

CHIPPENHAM COMMUNITY AREA PARISH FORUM

Chippenham Community Area Board Update November 2016

The Parish Forum has met on two occasions since their last Area Board update with both meetings being hosted by Kington St Michael Parish Council and held in The Kington St Michael Club.

On the 13th July 2016 the Parish Forum was delighted to hear that Wiltshire Cllr Howard Greenman, Forum Chair, had been elected Chair of the Area Board and that in this role he would be promoting much more focus on rural issues. Alongside this good news it was understood that there was concern that his new role could create a conflict of interest and that should this occur the future of the Community Area Parish Forum was discussed.

In congratulating Howard and wishing him success Parish Forum Members entered into a free and frank discussion on the future of the Forum and its' future role being mindful of the history of its' creation to meet the needs of the rural areas, to discuss matters that were Parish related and to achieve a strong voice, but still working with and for the benefit of the Area Board. Since its' creation the Parish Forum had been very well attended and had become the place where Parishes and other community volunteers could share and discuss related issues in a convivial, informal and unrestricted manner to reach conclusions that could be taken forward to Area Board and elsewhere.

Forum Members had been advised by Guest Speakers that attendance at the Forum was a pleasurable experience because of the informal meeting atmosphere, which allowed views to be expressed that might not be in other places and that their preference was to enter into whole room conversations rather than simply lecturing and then responding to questions.

Parish Forum Members were unanimous in their opinion that the Forum should continue in its' present form and that ideally Wiltshire Councillor Howard Greenman should remain as its' Chair retaining the strong link with Area Board. If this arrangement proved difficult then this could be reassessed in future months. The essential need was for the Forum to remain as the meeting place for the rural voice but it was emphasized that this should not mean that attendance at Area Board should be neglected.

Guest Speaker for 13th July 2016 Parish Forum was Inspector David Hobman, Sector Head of Neighbourhood Police Teams throughout northern Wiltshire. He had attended the Forum's previous Meeting and had updated the Forum on his role and duties. At that time the operational neighbourhood policing delivery structure was being discussed but because of the Election period for the new Police and Crime Commissioner for Wiltshire and Swindon he had been unable to confirm details in case of changes to the Police and Crime Plan following the appointment of a new PCC. He stressed that his last Forum visit had been an eye opener and he was pleased to return as he had enjoyed the to and fro discussions not able at other meetings he attended.

He was able to confirm the changes to the Wiltshire Policing Model now the PCC was in post and Community Policing Teams. On the 17th October 2016 North Wiltshire boundaries would change with Chippenham and Royal Wootton Bassett becoming one Team. Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) would not be disappearing. NPTs and Response Teams, jointly, would be under the control of Inspector Hobman and he assured all that they would be community focused.

Within the Chippenham Community Area there would be 5 Teams. All policing matters would be dealt with in 1 Team with no handover to others. This would provide knowledge, continuity and focus and partnerships would be built with Councils, Social services and "communities". The task ahead was focused on engagement and to how to reach rural communities and any assistance the Forum and its' Members could give would be welcomed. To raise profile Chippenham would see the arrival of Police Cadets soon and there was an intention to recruit 500 Special Constables throughout Wiltshire. A list of local Parish contacts would be welcomed so that the teams could become aware of people, places and events and the community messaging service was to be expanded.

There was a need to have a better understanding and engagement with communities, with modern communication methods adopted, alongside community messaging that was to be the recommended contact medium. There was intended to be a major overhaul of the Wiltshire Police website to make it more interactive but likely to take around 6 months to achieve.

In closing Inspector Hobman asked Members to consider what the best way would be for engagement with communities and any ideas so that good news stories could be highlighted. He looked forward to visiting again as the Forum was a good example for others to follow.

Other discussions at the July meeting related to issues raised and information received by Parish Councils from Wiltshire Council since the previous Forum meeting and included Briefing Note No 299 in regards to the Extension of the Basic Broadband Commitment Scheme, the Parish Steward Presentation Evening held on Tuesday 7th June 2016 where it was stressed that the Parish Link with the Steward was so important, Cllr Mr Whitehead's Local Highways Newsletters (June and July 2016) and notification of the 18 Tonne permanent Weight Restriction on the B4069 consultation.

Forum members raised issues relating to the formation of the Health and Wellbeing Group to connect with stakeholders, a brief update on the review of Chippenham Site Allocation position and the consultation closure with progress now unlikely this year, the re-drafting of the LYN Questionnaire to be more suitable for the rural areas and concerns over the delayed commencement of the re-introduction of the Parish Steward Scheme.

Guest Speaker at the Parish Forum held on the 21st September 2016 was Mr Mark Thorne, representing St Modwen, developers promoting the Chippenham Gateway - M4 Junction 17 proposals. They had held two community engagement meetings, hosted by Kington Langley Parish Council on Monday 1st August 2016 and Thursday 8th September 2016 in The Union Chapel, Kington Langley. Mr Thorne welcomed the opportunity to present the proposals, which would be taken forward as an outline planning application to Wiltshire Council later in the year, to a wider audience of local Parishes.

He explained the proposals for employment development and the need to comply with Wiltshire Core Strategy Policies using a regionally significant site to deliver employment in a highly accessible location on the strategic road and motorway network. The concept was to deliver a flexible storage and distribution space in a well-managed and maintained business park environment on a site that could become a central hub to the region and which could contribute to a reduction in out-commuting of workers to places outside of Wiltshire. The site included two parcels of land either side of the B4122 to the south east of M4 Junction 17.

Forum Members raised a number of concerns particularly on highway and motorway impact, and the effect on the landscape and countryside features, including wildlife and footpaths. There was the opportunity to create about 1000 jobs on the site accommodating HGV distribution uses in close proximity to the M4 motorway junction.

It was stressed that the site is located outside of a Principal Settlement (Chippenham) and is not allocated for development but that the National Planning Policy Framework was supportive of sustainable economic growth. Compliance with Wiltshire Core Strategy would be dependent on no detrimental effect on Chippenham Town Centre hence the specific uses being proposed.

Kington Langley Parish Council, had considered the proposals and reported that Wiltshire Council had been advised of their objections to the present proposals, which solely related to distribution services, their preference being for a more comprehensive value added development with additional employment opportunities to include leisure, science, technology and business park to provide more varied employment.

Mr Thorne in response advised that although the local community was supportive of a different form of development this would be contrary to present Planning Policy and would be unlikely to gain permission. Forum Members suggested that this might well be a case where the Local Planning Authority should listen to the wishes of local people. Mr Thorne closed by saying that attendance at the Forum had been a pleasurable experience because of the informal meeting atmosphere, which allowed views to be expressed that might not be in other places and that he welcomed the opportunity to attend again to update everyone of progress.

Other discussions at the September meeting related to issues raised and information received by Parish Councils from Wiltshire Council since the previous Forum meeting and included Briefing Note No 302, in regards to the Help to Live at Home (HTLAH) Tender process, Briefing Note No 303, in regards to Onshore Hydrocarbon Extraction, Public Health Briefing Notes July and August 2016 Editions, the Wiltshire Council Parish Emergency Assistance Scheme (PEAS) 16/17, the Wiltshire Council Budget Meeting – Challenges Ahead to be held at Monkton Park on Monday 26th September 2016, Local Highways (Cllr Mr Whitehead's August and September Newsletters) and news that, following the formal consultation regarding the proposal for a permanent weight limit Traffic Regulation Order on the B4069 (Draycot Cerne to Lyneham), confirmation has been received from Wiltshire Council that the proposal will go ahead. Most recent news included the Wiltshire Council Tax Grant Consultation, Briefing Note No 305 in regards to Onshore Oil and Gas Licensing and the DCLG "Capping" Referendum Consultation.

Forum Members raised issues relating to the Chippenham Older People's Forum and Chippenham Health & Wellbeing Groups' "Big Get Together" taking place on Friday 21st October 2016 in the Neeld Community & Arts Centre, a brief update and discussion on the repercussions of planning decisions made by the Strategic Planning Committee on the 14th September 2016, particularly on the cumulative effect on the local road network and M4 Junction 17 highlighting what appeared to be a U Turn by the Wiltshire Council and Highway Authority on previously expressed views and that resistance was required to development proposals without the required infrastructure and emphasizing the need for M4 slip road/third lane measures to be introduced. Clear evidence and support was available through the Highways England J17 M4 Motorway Model Paramics Results, a technical note/model assessing years 2017 to 2026, part of a Transport Assessment produced for the Barrow Farm development proposals in August 2015. Forum members noted a LYN Forum Event was planned for Thursday 20th October 2016 at Wiltshire College, Chippenham, that the Chippenham Site Allocations resumed Hearings were commencing on Tuesday 27th September 2016 also that Chippenham Town Council had invited adjacent Parishes to a meeting to discuss initial thoughts on a Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan.

Other discussions at the September meeting related to the Parish Forum's Forward Plan and that concerns still surrounded the future of the Forum despite the unanimous support from Forum Members when last meeting. It appeared that Wiltshire Council were not supportive of its' continuation and the question was raised as to what costs were involved in running the Forum and whether it could continue without the support of Wiltshire Council. Forum Members were reminded that at the present time the Forum had no costs. The Meeting room/facilities, were paid for by the host Parish Council and the administrative support was from a volunteer Clerk. In reality the Forum could continue as exists.

At the last meeting the Forum had agreed that it had become the place where Parishes and other community volunteers could share and discuss related issues in a convivial, informal and unrestricted manner, which was beneficial. There had never been an intention that it should compete with the Area Board but should be a working partner and the wish was that this should continue, particularly in the light that Parish Councils may well be required to take over services and support initiatives that Wiltshire Council were cutting. It was essential that the Forum's views were made known to a wide audience and this could be done through the Area Board, or alternative arrangements considered. An update report to each Area Board Meeting would provide the opportunity.

Castle Combe Parish Council informed the Forum that a number of Church thefts had occurred at Castle Combe, that the culprit had been identified, including video evidence, and reported but there had been limited liaison between Wiltshire and Avon Police Forces.

Concerns were raised regarding permits now being required for Vans/Pick Ups/Trailers at Recycling Centres and whether there was/would be a knock on effect with more fly tipping, particularly on farmland and rural verges.

The Community Area Parish Forum meets again on Wednesday 23rd November 2016 in the Goss Croft Hall, Upper Seagry at 7.30pm. All Wiltshire Council Chippenham Area Board Members are welcome, particularly those who represent the Parish Forum Divisions.