confirmed that the Council did not receive any grant from the Government to make buildings accessible under the Disability Discrimination Act.

S. TAYLOR

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 9.35 p.m.