

ETWALL AREA MEETING

30th July 2003

PRESENT:-

District Council Representatives

Councillor Whyman, M.B.E. (Chair) and Councillors Ford, Mrs. Hood, Hood, Martin and Mrs. Walton.

I. Reid (Deputy Chief Executive), P. Spencer (Democratic Services) and B. Jones (Helpdesk).

Derbyshire County Council Representative

Councillor Mrs. M. Littlejohn.

Member of Parliament

Mr. M. Todd MP.

Parish Council Representatives

C. Foord (Burnaston Parish Council), Mrs. B. Cowley (Egginton Parish Council), N. Ireland (Etwall Parish Council), J. Chisnall and Mrs. L. Nash (Findern Parish Council), T. Beresford (Foston and Scropton Parish Council), R. Buxton and R. Harding (Hatton Parish Council) and Mrs. L. Kolkman (Hilton Parish Council).

Derbyshire Constabulary

Sergeant S. Wilson and PC D. Charlton.

Members of the Public

R. Arnsworth, S. Avery, A. Baker, C. Baker, C. Bould, G. Bilbie, M. Bowes, M. Downey-Bowes, J. Brown, S. Brown, B. Chell, L. Coombes, A. Crossley, J. Dove, J. Etchells, F. Green, G. Green, R. Grimmett, S. Jolly, R. Mathews, R. Mathews, A. Mitchell, S. Morley, J. Newton, J. Parkinson, R. Paulson, I. Smith, E. Sutton, G. Wale and C. Woodward.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillors Bale and Lemmon (South Derbyshire District Council), Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Smedley, Mrs. Haig, D. Parkinson (Etwall Parish Council), M. Cramp (Hatton Parish Council), J. Banton (Hilton Parish Council) and Inspector D. Hargreaves (Derbyshire Constabulary).

EA/1. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR**

It was agreed that Councillor Mrs. R. Walton be appointed Vice-Chair of the Etwall Area Meeting for the ensuing year.

EA/2. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Area Meeting held on 29th January 2003 were noted. Further to Minute No. EA/18, Mrs. J. Dove asked if there had been any

developments regarding the treatment of ragwort. The Member of Parliament, Mr. M. Todd MP advised of a Bill making its way through Parliament which should help to enforce the treatment of this notifiable weed in areas where horses were likely to be affected. The Chair also commented on a recent article in the Local Government Magazine “First” about ragwort.

At the last Meeting, comment had been made about a blocked ditch on the A516 near Hatton. No progress had been made and the Deputy Chief Executive agreed to pursue Derbyshire County Council on this matter and to keep Hatton and Hilton parish councils informed of progress.

During public question time at the last Meeting there had been a discussion about the remaining planning gain monies for traffic management measures in Hatton. The Chair understood that once the local community had identified suitable schemes, this funding could be used and he felt that the matter should be raised at the next Hatton Parish Council Meeting. County Councillor Mrs. Littlejohn referred to a previous request for a “speed camera” to be installed in the Village. The Member of Parliament gave an update on the changing guidance regarding the installation of speed cameras and the retention of penalty fees within the local area.

EA/3. **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. An update was given on the highways’ issues raised at a number of previous Meetings. The Chair advised that information had been circulated to parish councils and parish meetings following the requests made at the last Meeting. He read a response from Councillor Bale to the enquiry made about a planning agreement in Scropton. Councillor Hood advised that Derbyshire County Council’s Cabinet had agreed to a speed reduction for a section of Doles Lane, Findern. County Councillor Mrs. Littlejohn also reported on this matter. The Chair provided feedback on the arrangements for monitoring the Council’s gully emptying contractor. Councillor Mrs. Walton advised of a specific gully problem in Uttoxeter Road, Hilton and the actions taken to seek a remedy to this situation.

EA/4. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE LOCAL DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Mrs. Kolkman had given notice of a question regarding the Hilton Western Link Road. She sought the Area Meeting’s support for a Public Meeting to be held with the County Council’s Highways Department. Hilton Parish Council had requested such a meeting, but had yet to receive a reply. County Councillor Mrs. Littlejohn had been in discussion with the Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment, Councillor Brian Lucas. It was proposed to raise highway issues at the Hatton Parish Council Meeting on the evening of 2nd September 2003. There was a discussion on the merits of holding a joint meeting for residents of Hatton and Hilton at this time, but there was a preference to hold two separate meetings. Residents stressed the importance of the Hilton Public Meeting taking place in the near future as the Western Link Road was under construction. It was agreed to hold the meeting in Hatton on 2nd September and to seek an additional meeting, prior to that date in Hilton. County Councillor Mrs. Littlejohn agreed to liaise with the appropriate agencies and the Clerk would write confirming details to all parish councils.

Mrs. Dove referred to the methods employed to treat weeds in the highway. Recently, an operative had been observed treating weeds whilst leaning out of a moving car and it was felt that the treatment had been ineffective. The Deputy Chief Executive asked Mrs. Dove to speak to him after the Meeting so that he could investigate this complaint. A resident advised that in December 2003 new European Union Regulations would restrict the use of certain pesticides and herbicides. Local authorities would have the responsibility to dispose of those chemicals which were no longer permitted. An enquiry was made on the proposed publicity arrangements and the approach being taken to deal with this issue. The Deputy Chief Executive agreed to research this matter and would submit a report to the next Area Meeting. It was requested that any press releases be circulated to parish councils.

Mr. Paulson of Repton Parish Council had given notice of a question regarding the transportation of vehicles from Toyota at Burnaston. In a recent press article it had been announced that approximately 160 cars per day were to be moved by road to Southampton. He questioned whether local authorities or Government could seek the provision of a rail link into Toyota to reduce lorry movements on the local road network. The comments were noted by the Member of Parliament and County Councillor Mrs. Littlejohn. However, there were significant financial and logistic implications in providing such a rail link. Other issues raised were the provision of traffic lights on the Toyota road traffic island and the possibility of securing the rail link when Toyota introduced a third production shift. The Company should be encouraged to transport vehicles away from the factory overnight.

Prior to the Meeting, Etwall Parish Council had submitted questions about the Swadlincote Bus Station and Etwall Public Toilets. Responses had been provided and included within the Agenda. Mr. Ireland of Etwall Parish Council commented on the provision of bus shelters. Mrs. Avery referred to the provision of additional bus shelters in Hilton, to serve the new doctors' surgery. Revised costings had been received and she reminded those present of the commitments made to date and the funding still required to provide the bus shelters. The Primary Care Trust had submitted an application to the Council's Community Partnership Fund, but this had been unsuccessful. The Chair offered to pursue this matter and hoped that it could be resolved in time for the next Area Meeting.

Representatives of the Hatton Action Group referred to the closure of Station Road, to enable works by the Severn Trent Water Company. It appeared that no advance warning signs had been provided and there were concerns over the route which heavy goods vehicles would use due to the road closure. It was agreed to liaise with Derbyshire County Council, the Highways Agency and Severn Trent Water Company to ensure that appropriate signage was provided. Traffic surveys had indicated that up to 71 heavy goods vehicles used this route each hour. Councillor Mrs. Littlejohn understood that traffic volumes were being monitored and she suggested that this issue be raised at the meeting with the County Council on 2nd September. Further concerns raised were the speed of traffic through this area, proposals to remove weight restrictions along the Hilton/Hatton section of the A516 and the likely impact for residents of Scropton with heavy goods vehicles travelling through that area due to the road closure. It was agreed to investigate the lack of signage as a matter of urgency. Police representatives noted the concerns and it was hoped that a presence could be provided during the road closure.

South Derbyshire residents were experiencing difficulties in using Civic Amenity facilities in East Staffordshire and Derby. It was questioned whether reciprocal arrangements could be introduced, as for many residents the facility at Newhall was too far away. The problem had been recognised and it was mainly due to the cost of waste disposal and attempts to prevent commercial use of Civic Amenity sites, that restrictions had been imposed. Derby City Council was seeking a considerable contribution from the County Council to allow residents of South Derbyshire to use the Raynesway facility. A cross-border meeting would shortly be held with East Staffordshire Borough Council and the Chair agreed to add this issue to the agenda.

There were road safety concerns regarding the Egginton Road rail crossing. At present, the crossing was not wide enough to allow cars to pass, let alone heavy goods vehicles. It was felt that the crossing should be improved at the same time as the other road improvements associated with the Hilton Western Link Road. The Deputy Chief Executive agreed to investigate this matter.

EA/5. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date and venue of the next Etwall Area Meeting would be confirmed in due course.

EA/6. **FOOTPATH FROM LONG LANE TO THURVASTON**

A request had been submitted by Councillor Bale, seeking the Area Meeting's support for the provision of a footpath between Long Lane and Thurvaston. The Chair read a letter to the former County Council Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment. This explained the road safety concerns and referred to a fatal road traffic accident. In Councillor Bale's absence, Councillor Hood added that the request was supported by the Local County Councillor, the Member of Parliament and there was a petition with more than 100 signatures. It was agreed to write to County Councillor Lucas, the Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment, giving the Area Meeting's support to this request and reaffirming the support of Mark Todd MP and County Councillor Mrs. Littlejohn.

EA/7. **REFUSE COLLECTION SERVICE**

Representatives of Etwall Parish Council had some concerns about the refuse collection arrangements. It was agreed that they write to the Deputy Chief Executive at the District Council, in order that these concerns could be investigated and a report would then be provided to the next Area Meeting.

EA/8. **BUDGET CONSULTATION**

The Chair introduced this item and explained that the Council wished to gather residents' views to inform the Budget Process. A verbal report was made by the Deputy Chief Executive who reminded that for the last two years the Council had tried to seek the views of local people on spending priorities. Whilst resources were limited, the Council sought to allocate some new monies each year to deliver service improvements. It wanted to ensure that these resources were used to reflect the priorities of local people. Last year, the consultation had identified four main priorities, being economic development, caring for the environment, providing Best Value services and "managing our business". These were supported secondary priorities of providing decent homes,

community and leisure development, leading the community and supporting the National Forest. This year, the Council was trying to gather further information and residents were asked to complete a short questionnaire to provide feedback. The Chair reinforced that many new spending bids were submitted each year and Members had to assess which developments could be taken forward.

It was questioned whether the District Council had any influence over the precept levied by the Police Authority. Like the Derbyshire County Council, the Police Authority was able to set its own charge to be collected through the Council Tax. The Chair commented on the relative Council Tax increases levied by the District Council, the County Council and the Police Authority. It was noted that the Police Authority was not an elected body, although it did hold some public meetings each year, at which residents could air their views. The Clerk was asked to research details of these public meetings and to circulate the information.

Mr. Ireland of Etwall Parish Council sought further information about specific community and leisure development bids, including new facilities for young people. It was confirmed that facilities would be provided throughout the District, rather than being directed solely at the urban areas. Mr. Smith welcomed the consultation but felt that in its present form, only a limited range of response was possible. He felt that it was important to target services which currently attracted complaints, quoting in particular the Police and Refuse Collection Service. Wider feedback on the Budget Consultation was invited and some focus group work was also being considered to enable a broader range of response.

Mrs. Dove referred to the cost of providing Christmas lights in Swadlincote Town Centre and recent improvements at the Green Bank Leisure Centre. It was noted that substantial sponsorship was received towards the cost of the Christmas lights and with regard to the Leisure Centre improvements, the majority of funding had been provided by the contractor, SLM.

EA/9. **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

The Chair explained that as part of a local government review, the Scrutiny process had been introduced to District Councils. The arrangements in South Derbyshire had been praised and were considered an exemplar for other authorities in the East Midlands. A leaflet had been circulated to provide further information about the Scrutiny process. In South Derbyshire, it was delivered by an Overview Committee, supported by two Scrutiny Committees for Corporate and Community Services. The Deputy Chief Executive expanded on the functions performed by the Scrutiny Committees and Councillor Hood spoke of his role as Vice-Chair of the Overview Committee.

EA/10. **CRIME AND DISORDER PARTNERSHIP UPDATE**

The Area Meeting received a presentation from Sergeant Steve Wilson, the Police Liaison Officer seconded to the South Derbyshire Crime and Disorder Partnership. By way of background, Sergeant Wilson outlined the duties introduced by the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act, including the establishment of local partnerships and the production of a crime audit and strategy every three years. The strategy for 2002-05 contained a mixture of priorities from Government, public service agreement and local targets. Specific elements were

discussed. Sergeant Wilson spoke of the staffing and financial resources available to the Partnership. He gave examples of the initiatives undertaken from covert police operations to partnership working, crime reduction projects to sports and arts development. Statistics were provided which showed the success of the Partnership, particularly in relation to the house burglary and auto crime. In Newhall, a 60% reduction had been achieved in house burglary rates. The partnership's future proposals included the establishment of a community police office in Newhall, making use of CCTV and establishing mediation services. Other target areas were reducing domestic abuse, a home security project and establishing local crime reduction groups, through Neighbourhood Watch. The disposal of abandoned vehicles, providing a BMX/skateboard park and environmental improvements were further objectives.

Sergeant Wilson responded to an earlier question about the cost of police services. He reminded that there had been large increases in police officer numbers recently. The Chief Constable for Derbyshire had made a bold statement about providing Beat Officers for each designated Beat in the County. There was a discussion about Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) and it was questioned how many had been served to date. Sergeant Wilson responded that two such Orders had been granted and three further cases were being pursued. He spoke of the multi-agency approach adopted in dealing with anti-social behaviour and the efforts made before an Order was sought. Once an Order had been granted, any further offence could lead to a custodial sentence and one of the people subject to an ASBO was now serving a prison sentence.

Problems had been experienced in Findern with youths on motor cycles causing a nuisance. Councillor Hood reported that with the assistance of the Beat Officer PC Frost and the use of photographic evidence, the parents of the offenders had been contacted and the problem appeared to have been resolved.

A question was submitted about the use of planning gain monies associated with housing developments in Hilton. The District Council would be responsible for these funds, which would be spent in Hilton and the surrounding area to provide new facilities. The legal agreement provided that funding would be released after the construction of 800 properties. Practically, it would be another 18 months to 2 years before this trigger was reached. The District Council had authorised some expenditure in advance of the receipt of these funds. Consultation was planned to help shape the way in which the money was spent. A resident informed that a local consultation forum had been established and its feedback would be valued. There had been some confusion and disappointment amongst residents after a Public Meeting that monies could not yet be made available.

Problems associated with traveller encampments were discussed. Sergeant Wilson reported that the Derbyshire Constabulary had appointed specialist Officers to deal with traveller problems. He spoke of the powers available to the Police and the conflict with Human Rights legislation. Some pro-active measures were available, for example to restrict the unlicensed transfer of waste. The Member of Parliament advised that the law was changing and travellers camped illegally could be moved on where there were earmarked sites locally.

EA/11. **COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT**

A presentation was made by Ian Reid, the Council's Deputy Chief Executive. He advised that the Comprehensive Performance Assessment was effectively a successor to Best Value. It was a Government initiative to help councils find out what the public wanted, to focus on the community's priorities and to improve services. The Council had produced a self assessment and was now asking people what they thought. It had identified some issues that the Council thought should be its priorities, called "key challenges". An external group had been asked to challenge the self assessment and this was known as a "Peer Challenge". The key corporate challenges were to agree with the community a shared vision and then deliver that vision through high quality, customer focused services. The Council needed to manage its resources effectively, to listen and respond to its customers and improve service quality. It would be required to produce plans that delivered the improvements. The Peer Challengers felt that the Council was soundly managed and pragmatic. It was improving in many areas with a "can do" culture and making a difference to the people of South Derbyshire. However, the Council needed a more strategic focus and to act with greater confidence. A questionnaire had been circulated prior to the Meeting and residents were asked to complete and return it at the end of the Meeting.

B. WHYMAN

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 9.30 p.m.