

NEWHALL AREA MEETING

7th February 2002

PRESENT:-

District Council Representatives

Councillor Richards (Vice-Chair in the Chair) and Councillors Bambrick, Routledge and Wilkins.
T. Neaves (Chief Finance Officer), N. Betteridge (Members' Services) and B. Jones (Helpdesk).

County Council Representatives

Councillor Routledge and S. Pearson.

Derbyshire Constabulary

Inspector Hargreaves, WPC Fearn and PC Holmes (Beat Officers).

Members of the Public

I. Bambrick, P. Bambrick, M. Coulson, G. Hall, G. Harrison, P. Holden, R. Holden, R. House, R. Howes, R. Hughes, C. Maddock, D. Mansfield, B. Marsden, G. Myatt, K. Parker, W. Parker, M. Richards, D. Tagg, V. Thornley, E. Tunnicliff and B. Woods.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from District Councillors Mrs. Mead (Chair) and Dunn and from J. Harrison.

NA/21. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Area Meeting held on 6th December 2001 were noted.

NA/22. **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair referred to the recent introduction of the Clean Team to concentrate on littered areas and reported that this initiative had been successful to date in reducing fly-tipping clearance from 6.4 days to 1.2 days. The Council was now positioned in the upper quartile of the country and the Chair encouraged the use of the freephone number to residents.

The Chair advised of a letter from Newhall United Football Club advising that the Club hoped to secure grant funding from Waste Recycling Environmental (WREN) to improve the facilities at the Club and make them more available to the wider community. The proposed scheme included levelling the football pitch, improving the drainage and the installation of floodlighting, subject to funding. The Club had offered to meet any interested persons to explain the plans in more detail.

The Chair referred to recent letters in the local media concerning the many initiatives ongoing in Newhall to the benefit of the area and stressed that these were due mainly to the efforts of local residents.

NA/23. **REPORT OF POLICE**

Inspector Hargreaves introduced himself to residents and advised that he wished to become involved in the local initiatives to reduce crime and the fear of crime. WPC Fearn addressed the Meeting in respect of the recent spate of burglaries in Newhall, advising that during January, Newhall had topped the crime list with 30 burglaries. Subsequently, two alleged offenders had been arrested and one alleged offender had been remanded in custody. Since the end of January, three burglaries had been reported. Three successful drug warrants in Newhall had also been executed in January together with two theft warrants, in respect of which equipment had been recovered and an individual had been charged with handling stolen goods.

Following a query, residents were encouraged to report nuisance telephone calls, as these would be monitored and hopefully pursued. Following a further query, it was reported that it was hoped to issue the Beat Officers with mobile phones imminently together with business cards, which would enable them to be contactable more readily. Inspector Hargreaves outlined the new telephone call system and a resident confirmed that this now appeared to be working satisfactorily.

With regard to the proposed use of premises in Newhall as a police base, Inspector Hargreaves advised that this matter was still ongoing and the suitability of any premises was paramount for various reasons, including health and safety and security.

The Meeting discussed the problem of under-age drinking and WPC Fearn advised that a leaflet drop had been undertaken to all local off-licences advising of the appropriate offences in this regard, which should be displayed prominently.

A resident expressed his gratitude to the police for the recent efforts undertaken to reduce crime and residents were encouraged to continue reporting matters to the police to assist in their endeavours.

NA/24. **REPORT BACK ON ISSUES RAISED AT THE LAST MEETING**

The Meeting reviewed those items raised at the last Meeting and noted the progress made in each case.

NA/25. **BRETBY CIVIC AMENITY SITE**

Further to the discussions on this matter at the last Meeting, Steve Pearson of the County Council attended the Meeting to address residents' questions on the operation of this site. Mr. Pearson advised that commercial waste of any kind would not be accepted at civic amenity sites as the facilities were extensively used by the general public. With regard to the disposal of refrigerators, Mr. Pearson advised that these presented a problem on a national basis. The District Council would dispose of these appliances for a small charge or residents could take them to a civic amenity site free of charge.

The Meeting discussed the unpleasant odour arising from the site and residents claimed to have reported this matter on numerous occasions. Accordingly, Mr. Pearson agreed to pursue this matter with the contractor.

With regard to the future of the site, County Councillor Routledge confirmed that no extension would be permitted and it was hoped that the waste disposal site would close within the next twelve months. However, it was noted that the civic amenity site had the benefit of planning permission until November 2003 and Mr. Pearson anticipated that this may be extended into 2005.

A resident claimed that the rubbish deposited on the site was often not covered at the daily closure of business and County Councillor Routledge agreed to pursue this matter. A resident queried the height of the site and it was agreed to ascertain this restriction from the planning permission. A resident expressed concern at the disposal of materials in windy conditions and Mr. Pearson advised that occasionally, it was necessary to close the site due to adverse weather conditions. It was noted that the licence granted to the operator of the site stipulated that the site must close in inclement weather conditions.

Mr. Pearson advised that general construction waste was not classed as household waste and the responsibility for its disposal fell on the householder. As a concession in Derbyshire, residents were permitted to dispose of five bags at the site, which was considered reasonable on this basis. However, it was noted that many county councils did not allow this.

District Councillor Bambrick expressed concern that many lorries were not utilising the wheel wash facility when exiting the site and accordingly, large deposits were falling from the wheels onto the highway. Mr. Pearson agreed to pursue this with the operator of the site. Finally, Mr. Pearson encouraged residents to raise day-to-day operational issues at the Liaison Meetings held in respect of the site.

NA/26. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE LOCAL DISCUSSION ITEMS**

A resident referred to the constant dumping of rubbish in the passage directly opposite Fairfield Crescent and it was agreed to refer this matter to the Clean Team for attention.

A resident again referred to motorcycles encroaching onto the walk areas at the bottom of Oversetts Road, Newhall and claimed that pedestrians were being forced into the hedge with the possibility that someone would be seriously hurt in due course. The Chair advised that the police were aware of this problem but it was necessary to reprimand those concerned at the time of the incident. A sufficiently wide access also had to be provided for the disabled and Councillor Bambrick advised that he had visited the site with officers. The access areas had been noted with a view to restricting these areas as far as possible to attempt to preclude access for motorcycles.

A resident complained at the lack of street cleansing on Sunnyside compared to Bretby Road, advising that he had telephoned the District Council to complain on previous occasions. With regard to such complaints, the Chair encouraged residents to ascertain the name of the officer registering the complaint.

A resident enquired as to the commencement of works on the play area on the former Nadins site. County Councillor Routledge advised that several

picnic tables would be provided in the spring and a sum of £28,000 had been left in Trust. However, substantially more funds were required to develop the area but work had already commenced on the walkways. It was noted that the site had not yet been transferred to the local authority and negotiations were ongoing in respect of maintenance issues.

A resident raised the issue of nuisance neighbours and enquired as to the Council's policy on this matter. The Chair advised that if sufficient evidence was available, action would be taken including eviction, if appropriate. Such matters often involved children and in these circumstances, the Social Services department would become involved and it was the duty of the local authority to rehouse in certain circumstances. A strict criteria applied on this matter involving a substantial amount of work and in all cases, physical evidence was required.

Mr. Woods referred to the 7,000 residents of Newhall and the need to eradicate the area from crime and drug problems, as widely reported. In this regard, he read a statement prepared by himself to the Meeting. Mr. Woods also expressed concern that the Council had recently replaced windows in Council properties but had not replaced any doors. In this respect, the Chair advised that the replacement of doors was ongoing but priority had been given to the most insecure properties at the present time.

Following a query relating to inadequate signage concerning the weight limit through Newhall, as discussed at the last Meeting, it was noted that a further response on the review of the scheme was still awaited from the County Highways Authority. In the meantime, it was suggested that the police should be informed of the registration numbers of any vehicles in breach of the limit, together with the time of the incident.

NA/27. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next Area Meeting would be held at William Allitt School on Thursday, 2nd May 2002 at 7.00 p.m.

NA/28. **BUDGET CONSULTATION**

The Area Meeting received a presentation from Terry Neaves, Chief Finance Officer at the District Council. This was the first year that the Council had consulted on its budget proposals and it was hoped to develop the process further in future years. Mr. Neaves explained the financial crisis which the Council had faced in 1999. Since that time, measures had been taken to ensure sound financial management, including a Best Value Review of Financial Management and Control. Details were given of the Council's medium term financial strategy, the service and financial planning process and strengthened budgetary monitoring in place.

The Council's financial position had stabilised and there was an adequate level of Reserves. However, caution was still needed and it was proposed to refocus and reprioritise the services provided. Information was submitted on the financial constraints imposed by Government and the implications of expenditure above Government guidelines. The revenue budget proposals for 2002/03 were reported. These sought to maintain existing services, provide additional resources for service improvement which were in part offset by savings in existing services. There was the potential for a lower Council Tax

increase than in previous years. Details of the proposed service developments and budget reductions had been circulated.

The capital spending proposals for 2002/03 were also reported. For this year, there was a single capital allocation which would give authorities greater freedom in allocating resources. Overall, Government allocations were falling and authorities were becoming more reliant on generating their own resources. The presentation concluded with a summary of the Council's financial position, an outline of how the feedback from the consultation meetings would be incorporated into the budget process and proposals to undertake further consultation during the summer on spending priorities for 2003/04.

In response to a query relating to authorities not being allowed to operate "in the red", Mr. Neaves advised that if an authority set an excessive level of council tax, the government could request the authority to set a lower level. A resident advised that it would be appreciated if the level of council tax was not increased for one year but Mr. Neaves advised that in this event, it would be necessary to reduce services. A resident expressed concern at the proportion of the council tax allocated to the county council and the police authority together with the fact that there was no consideration for those residents on a fixed pension.

Residents expressed their thanks to Mr. Neaves for an informative presentation.

K. J. RICHARDS

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 8.45 p.m.