

ETWALL AREA MEETING

9th October 2002

PRESENT:-

District Council Representatives

Councillor Whyman (Chair) and Councillor Hood (Vice-Chair), Councillors Bale and Mrs. Walton.

I. Reid (Deputy Chief Executive), S. Batchelor (Community and Leisure Development), P. Spencer (Democratic Services) and B. Jones (Helpdesk).

Derbyshire County Council Representative

Councillor W. Burrows and Mr. J. Waite.

Derbyshire Constabulary

Sergeant M. Gahagan and Acting Sergeant I. Mallard.

Parish Council Representatives

H. Thornton (Burnaston Parish Council), N. Ireland and J. Newton (Etwall Parish Council), J. Chisnall and L Nash (Findern Parish Council) and J. Cumpstone (Hilton Parish Council).

Members of the Public

S. Avery, S. Bell, T. Beresford, P. Black, D. Brierley, B. Chell, K. Cleghorn, B. Cowley, M. Cramp, A. Crossley, J. Dove, C. Gerrard, B. Goodhead, G. Green, H. Hague, C Hariland, G. Hariland, P. Hickinbotham, B. McGibbon, A. Mitchell, P. Morrell, D. Parkinson, R. Paulson, B. Penlington, J. Redfern, B. Smedley, I. Smith, S. Smith, M. Whyman and J. Wood.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillor Lemmon (South Derbyshire District Council), Councillor Mrs. Littlejohn (Derbyshire County Council), R. Grimmett and G. Wale.

EA/9. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Area Meeting held on 24th July 2002 were noted.

EA/10. **REPORT BACK ON ISSUES RAISED AT THE LAST MEETING**

The Chair reviewed those items raised at the last Meeting and explained the progress made in each case. Details were provided of forthcoming County Council Local Area Committees and the next would take place on Thursday, 31st October 2002 at 2.00 p.m. at the Hilton Methodist Church Hall in Main Street, Hilton. Reference was also made to the format of these Meetings.

Following the request at the last Meeting, discussions had taken place about winter maintenance and it would be possible to provide and service winter grit bins to enable self-help. The Council was unable to provide a district-wide path clearance service. At the previous Meeting, consideration had been given to liability issues and further guidance was sought. This would need to be researched and a report would be made to the next Meeting. In the meantime,

officers would liaise with Hilton Parish Council about the provision of grit bins in Bloomfield Close and Percy Wood Close. Mr. Waite commented that Derbyshire County Council provided numerous grit bins throughout the County. He was unaware of any claim against an individual relating to the dispersal of grit from one of these bins.

A letter had been received from Trent Buses giving detailed reasons why its V1 route could not be diverted to serve the new Hilton Surgery. Trent Buses had advised that the V2 service passed the surgery every hour. County Councillor Burrows was advised of a problem reported at the last Meeting regarding an overgrown verge obscuring new road signage at the entrance to Hatton.

EA/11. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE LOCAL DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Ivor Smith questioned whether parking restrictions could be introduced in Main Street, Etwall. Previously, this proposal had not been pursued as there were no traffic wardens to enforce such regulations. With the introduction of beat officers, it was questioned whether parking restrictions could be introduced and some limited enforcement undertaken, to provide a deterrent. There were safety concerns due to vehicles parking in the vicinity of the John Port School entrance and nearby bus stops. Sergeant Gahagan felt that this would not be the best use of the beat officers' time and a traffic warden was still unavailable for this area. County Councillor Burrows spoke of the design of traffic calming schemes to provide self-enforcement, the need for each scheme to be designed individually and for wide consultation to take place before a scheme could be introduced. Parking restrictions were sought rather than traffic calming measures and Mr. Waite was asked to consider implementing traffic regulation orders and to submit a further report to the next Meeting.

There was a brief discussion on the role of beat constables and a request was made that officers make themselves familiar with residents of rural areas. A complaint was submitted about speeding traffic along the A511, Station Road in Hatton. Sergeant Gahagan advised of recent speed monitoring undertaken in the area. He explained how the Constabulary recorded all accident statistics and applied a weighting, based on the severity of each accident to give a profile of known problem areas. Hatton residents were concerned that a fatal road traffic accident would take place before these safety concerns were recognised and appropriate action was taken. In response to a further question, Sergeant Gahagan publicised revised arrangements for use of the mobile police station. The vehicle was now used on a daily basis by beat officers and a flexible approach had been adopted, with details of where the vehicle would be situated publicised through the Police liaison group minutes.

Further to Minute No. EA/10 above, there was a discussion about providing a bus shelter near to the new Hilton Surgery. Ian Reid explained that the Primary Care Trust (PCT) had agreed to progress an application under the County Council's joint scheme, now that the necessary funds had been raised. He agreed to pursue the PCT and to ask that Mrs. Avery be kept informed of progress. County Councillor Burrows spoke about the joint scheme and the issues to be considered in siting bus shelters. There was a need for the PCT to liaise with Derbyshire County Council to progress the scheme and Ian Reid offered to pass on this request. A member of the public voiced dissent on the role that the PCT had agreed to take and Mrs. Avery agreed to speak to the person concerned after the Meeting to clarify this aspect.

Councillor Mrs. Walton enquired whether the postcard acknowledgement system was still in place for County Council correspondence. Councillor Burrows assured that every effort was made to provide a speedy response to all enquiries, but for more complex matters a holding response was sent by postcard, letter or e-mail as appropriate.

Mrs. Cowley, a resident of Egginton advised Councillor Burrows of road safety concerns at the junction of the A5132 Egginton/Etwall crossroads. Councillor Burrows noted the need for verge maintenance to improve visibility at this junction.

An update was sought on progress with the South Derbyshire Local Plan. Ian Reid explained that some 1,200 responses had been received during the first consultation stage. These were currently being considered and proposed alterations to the first draft would be submitted to a Special Meeting of the Council's Development and Environmental Services Committee in early November. This would be followed by the production of a second deposit document by Christmas and then further consultation. Each person that had made a representation or objection during the first consultation phase would receive a response explaining how their representation had been dealt with and any consequential proposed amendments to the Local Plan. A public inquiry would be held in the summer of 2003.

There was a discussion about the withdrawal of some train services using the Willington Station. It was felt that this would diminish the strategic viability of the Station and given the public sector investment to reopen Willington Station, the news had been met with disappointment. It was noted that rail companies had no formal commitment to provide services and they were only operated if financially viable. The County Council offered subsidies to secure the retention of some services and comparisons were made with problems experienced elsewhere in the County.

For the next Area Meeting it was requested that a discussion take place on increasing the number of affordable properties within South Derbyshire. This was agreed and some initial information was provided on how the Council tried to achieve this objective.

EA/12. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next Etwall Area Meeting would be held on Wednesday, 29th January 2003 at the Hilton Village Hall in Peacroft Lane, Hilton.

EA/13. **HIGHWAY ISSUES**

County Councillor Burrows introduced himself and John Waite, the Area Highways Manager for the south of the County. He thanked those present for the opportunity to attend this Area Meeting and explained his role as the Cabinet Member for the Environment and Highways. Councillor Burrows took the opportunity to provide further information on those items raised earlier in the Meeting, particularly publicity arrangements for the local area committees, winter maintenance arrangements and non-winter maintenance. Derbyshire County Council was not a transport authority, but it did have a small budget which was used to encourage service providers to retain certain strategic if not financially viable services. Councillor Burrows then referred to the problems

caused by ragwort and the limited effectiveness of permissible weedkillers. John Waite provided supplementary information on the problems caused by this notifiable weed and the County Council's complementary treatment policy.

An outline was given of revisions to funding arrangements for highway maintenance and safety works. Prior to 1998, Highway Authorities received an annual allocation, which did not enable long-term planning. Government was lobbied by a number of authorities including Derbyshire County Council and a subsequent review meant that longer term indicative budgets were now provided. Derbyshire had been awarded £82m for highway works over a four year period and Councillor Burrows felt that terrific progress had been made in the last 18 months.

Mr. Cumpstone of Hilton Parish Council reminded those present of the problems experienced with maintenance works in Back Lane, Hilton. He also asked about the adoption of highways following residential development in the village over the last four years. Councillor Burrows voiced his concerns about the problems experienced in Back Lane and he compared the merits of the surface dressing technique to those of full highway reinstatement. Even with the additional resources provided by Government, it was still necessary to use the surface dressing technique on some occasions.

It was clarified that it was the quality rather than the method of road repair used that was an issue. It was agreed that County Councillor Burrows and John Waite liaise with Hilton Parish Council directly to resolve this matter. The delay in adopting highways was probably due to the developer not achieving the required specification of the County Council. As a way forward, Mr. Cumpstone was asked to speak with John Waite and to report progress to the next Meeting.

Mr. Wood sought a progress report on the traffic calming measures for Station Road, Hatton. Councillor Burrows referred to the status of A511 as a primary route, the disappointment that the A50 had not achieved the desired reduction in traffic levels through Hatton and adjacent villages and the difficulty in imposing the requested weight restrictions. There were differing interpretations of the content of a Ministerial letter and the ability to reclassify this section of the A511. At present, the County Council was awaiting the results of traffic surveys to enable discussions to be held with Staffordshire County Council. Local people had recorded their own traffic statistics and these were reported together with the problems caused for residents. A view was expressed that adjacent Staffordshire residents suffered similar problems and were supportive of proposals to seek the reclassification of this route.

An enquiry was made about liability for clearance of a blocked ditch adjacent to the A516 near Hilton. Mr. Waite of Derbyshire County Council agreed to look into this problem and it seemed that it might be the responsibility of the County Council.

Further complaints were made about the quality and methods of road repairs undertaken. Specific problems reported were weeds growing through resurfaced footways, resurfacing works taking place around parked vehicles and the poor quality of reinstatement following works by utility companies. The County Council representatives provided some clarification on the responsibilities placed on contractors to remedy defects. It was noted that the Authority only received sufficient funding to enable the inspection of 6% of repairs undertaken by utility companies.

Mr. Bell of Findern Parish Council enquired about the re-siting of a 30 MPH speed limit sign on Doles Lane and associated lining work. Mr. Waite agreed to research this matter and to respond to Mr. Bell directly.

EA/14. **ITEMS FROM ETWALL PARISH COUNCIL**

(a) Refuse Collection and Recycling

Mr. Ireland enquired about the recent publicity in “Composting News” for the freighter service funded by Etwall Parish Council. He sought clarification about the expansion of the composting scheme and Ian Reid provided an update. The scheme had been extended to include the Melbourne area and further expansion was planned in March 2003. It was hoped to introduce a “blue box” dry recycling scheme and the renewal of the County Council’s waste disposal contract might provide further recycling opportunities. Mr. Ireland also questioned the recycling of electrical items and cardboard. Two cardboard recycling points had been established and it was hoped to expand this in the future. Mr. Smith spoke of the success of the composting scheme but was critical of the fortnightly collection of refuse. Comment was also made about excessive packaging and the need for the Government to impose regulations on the retail sector.

(b) Noise from East Midlands Airport

The Parish Council had been informed by residents of increasing noise from night flights. The Chair was also Chair of the East Midlands Airport Independent Consultative Forum and he advised that each noise complaint was recorded. To date there had been few reported problems from this part of the District. Statistically, complaint levels had reduced following the introduction of noise preferential routes. All problems should be reported to the Airport so that they could be logged and compliance with agreed routes monitored. It was noted that once an aircraft reached an altitude of 3,000 feet, the noise preferential routes did not apply. A consultation process was currently underway on the expansion of the controllable airspace in the vicinity of the East Midlands Airport and the Chair provided details. A group had been established and it was agreed to circulate details of forthcoming meetings of that group with the Minutes of this Meeting. Problems had also been experienced in Scropton and the Parish Council Meeting had been interrupted the previous evening because of aircraft noise. The Chair agreed to invite Neil Robinson of East Midlands Airport to attend the next Meeting to discuss this issue further.

(c) Joint County and District Area Meetings

Mr. Ireland compared the format of the District and County Councils’ area-based public meetings. He felt that the County’s local area committees gave little opportunity for participation and that they should be held in the evenings rather than mid-afternoon as at present. Councillor Burrows explained that arrangements for local area committees varied across the County and in his own area of Chesterfield, the meeting started at 6.00 p.m. In the north of the County, levels of public attendance were high and the public open session was given sufficient

time to enable any questions to be answered. Further information was provided on the publicity arrangements for the local area committees and Councillor Burrows agreed to refer back the views expressed.

(d) Problems with Ragwort

Whilst this issue had been discussed earlier in the Meeting, Councillor Bale reported briefly on a proposed Early Day Motion for the Government to become pro-active in preventing the spread of ragwort. To date 49 Members of Parliament had given their support and Councillor Bale suggested that people lobby South Derbyshire's Member of Parliament, Mr. M. Todd to sign the Early Day Motion.

EA/15. **CRIME AND DISORDER INITIATIVES**

The Area Meeting received a presentation from Stuart Batchelor, the Council's Community and Leisure Development Manager. He spoke to a circulated handout "Reducing Crime in our Community". The vision for a safe South Derbyshire would be achieved through partnership working between the range of local authorities, Police, Health, other statutory bodies, voluntary organisations and the business sector. The community would also be encouraged to take action itself to reduce criminal and anti-social behaviour.

The Crime and Disorder Act had placed a statutory responsibility on authorities to work in partnership to reduce crime and disorder through the production of a strategy every three years. The 2002 to 2005 Strategy had identified six main priority areas which were outlined together with their respective three year targets. The literature showed the South Derbyshire Crime and Disorder Partnership structure and a table was submitted outlining current activity being undertaken by each of the action teams.

A question was submitted on possible funding for Neighbourhood Watch Schemes and Mr. Batchelor explained the resources that would be available and how these would be refocused through the Police for Neighbourhood Watch Schemes.

B. WHYMAN

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 9.55 p.m.