

MELBOURNE AREA MEETING

18th January 2005

**PRESENT:-**

**District Council Representatives**

Councillor Carroll (Chair), Councillor Harrison (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Atkin, Jones, Pabla, Shepherd and Mrs. Wheeler.

M. Alflat (Director of Community Services), K. Stackhouse (Head of Finance and Property Services), P. Spencer (Democratic Services) and B. Jones (Helpdesk).

**Derbyshire Constabulary**

Inspector S. Fairbrother.

**Derbyshire County Council Representative**

Councillor Harrison.

**Parish Council Representatives**

C. Barker (Barrow-on-Trent Parish Council), F. Mitchell (Elvaston Parish Council), M. Sharp and A. Hicklin (Melbourne Parish Council), A. Mitchell and N. Hawksworth (Shardlow Parish Council), V. Shaw (Weston-on-Trent Parish Council) and P. Watson (Ingleby Parish Meeting).

**Members of the Public**

P. Burden, K. Cleghorn, J. Dallman, J. Dallman, C. Ford, P. Grimley, F. Hinds, J. Hinds, A. Madeley, G. Pollard, R. Saxby, P. Waters, K. Whewell and A. Wood

**APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from PC Staley (Derbyshire Constabulary), Aston-on-Trent Parish Council Representatives, H. Coyle (Elvaston Parish Council), R. Wheat (Stanton-by-Bridge Parish Meeting) and J. Thompson.

MA/18. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Melbourne Area Meeting held on 17th November 2004 were noted.

MA/19. **REPORT BACK ON ISSUES RAISED AT THE LAST MEETING**

The Chair reviewed those items raised at the last Meeting and gave an update on progress. The highway safety concerns in the Elvaston area had been referred to Derbyshire County Council and the Chair read an extract of a response received. Accident statistics had also been provided by the Police, as requested. There had been five injury accidents in this area in the period January 2001 to September 2004. An issue had been raised on the kerbside collection scheme and problems when recyclable materials fell into the roadway. Following discussions with the contractor, vehicle operatives would

now be supplied with equipment, so that any spills and debris could be cleared.

It was noted that representatives of the Nottingham East Midlands Airport would be invited to attend the next Melbourne Area Meeting, to discuss the Airport's 20 Year Strategic Plan. Mrs. Shaw of Weston-on-Trent Parish Council asked about the publicity arrangements for County Council Local Area Committees. The Democratic Services Officer explained that these Meetings were co-ordinated by K. Fox at the County Council who could be contacted on 01629 580000, if residents wished to be added to the distribution list for agendas. There was criticism over the publicity for these County Council Meetings and it was agreed that the Democratic Services Officer write to Derbyshire County Council to seek more publicity. The Chair encouraged parish councils to make similar representations.

MA/20. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE LOCAL DISCUSSION ITEMS**

A Melbourne resident complained about parking difficulties within the Village. It was felt that employees of local shops were parking outside residents' properties which then caused difficulties, particularly when residents wished to unload their vehicle. The complainant felt it was time for a residents parking scheme to be considered. The Chair explained her efforts to resolve this matter, including a Meeting with the County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways, Brian Lucas. The County Council's policy was explained and it was noted there was a need for policing of residents parking schemes. Typically, such schemes were only introduced where wardens were available. In some parts of Melbourne, such as Alma Street and North Street, a residents' parking scheme would actually reduce the number of spaces available. Derbyshire County Council did not feel that such a scheme would be of benefit to the area. The Chair also referred to Melbourne's thriving economy and the value that local shops brought to the area.

Inspector Fairbrother commented on the increasing number of vehicles on the road. From March 2005, the police would have a community support officer whose responsibilities would include dealing with parking problems, where an offence was being committed. A resident suggested publicity to seek a considerate approach from those parking outside properties. The resident was encouraged to write to the press to raise awareness of this problem.

Shardlow representatives thanked the District Council for the initiative to recycle Christmas trees. It was felt that this scheme could have been even better if it had been publicised appropriately, in a local newspaper. The Director of Community Services asked when the local newsletter was issued and the Recycling Officer would be asked to provide appropriate publicity for next year. The Chair suggested that the publicity be included in the "Village Voice" newspaper which covered a number of local parishes.

Mr. Watson of Ingleby Parish Meeting referred to a recent press article about access for South Derbyshire residents to civic amenity facilities at Raynesway in the City of Derby and at Lount in North West Leicestershire. He also commented on a District Council scheme for the collection of unwanted vehicles from people's homes, to prevent the problem of abandoned vehicles. Mr. Alflat confirmed that the press articles were

correct. Mr. Watson praised this lateral thinking and questioned whether the civic amenity access could be extended to small vans, to prevent problems of fly-tipping in areas such as Ingleby. He gave a specific example where an individual waiting in the queue for the Raynesway facility was attempting to fly-tip waste on a nearby verge and he had challenged this individual. The Director of Community Services responded that South Derbyshire had one civic amenity site at Newhall. It had been successful in securing access to the facilities in neighbouring council areas. He also responded to a further comment from Mr. Watson to explain the functions performed by the Clean Team. The Council's Environmental Health Division was looking at enforcement issues, particularly against those dropping litter. Councillor Shepherd had raised the issue of access to the Raynesway facility persistently and he was pleased to hear of this agreement.

A resident requested that the Council seek reciprocal arrangements for discounted access to leisure facilities in neighbouring authority areas. The request had been made to a previous Area Meeting and specifically it concerned access to a swimming pool in Long Eaton, in the Borough of Erewash. Local residents were entitled to discounted admission, but this was not available for South Derbyshire residents. The Democratic Services Officer explained the efforts made previously to secure reciprocal arrangements, but without success. It was noted that South Derbyshire District Council did not charge a different admission fee to its leisure facilities for residents as compared to non-residents. A further resident referred to the Derbyshire County Council Gold Card scheme, which offered discounts on a range of services. It was valid throughout the County of Derbyshire and might provide a mechanism to achieve the desired discounts. It was suggested that this approach be pursued and that a further report be provided to the next Area Meeting.

There was a discussion about mechanical road sweeping and the difficulties caused by on-street parking. A resident of Station Road in Melbourne questioned whether the Council could co-ordinate for residents to park on alternate sides of such roads when mechanical sweeping was due to take place. The Director of Community Services responded that this could be investigated and possibly leaflets provided to residents to inform of cleaning schedules. However, it was questionable whether all residents would comply with a request not to park outside their property on certain dates. The Chair suggested that maintenance schedules be provided to Melbourne Parish Council.

Inspector Fairbrother gave an update with regard to anti-social behaviour. It appeared that the number of reported problems in the Melbourne area had reduced in recent months. He was aware from discussions with colleagues in a neighbouring section of the Constabulary that problems were being reported within the City of Derby. The Constabulary was planning further action, which might again cause the young people to move to another location. He referred to a recent incident in Melbourne and questioned whether problems were still being experienced. Several residents responded and whilst there had been an overall decrease in the number of young people congregating and vandalism problems, specific examples were provided to the Inspector.

Councillor Harrison reported that hypodermic needles, attached to drip bags had been found within a planted area of the car park adjacent to the Budgens supermarket. Arrangements would be made for the Clean Team to

remove these items. The Chair referred to a similar incident some 18 months ago in this area. Councillor Harrison reported a complaint from residents near to the Cyber Café in Potter Street, Melbourne. Disturbance was being caused through noise and this matter had been reported to Police Constable Staley. Inspector Fairbrother agreed to pursue this matter.

Problems were also reported with speeding traffic in Cockshut Lane, Melbourne. There were no accident statistics and this was not a “built up” area, but Councillor Harrison suggested occasional speed monitoring and the erection of signage to provide a deterrent. Inspector Fairbrother was aware that this issue had been investigated previously. There were problems of speeding traffic throughout the District of South Derbyshire. Beat Officers were now trained in the use of mobile speed detection equipment. Signage was a matter for Derbyshire County Council, but the Inspector suggested that a common sense approach be taken in known problem areas. He agreed to pursue this matter.

A further comment was made about anti-social behaviour and drinking in public places, despite the by law prohibiting drinking in certain areas of Melbourne. Inspector Fairbrother referred to the new licensing provisions and the potential for extended drinking hours. He explained the Constabulary’s policies and pro-active approach to this issue.

Mr. Ford asked for an update on the South Derbyshire Local Plan. He understood that housing development was planned for an area of Station Road in Melbourne. It was reported that the Local Plan Inspector’s report rejected the proposal for housing development on the former Willington Power Station site. Overall, the requirement for additional housing development within the District had been reduced, but the Council had to identify alternate sites, including that proposed at Station Road in Melbourne. The District Council had accepted the Inspector’s recommendations and a further consultation period was now underway. Councillor Shepherd added that the owners of the Willington Power Station site were appealing against the Inspector’s judgement. He commented on the plans to develop on several smaller sites and that the new Local Plan would be in force until 2011. Councillor Harrison added that the land at Station Road currently had consent for light industrial development. The Inspector was supportive of the development of 130 houses on this site, of which 30% would be affordable homes. Any arguments against such land use would need to be weighty and there would be a further chance for consultation when a detailed planning consent was sought for this site. Councillor Shepherd clarified that this consultation exercise would only concern changes to the proposals. Mrs. Shaw commented that the summary and explanation document provided by the District Council had proved very useful and she commended this. Mr. Watson questioned whether the Inspector’s decision on the Willington Power Station site would mean that this would not be developed for the next ten year period. Councillor Shepherd clarified that other potential site uses could be brought forward.

A request was made for the provision of post boxes at the flats in Clover Court, Shardlow. There were security doors at the entrance to this scheme, which prevented access to individual flats. The Director of Community Services agreed pursue this request and to provide a report to the next Meeting.

Reference was made to the Parish Council Forum, due to be held the following week. Shardlow representatives explained that despite consultation on suitable dates, the meeting had been arranged on the same night as the Shardlow Parish Council. The Chair explained that sometimes it was difficult to avoid such clashes of meetings, but this matter would be reported to Officers at the District Council.

MA/21. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

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

MA/22. **CONSULTATION ON THE COUNCIL'S BUDGET**

The Area Meeting received a presentation from Kevin Stackhouse, the Council's Finance and Property Services Manager. The aims of the presentation were to raise awareness of the Council's finances and to seek views on the Council's budget proposals. An outline was given of the topics to be covered and initially slides showed the total cost of revenue services. This comprised Environmental Services, Community Services and Corporate/Management Services. Capital spending was also explained. The slides showed the services provided by the County Council, the Police Authority and the Fire Authority.

In terms of managing the Council's finances, there was a focus on the longer term, with revenue estimates based over a three year period and capital estimates over a five year period. Government grant funding met around 55% of Council spending and another 10% of funding came in the form of specific grants. The general Government grant for 2005/06 for South Derbyshire had increased by 8%, when compared to the previous year. This recognised the growing population of the area and new spending pressures to be faced. Reference was made to the Government's grant funding formula and the Council received just under £400,000 less than that identified in the formula. However, this position had improved from the previous year.

A chart showed the breakdown of the Council Tax bill in terms of the funding required by the County Council, the Police Authority, the Fire Authority and the District Council. Future Council Tax projections allowed for an increase of 4.5% each year for District Council services. The level of Council Tax increase for 2005/06 was still to be determined, but the Government guideline was for increases of less than 5%. The Government had warned councils about excessive increases and it had powers to "cap" increases if necessary.

The Council's projected financial position was explained. It had a good financial base, with improving levels of reserves. An outline was given of financial issues, comprising new spending pressures and the Council's plans to meet these pressures. The financial position was summarised and a further slide explained the Council's budget process. Money was available for service improvements, for both revenue and capital schemes. The presentations concluded with an outline of proposed areas for new spending and feedback was sought from the Area Meeting.

Questions were invited. Mr. Watson asked about the Government grant funding formula and the current shortfall of £400,000. He questioned whether the Council would receive this funding at a future date. Mr.

Stackhouse explained the Government's approach to phase in this funding formula over a period of time. The Chair added that if the revised funding formula was implemented immediately, it would cause significant financial difficulties for those authorities that were allocated less resources under the new arrangements. Reference was made to the Council's financial difficulties some years ago and the need to generate significant resources. The Chair reminded those present of the difficult decisions and measures taken by the Council to address those financial difficulties.

Mr. Ford thanked the Officer for the presentation, sought an outline of the partnership working arrangements and the beneficial return for the Council's investment in joint projects. Mr. Stackhouse used examples of the Crime and Disorder Partnership and working with Derbyshire County Council to show how external resources were combined with those of the District Council to enhance service delivery.

A resident commented that following the budget consultation last year he had received information from the former Chief Finance Officer about the cumulative increases in Council and Policy Authority precepts. He commented on the level of Police Authority precept and would find such information useful again. Councillor Harrison asked whether the budget information could be split by area to show service improvements in the Melbourne Division. The Director of Community Services explained that it was not possible to give that information at this Meeting, but he did expand on the presentation slide on proposed areas for new capital and revenue spending. Specific reference was made to the Street Warden Scheme. Following a question from Councillor Harrison it was confirmed that these wardens would report to the District Council and consideration would be given to the areas on which the wardens should focus.

Mrs. Shaw compared the level of funding required for services delivered by the Police to that for District Council Services. These were virtually the same and yet the District Council was now responsible for crime prevention and the street warden scheme, which she considered to be policing matters. Inspector Fairbrother responded that crime prevention was not just a matter for the police and he gave examples of other areas of joint working. The South Derbyshire Crime and Disorder Partnership was one of the best in the Country. By combining resources with other agencies, greater benefits could be achieved. The Inspector explained the role and benefits of the street wardens, which had been found to be very effective in the Peartree area of Derby. They were not responsible for traditional areas of police work and he made a comparison to the roles performed by police community support officers. These groups coupled with Special Constables gave valuable resources to assist the police in covering a large area like South Derbyshire.

A resident commented on the different agencies being employed to assist the police. It was noted that the proposals stemmed from concerns raised through the Crime and Disorder Partnership. A specific example was the problem of vandalism in parks during the evenings. Such initiatives meant that extra cover would be provided, where the police would not normally be able to attend. Mr. Watson felt there would be confusion for residents over the different agencies involved and it would be better to have a single point of contact to overcome this. Broadly, the services were policing matters and should be co-ordinated by the Constabulary. The partnership approach was reaffirmed and the finance for some initiatives had to meet requirements set by the Home Office.

Mr. Ford commented that the introduction of recycling initiatives in the Aston area seemed to be going well.

J. D. CARROLL

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 8.40p.m.