

SOUTH DERBYSHIRE AREA FORUM

REPTON

January 31, 2017 at Repton Village Hall

PRESENT:-

District Council representatives

Councillor Michael Stanton (Chair), Councillor Andy MacPherson, Councillor David Shepherd.

Frank McArdle (Chief Executive), Tom Sloan (Clerk).

Derbyshire County Council representatives

Councillor Rob Davison.

Parish Council / Meeting representatives

Charles Fellows (Stenson Fields Parish Council), Richard Lisewski (Stenson Fields Parish Council), Steve Toone (Bretby Parish Council).

Members of the public

Jane Clayton, Anne Evans (Findern Footpaths Group), Heather Hall (Findern Footpaths Group), Barry Hanson (Ticknall Neighbourhood Watch), Parmjit Maskiana (Stenson Fields Neighbourhood Watch), John Orme, G Varty, Sam Watters (Willington Neighbourhood Watch).

RA/19 **Apologies for absence**

Councillor Manjit Chahal, Councillor Mrs Linda Chilton, R Cunningham, Councillor Martyn Ford, Paul Jameson, AD Lomas, Terry McGarry, Councillor Peter Smith, Clifford Warner.

RA/20 **Declarations of interest**

None.

RA/21 **Chairman's announcements**

Chairman Michael Stanton had no announcements to make.

SDDC Chief Executive Frank McArdle updated the meeting on the situation regarding DCC and Area Forum Liaison Officer Paul Jameson, who would no longer be attending on a regular basis following a review. Instead, SDDC Service Assistant Tom Sloan would report issues back to County Hall and get a response for the forum. Councillor Rob Davison added that the decision was essentially to do with budget cuts. Mr McArdle recorded his thanks to Mr Jameson for his contributions to the meetings over the years – he had been a committed, dedicated and professional officer.

RA/22 **The minutes of the meeting held on October 4, 2016**

Councillor David Shepherd proposed the minutes and Councillor Andy MacPherson seconded them.

RA/23 **Report back on issues raised at the last meeting**

Derbyshire County Council issues:

Vegetation growing over the footway in Repton Road, Willington

Works to clear the footway had taken place in October.

Drainage in Bretby Lane

No update available for the forum.

Road markings in Knights Lane

The parish council's request for road markings was still under investigation and a full response was due shortly.

Cats eyes in Stenson Lane

A decision had been taken not to replace the cats eyes following the surface dressing as they pre-dated the lower 40mph speed limit and introduction of street lighting.

Japanese Knotweed in Burton Road, Findern

Works had been issued to deal with the knotweed on the highway and the adjacent landowner had been informed of the plant on his land so he could take appropriate steps to remove it.

RA/24 **Public questions on issues raised by residents**

A Findern resident said they had reported faulty streetlights only for it to take two months for them to be fixed. DCC had said they needed the period of time to make a journey to a location worthwhile. Lights had been repaired but there were still 13 not working in the village.

A member of the public reported that 26 lights appeared to be faulty in an underpass in Crow Park Way, Findern, under the A50. Not a single light was working. Was it part of a cost-cutting measure by DCC?

Councillor Shepherd had received a complaint from a resident in Stenson ward after it took two months to get a light repaired. He said it was an important measure to discourage burglars.

Councillor Davison said that regarding street lights, there wasn't enough money to fix lights as quickly as people would like. The department was also a man short to fix faulty lights. He agreed the situation was exasperating and suggested people keep emailing faults in and contact their local county councillor.

A Willington resident said that lights were being turned off in the village at night as part of DCC's cost-cutting measure – but some lights were left on in the day. Councillor Stanton replied that it was surely unintentional. Councillor Davison asked for the issue to be reported along with a photo of the light(s) in question. The resident added that a number of street lights he had reported in December had still not been fixed despite a number of representations.

ACTION: Issues to be reported to DCC and clarity sought on how long it should take to repair streetlights

A resident said they had read that another 2,000 houses were planned for South Derbyshire and it would have a big effect on traffic in Willington as new residents drove through the village to get to the A38 and A50. They felt a bridge over Frisoms Lane, Willington, built for 18th century traffic would start having to deal with high levels of 21st century traffic, despite having barely been modernised in 200 years. Councillor Stanton replied that DCC had been happy with the road situation when the application was entered. Councillor Shepherd confirmed that the infrastructure opposition had been put forward by himself. There was a proposal for a new junction to the A38 from the A50 which would remove the need to go through Willington. Councillor Davison said that DCC was having to deal with decisions made by SDDC relating to housing welded onto the bottom of Derby. Infrastructure problems caused were passed on to DCC. Councillor Davison also felt that access to the A50 from the new developments was aspirational at this stage. He said when SDDC announced the award of Government Garden Village funding on January 3 it came as a surprise to him. Councillor Davison had entered a Freedom of Information request as the application didn't meet Government criteria and there had been no public consultation on it. He said

there was supposed to be consultation with local people and local political support – he felt there was neither.

A resident asked what work had been completed by Severn Trent at Bretby Lane. A DCC update had been due, but with Mr Jameson no longer attending it had not been possible.

ACTION: Update to be sought from Derbyshire County Council on Bretby Lane

RA/25 **County Council issues**

Councillor Shepherd reported that road works were incomplete outside a housing development opposite the Bonnie Prince. Illuminated bollards had not been put in and a resident had sustained a damaged car as a result. DCC had referred the motorist to Persimmon Homes, who in turn had passed him onto the contractor. If the bollards had been in position, the accident would not have happened.

ACTION: Report to be issued to Derbyshire County Council to see if progress could be made

Councillor Davison said that DCC's Council Tax rise was an action replay of the previous year, with a 1.99% rise plus an added 2% to help fund adult social care.

Councillor Davison reported that Chesterfield was staying in Derbyshire following a consultation. It helped to ensure the future of the county as an administrative area.

RA/26 **District Council issues**

Mr McArdle reported that SDDC's Council Tax would be fixed on March 1, with a 1.95% rise proposed. Current reserves were healthy and the budget was balanced. The Government's Revenue Support Grant would be reduced from £1.2 million a year to zero by 2019-20. SDDC needed to find alternatives to increase its income but it had a limited ability to do that. Council Tax, Business Rates and the New Homes Bonus were the available options. However, the latter two would be 'top sliced' to help fund adult social care. Other charges levied by the authority, including cemetery and licensing fees, could not be used to make a profit. SDDC would need to look for ways to reduce the deficit. Among other things, this would be achieved through efficiencies and innovation and SDDC would rise to the challenge.

A resident said the parished areas of South Derbyshire could see precepts rise while the urban areas without parish councils would not. Mr McArdle

replied that the Parish precepts were set at the sole discretion of each parish council.

A resident asked if the district council shared resources with other organisations to minimise costs. Mr McArdle replied that it did, with an example being the audit service.

A member of the public asked if the Council Tax levied by SDDC could rise by more than 2%. Mr McArdle replied that a rise of more than 2% required a referendum which would cost more than any extra revenue levied by the rise.

RA/27 **Date of next meeting**

To be announced in due course.

Councillor Michael Stanton
CHAIR

The meeting terminated at 8.30pm.