

WEST WILTSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of the: **BRADFORD ON AVON AREA SEMINAR**

Held on: **9 FEBRUARY 2006**

Held in: **ST MARGARET'S HALL
BRADFORD ON AVON**

Present:

West Wiltshire District Council Representatives: Cllrs Brown (Chairman), Cunliffe-Jones, Hames, Repton and Viles

County Council Representatives

Bradford on Avon Town Council Representative: Cllr Fielding

Parish Council Representatives: Cllr Grant – Holt
Cllr Allison – Winsley
Cllr Kennedy – Limpley Stoke

Parish Liaison Group Representative

Community Area Partnership Representative

Also in attendance: Cllr Bowen – Bradford on Avon Town Council

Officers: Gwilym Gibbons – Community Initiatives Manager
Melanie Stimpson and Stef Keen – Member Support Officers

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Farkas and Lewis.

2 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Bradford on Avon and Warminster Conservation Areas – Formation of Policy Project Groups (PPG's)

The Chairman announced that the District Council was proposing a PPG to review the conservation areas in Bradford on Avon as part of the ongoing work of the District Council's Historic Environment Strategy, which was adopted in June 2004.

The Area Seminar felt that a meeting of the Seminar should be arranged to allow for consultation before Cabinet receives the final report.

At the Chairman's discretion a number of questions had been allowed, to which the Chairman replied.

A copy of the questions and answers are attached as an appendix to these minutes.

NHS Reconfiguration Consultation Drop In Sessions

Consultation is currently taking place (the consultation period was from 14 Dec 05 and 22 March 06) on proposals to change the boundaries and functions of the local Primary Care Trusts and the Strategic Health Authority. Everyone was welcome to attend. The drop in session in West Wiltshire will be held at Trowbridge Community Hospital on 22 February 2006, 3 – 6pm.

5 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Youth and Community Support Group

The Chairman informed the Seminar of the progress regarding the Bradford on Avon Youth Centre. £1,000 had been spent on an Art Work Project in the Sports Hall. It was reported that the result was fantastic and a press release was being organised. Attendance at the Youth Centre was still good and the Girls' Night on Mondays was still doing well. There were plans to open the Youth Centre on a Friday night as the PCSO's had received feedback that there was nothing to do on Friday and Saturday nights for 15 – 17 year olds.

Bradford on Avon Historic Buildings Joint Committee

Cllr Repton reported on the meeting held on 24 January 2006. The main aim of the Committee is to award grants to secure the preservation of historic buildings and structural stability. Usually when a grant was given it was for up to 40% of the cost of repairs which could be of great help especially as technical advice was also offered.

Police Authority Consulting Committee

Cllr Hames reported that a major development had been the creation of Neighbourhood Policing Teams, as well as the merging of police authorities, which the Government was consulting on. The outcome of the consultation would be known shortly and it was likely that Wiltshire Police Authority would be merged with another authority.

6 **UPDATES**

(A) **High Hedges**

At the last meeting, the Seminar had made the following recommendations to Cabinet;

- That Cabinet review the charges in respect of high hedge complaints, particularly in respect of group complaints and to ensure that costs be kept to a minimum whilst covering costs.
- That the views of the Planning and Development Portfolio Holder, Developmental Control Manager and Leader of Council be sought on this matter

At its meeting on 31 August 2005, Cabinet had resolved as follows:

- a) A further report be brought to the Cabinet meeting in October to get definitive guidance on multiple applications, and regarding the possibility of means tested concessions.
- b) To agree the current level of fee at £345
- c) That a comprehensive review is undertaken based on the experience of the first 10 completed cases.

In accordance with (a) above, Cabinet further considered the issue on 26 October 2005, when it resolved as follows:

- a) Agree that in cases where there are multiple complainants about one hedge with one owner, all complainants pay the requisite fee in line with the confirmation of the guidance from the ODPM.
- b) Agree a concessionary fee of £175 for people on means tested benefit subject to annual review and a comprehensive review of high hedgerow complaints fees based on the experience of the first 10 completed cases.

The Chairman explained that the complaint between the hedge owner of Belcombe Court and the local residents of Meadowfield, Bradford on Avon had been the only complaints the Council had received since the introduction of the High Hedges legislation.

(B) **Surgeries**

At the last meeting of the Area Seminar, the Chairman was asked to invite the views of the District Council Members regarding surgeries. The Chairman reported her findings that most District members were in favour, however there was some concern regarding the health and safety aspect.

Response at the Area Seminar was that the public managed to contact their local councillor when it was necessary, such as by telephone, letter and email. Past

experience was that surgeries had not been popular although members would try it if necessary.

Bradford on Avon Town Council expressed concern that not all of the four District Councillors representing Bradford on Avon wards made regular contact with the Town Council.

(C) Questions

At the Chairman's discretion a number of questions were allowed, to which the Chairman replied. A copy of the questions and answers are attached in an appendix to these minutes.

Bradford on Avon Hospital

OPEN FORUM – Speaker: Mr. Martin Valatin

Cllr Repton informed the Area Seminar that the Town Council and 'Friends of the Hospital' had been in talks, over the past four years, with the Health Authority over the future of the hospital and were shocked when it closed.

Proposals had now been developed with an experienced health and social care Friendly Provident organisation which had charitable status. It was hoped that the organization would buy the site and convert the buildings into a range of residential care and nursing/health services. The scheme had the support of Dr Murrison MP.

It was asked how the scheme would be affected now that the Government was reconsidering the closure of the small hospitals.

The Chairman undertook to provide a written answer if she was able to ascertain this information.

7. BRADFORD ON AVON COMMUNITY AREA PARTNERSHIP UPDATE – THEMES - THE NEXT STAGE

OPEN FORUM – Speaker: Mr. R. Clark

The Chairman announced that due to illness, Jacky Nicholas, Community Development Officer, was not at the meeting, therefore the item would not be discussed as intended. However as the Chairman had received a question from Mr. R. Clark, which related to an item on the agenda, the Chairman allowed Mr. R. Clark to present the question:

At the Chairman's discretion a question was allowed, to which the Chairman replied. A copy of the question and answer is attached in an appendix to these minutes.

8. **RESPECT AGENDA – IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY AREAS, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND PARISHES, FOR EXAMPLE, NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING TEAMS**

OPEN FORUM – Speaker: Cllr Bowen

Gwilym Gibbons, Community Initiatives Manager, presented a report, which updated the Area Seminar on the emergence of Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPT), the Council's response to their arrival and planned involvement in their development.

3 pilot sites had been identified in the District as sites for roll out during 2006, namely;

- Trowbridge Adcroft – due to start 14 Feb 2006
- Melksham North
- Warminster West

The Government had stated that every neighbourhood would have an NPT by 2008 and that everyone should know the name and telephone number of their local Police Officer.

During open forum it was stated that the Town Council would prefer the Police to use community areas and not wards. Gwilym Gibbons confirmed that the District Council was keen to encourage policing within community areas so that there was no policing overlap. It is envisaged that each area would have a geographical base of 60,000 and the District Council is actively working with the police on this.

Members would be involved in guiding how the policing should be delivered. The Government would also be placing a duty on District Councillors to act on information or complaints they received. District Councillors would have to respond within a prescribed timescale.

The District Council, along with Town and Parish Councils, had a range of new powers in relation to Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005. The District Council was currently in the process of exploring how, when and where it could best utilise these new powers. There was an opportunity to explore what role NPT's, and in particular PCSO's, could play in enforcement action (fixed penalty notices) in support of the Council's objectives. If the PCSO's were used for this purpose, the local authorities would need to make a financial contribution. The issue of any income generated from the fixed penalty notices would also need to be investigated.

It was felt that the public would be happier if they were able to contact their local police station. Members were concerned at having such a duty placed upon them. There was also concern that it was going to be more difficult to make NPT work in rural areas, as the villages were more spread out, than in a town where homes were more compact.

9. **ITEMS WHICH REQUIRE REFERRAL TO CABINET**

There were no items which required referral to Cabinet

10. MATTERS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

- Consultation on review of Bradford on Avon Conservation Area – Policy Project Group
- Update on the Future of Bradford on Avon Hospital
- Update on Air Quality Action Plan
- Discussion of the work and progress of the Community Plan and end of year review.

A view was also expressed that it was hoped that there would not be any future meetings of the Area Seminars.

43. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Area Seminar meeting had provisionally been arranged for 20 July 2006. This date would be ratified by Council on 22 February 2006, along with dates of all meetings of the Council. Members of the Committee would duly be informed.

(7.07pm – 8.46pm)

These minutes were prepared by Melanie Stimpson, Member Support Officer
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