

REPTON AREA MEETING

28th January 2003

PRESENT:-

District Council Representatives

Councillor Taylor (Chair) and Councillors Evens, Sherratt and Mrs. Wheeler.

S. Whiles (Head of Community Services), K. Stackhouse (Finance Services Manager), P. Spencer and H. Pexton (Democratic Services Officers) and B. Jones (Helpdesk).

County Council Representative

Councillor Jones (Vice-Chair), Councillor W. Burrows (Cabinet Member Environment & Highways) and J. Waite (S.E. Area Manager).

Derbyshire Constabulary

P.C. Frost, Swadlincote.

South Derbyshire and Erewash Partnership

J. Powderly, (Rural Transport Project Officer).

Parish Council Representatives

S. Smith, R. Statham, C. Bailey and M. Gee, (Woodville Parish Council), A. Skipper and D. Roberts (Repton Parish Council), R. Morrow and C. Warner (Willington Parish Council) and Mr. D. Adams (Hartshorne Parish Council).

Members of the Public

A. Kimber (Repton Village Society), Mr. and Mrs. J. Cownie, Mr. and Mrs. K. Vincent, M. Botham (Repton School Governor), P. Needham, D.J. Deboo, I. Hicklin, A. Topliss (Woodville Church of England Juniors Governor), Mr. and Mrs. Topliss, R. Young, M. Thornton, A. Gifford, J. Orme, P. Wood, J. Newman and J. Burley (Goseley Neighbourhood Watch), R. Paulson, M. Vorley, M. and J. Tomlinson, R. Dennis, C. Manfield, R. Russian, S. Bittery, T. Smart (Woodville Infants School) and P. Stylier .

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from S. Ellis, Mrs. Gillespie, Mrs. Stamford, D. Tagg, M. Groom, Councillor Bell and Councillor Bladen.

RA/13. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 31st October 2002 were noted.

RA/14. **REPORT BACK ON ISSUES RAISED AT THE LAST MEETING**

The Chair invited County Councillor Jones to provide an update on matters raised at the previous Meeting. He reported that the poplar trees at Mill Hill, Repton were on private land and that this matter was being pursued.

Further progress had been made concerning the review of the speed limits on the Repton to Willington Road. County Councillor Jones outlined the proposals being considered by Officers and the suggested arrangements for roads to the south of Repton. The representatives of Repton Parish Council commented on these proposals.

Councillor Evens provided an update on the Willington Railway Station and confirmed that at its Meeting on 7th November 2002 the Council had agreed to make representations to Central Trains Limited, Derbyshire County Council and Mark Todd M.P. to seek an increase in passenger services using this route.

The Chair provided further information with regard to the public toilets at Willington. A report was to be considered by the District Council's Environmental and Development Services Committee on 30th January 2003. It would consider a suggestion that the District Council clean the toilets and recharge these costs to Willington Parish Council. Mr. Orme had submitted a report to the Council to support the case to retain these toilets.

The Chair reported on the second draft of the South Derbyshire Local Plan. A six week consultation period had commenced on 3rd January 2003. The document was available for inspection at the Planning Reception in the Civic Offices, at local libraries, Post Offices and could also be viewed via the Council's website.

The Chair confirmed that it was beyond the Council's powers as a planning authority to impose a 'blanket' restriction to prevent develop on the flood plain at Willington, pending the results of the Environment Agency's study. He gave an update on the likely report date for the study, which should precede the final adoption of the Local Plan.

The Chair read a letter which had been received from Calder Industries in response to concerns about the high level of lorry traffic movements in Willington. The Company agreed that the volume of traffic in the area had increased greatly in recent years, but considered that this was not due to vehicles travelling to and from its premises at Willington. Comment had been made on a number of other known causes which had increased traffic volumes. The Company sought to encourage vehicles visiting its premises to use agreed routes, but it did not have any direct control over vehicles which did not belong to Calder Industries.

RA/15. **HIGHWAY MATTERS**

The Chair introduced County Councillor W. Burrows, the Cabinet Member for the Environment and Highways. Councillor Burrows explained that in addition to highways, his responsibilities included the environment and waste disposal. Highways included rural footpaths and it was not until the outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease, that the County Council had realised how many paths existed. He explained the recent increases in funding available to the County Council with some £80 million being allocated over a four year period. The Council had completed significant highway improvements over the last two years, with priority being given to major routes.

The Chair invited questions from residents. Mr. Morrow drew attention to the poor and conflicting signage on the roundabout at the A38 and A50 interchange by Toyota. In response, John Waite, the Area Highways Manager, advised that this was part of a trunk road and the responsibility of the Highways Agency. The problems were recognised and would be reported by the County Council. Willington Parish Council was also encouraged to lobby the Highways Agency to improve the signage.

Mrs. Smith of Woodville Parish Council stated that the 'Toll Gate' road traffic island could not cope with the increasing volumes of traffic and frequently came to a standstill. The view was echoed by N. Botham who added that crossing the road in this area was dangerous, especially for children. Lorries frequently mounted the pavement at this location and at the nearby Woodville Post Office. Swadlincote Road, Hartshorne Road, Burton Road and Moira Road all suffered similar problems and a child had recently been hit by a lorry that had mounted the pavement. Further residential developments in this area were adding to the traffic problems. Residents had suggested that a traffic survey be conducted or that a working group be established to look at the problems. Traffic problems in this area had been raised previously and residents were angry that nothing had been done to alleviate these problems.

Further concerns were voiced by residents about the increasing volume of traffic. It was difficult for some residents of Swadlincote Road to make use of their driveways or to cross this road.

Problems associated with the Ashby bypass were reported. This had impacted on the Woodville area, causing further traffic congestion. When traffic permitted, vehicles were travelling through Woodville at increased speeds due to the relaxation of speed limits at Boundary.

Residents appreciated that the County Council had introduced a pedestrian crossing at the top of the High Street. Further crossings were required in the area to improve pedestrian safety. However, each crossing halted traffic flows and therefore added to congestion problems.

The Chair summarised the main issues raised and voiced his own concerns as the Local Ward Member. Councillor Burrows recognised the serious concerns of residents and he offered to visit the area to see if a solution could be progressed. He was conscious that many issues had been raised and tried to respond to these. He reported on recent speed monitoring in the Woodville area which showed that on average, the speed of vehicles had reduced. He appreciated the need for school crossing patrols and informed residents of the difficulty in recruiting personnel. He referred to the common problem of parents parking outside schools which caused congestions.

Councillor Burrows clarified the role of the District Council as the planning authority and that of Derbyshire County Council as the highways authority. He explained that available resources were prioritised and would be spent in the areas where they were considered to be most needed. The problems associated with the 'Toll Gate' would be examined and a solution sought. Over the past two years, the County Council had spent nearly half a million pounds on improving and maintaining the roads in the Repton area and £94,000 on traffic calming measures for this area. Further concerns were reported about a number of simultaneous major road repairs which were taking place currently and adding to the congestion problems. Residents

also felt that there should be more 30 mph speed limit signs. Councillor Burrows explained the limitations on the use of 30 mph signage.

Mr. Vorley asked about the inspection of roads to ensure conformity with appropriate standards. Councillor Burrows provided information and offered to supply a more detailed written response to him.

County Councillor Burrows confirmed that he had taken note of residents' concerns. Councillor Taylor summarised the main problems as the 40 mph speed limit on the Ashby Road, the parking problems outside schools and traffic congestion around the Toll Gate island. He requested that these three items be addressed in particular and hoped that an earlier suggestion to form a working group could be pursued. Councillor Burrows was thanked for his attendance at the Meeting and the commitment to address residents' concerns.

RA/16. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE LOCAL DISCUSSION ITEMS**

A resident requested clarification on the Government guidelines regarding standards of conduct for District and Parish Councillors, who discussed planning applications at Parish Council Meetings. Officers explained that there were also certain planning restrictions and the resident was asked to contact the District Council for more detailed advice on this subject.

Residents at Ladyfields, Midway spoke of the difficulties experienced due to post being misdirected to properties at Ladyfields Way, Newhall. The Royal Mail had been informed of the problem and it was agreed to investigate this matter.

A resident requested that the Police be invited to attend a future Meeting to discuss problems with speeding traffic. It was also requested that feedback be sought from the County Council regarding the traffic problems in Woodville and the measures that could be implemented following this evening's discussion. Councillor Taylor confirmed that a letter would be sent to Derbyshire County Council, together with a copy of the Minutes of the Meeting with the various issues highlighted.

RA/17. **RURAL TRANSPORT**

The Chair invited John Powderly, Rural Transport Project Officer for the South Derbyshire and Erewash Partnership, to speak on transport matters. Mr. Powderly spoke of his role and the current two year contract to identify rural transport needs.

Residents questioned why a popular bus service through the Cathedrals Estate in Midway had been removed. Mr. Powderly agreed to pursue this with the Bus Company, Arriva. If the Company could not be persuaded to reintroduce the service then funds should be available to provide alternative transport for residents, possibly through taxi vouchers. There was also a transport brokerage idea where underused public service vehicles could be used by other organisations. Government funding was available of up to £10,000 through a Parish Transport Grant scheme. The Countryside Agency also provided funds for rural transport initiatives.

Residents complained about the inadequate bus services to the Queen's Hospital in Burton. Mr. Powderly offered to pursue this issue with Arriva.

RA/18. **BUDGET CONSULTATION**

The Area Meeting received a presentation from Kevin Stackhouse, Finance Services Manager at the District Council. He explained the aims of this consultation exercise and gave an overview of the topics covered in the presentation. Feedback from previous consultations had identified residents' key priorities and the other aims that the Council should pursue. The total cost of General Fund Revenue Services was some £9.61 million and a series of charts showed the cost of Environmental Services, Community Services and Finance and Management Services. A further chart showed the respective proportions of Council Tax income that funded services provided by the District Council, the Police Authority and the County Council.

Mr. Stackhouse explained how the Council managed its finances through close monitoring of its expenditure, a more open budget process and by improving efficiency. 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 slightly more than it received in income at present. Mr. Stackhouse explained the financial constraints that the Council faced and how this affected the level of Council Tax increase. The Revenue Budget proposals were reported and these sought to maintain existing services and provide additional resources for service improvements. There was the potential for a low Council Tax increase for the second successive year.

Details were then provided of current capital spending, the constraints in place and capital spending proposals. Feedback from the Area Meetings would be submitted to inform the Council when it set its budget and Council Tax on 27th February 2003.

Mr. Vorley asked how the Council had agreed its priorities. He suggested a referendum to ask the public what they wished the Council to spend money on. The Chair spoke of the previous consultation on the Council's budget to determine priorities, the low level of Council Tax increase last year and the aim to levy a similarly low level of Council Tax increase this year. Mr. Vorley compared the likely Council Tax rise to the current rate of inflation. He asked about the proportion of current services that was subject to competitive tender. The Head of Community Services provided general information on procurement arrangements. Mr. Vorley submitted further questions on efficiency savings, the increased support to the Citizens Advice Bureau and with regard to Council Tax levels.

RA/19. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Due to District and Parish Council Elections on 1st May 2003, the date of the next Area Meeting would be delayed. Details of the date and venue would be confirmed in due course.

S. TAYLOR

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 10.00 p.m.