

**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE**  
**(Cadwell, Codicote, Graveley & Wymondley, Hitchwood, Hoo, Kimpton,  
Knebworth and Offa Wards)**

**Minutes of the meeting held in the Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth  
Garden City on 1 June 2006 at 7.30 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** *Councillor D.J. Barnard (Chairman), Tom Brindley (Vice-Chairman),  
Tricia Gibbs, J. Gray, David Miller, and Mrs C.P.A. Strong.*

**IN ATTENDANCE:** *John Chapman (Area Planning Officer), Garry Gover (Community  
Development Officer for the Southern Rural Area) and Donna Levett  
(Committee & Member Services Officer).*

**ALSO PRESENT:** *Mr Kevin Green (SCooTS 2 Wheel Project Co-ordinator, Community  
Development Agency for Hertfordshire), Councillor F.J. Smith (Leader  
of the Council) and 4 members of the public.*

**4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Bardett, Sal Jarvis and J. Bishop.

**5. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 April 2006 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman informed the Committee that, following the Committee's support for the identification of officers in Minutes at the previous meeting (Minute 156 refers), the Chief Executive had confirmed that, from the current Committee cycle, officers would be identified by both name and job title in the attendance list at the start of Area Committee Minutes.

**6. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was submitted for consideration by the Committee.

**7. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Tom Brindley declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 9 – Planning Applications as he was a member of the Codicote Parish Council, which had considered planning application items 4, 5 and 6. Councillor Brindley reserved his right to speak and vote on this matter.

**8. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mrs Zoe Coles had given due notice that she wished to speak at the meeting regarding planning application reference 06/00414/1HH – Fairways, Church Lane, Preston. Mrs Coles was speaking as the applicant and explained to the Committee the circumstances that had led to the family's move to Preston and their need to extend the house to cater for their growing family. She outlined the design process that had taken place to ensure that the plans were in sympathy with the existing buildings and the surroundings, and expressed her hope that the Committee would look favourably on the application.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Coles for addressing the Committee and informed her that the points she had raised would be considered when determining the application.

**9. SCOOTERS FUNDING APPLICATION**

Mr Kevin Green, the SCooTS 2 Wheels Project Co-ordinator for the Community Development Agency for Hertfordshire made a presentation to the Committee relating to a funding request for the SCooTS project.

Mr Green informed the Committee that the prime aim of the SCooTS project was to tackle barriers faced by young people as a result of the lack of transport in rural areas through the provision of 50cc scooters or bicycles, allowing them to access employment, training and further education opportunities and enhancing their life chances. Clients would be identified through referral partners at ConneXions Hertfordshire, JobCentrePlus and North Herts College, aged 16-25 years old, living in the 33 rural parishes of North Hertfordshire, and must have received a firm offer of an employment, training or further education placement.

Mr Green then outlined the application process for the Committee, and provided details of what would be provided for clients accepted onto the scheme. He highlighted the steps that had been taken to ensure that safety, security and misuse concerns were addressed, and the level of parental involvement and consent required.

Mr Green explained to the Committee that the grant request was for a total of £30,000 from the Southern Rural Capital Visioning Budget, provided in three annual instalments of £10,000 each in April 2007, 2008 and 2009. This money would be used as capital expenditure for purchasing additional and replacement scooters and associated safety equipment for deployment in North Herts, enabling the project to support up to 240 clients.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr Green stated that the Southern Rural Committee had been approached for this initial capital grant as 80% of the client group living in rural North Herts lived in the Southern Rural area, and it suffered from higher levels of employment and income deprivation compared to the other rural areas of the District, with access to employment being generally poor. He confirmed, however, that the sum requested actually only equated to approximately 30% of the capital cost of the scheme, with the remainder of the funding being sought from other partners and funding streams.

Mr Green further confirmed that the scooters that would be provided had been chosen as they were the same models as had been used successfully by other schemes. He informed the Committee that the scooters would be registered to the Community Development Agency for Hertfordshire and would have fully comprehensive insurance, so any problems that arose as a result of careless or negligent usage of the scooters would be dealt with directly by the project, with no implications for the Council. He also reassured the Committee that regular monitoring of use would take place and any such behaviour would result in the removal of the scooter from the client due to breach of the terms and conditions of use.

**RESOLVED:** That the information provided by the 2 Wheels Project Co-ordinator for the Community Development Agency for Hertfordshire be noted.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and strategic priorities of the Council.

**10. CHAMPION NEWS**

The Community Development Officer for the Southern Rural Area presented a report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services to the Committee, which advised them of the activities undertaken by the Community Development Officer for the Southern Rural Area since the meeting of the Committee held on 27 April 2006,

and brought to their attention some important community based activities that would be taking place during the next few months.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Community Development Officer for the Southern Rural Area stated that responsibility for the organisation of the Rural Conference no longer lay with the Community Development team but had been given to the Policy, Partnerships and Performance team. Current resourcing problems in that team had meant the Conference had been postponed from 10 July 2006.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services be noted;
- (2) That the actions taken by the Community Development Officer for the Southern Rural Area to promote greater community capacity and well-being for the Southern Rural area communities be endorsed;
- (3) That the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement & Rural Affairs be requested to investigate the current situation with regard to the Rural Conference and provide an update to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 13 July 2006.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To keep members of the Committee apprised of the latest developments in community activities in the Southern Rural area.

**11. SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE DEVELOPMENT & AREA VISIONING BUDGETS 2006/2007**

The Community Development Officer for the Southern Rural Area presented a report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services to the Committee, which set out the budgetary situation for the Committee.

With regard to the funding request from the SCooTS 2 Wheel Project, the Committee expressed their concern about the lack of information provided concerning the success rates of other, similar projects. There had also been some uncertainty about the *de minimis* capital funding levels and, as a result of these two factors, the Committee felt unable to make a decision about whether to fund the project at this stage.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forwards from Ward Development Budgets and the allocated and unallocated Visioning Budgets be noted;
- (2) That determination of the funding request from the SCooTS 2 Wheel Project be deferred until the meeting of the Committee to be held on 13 July 2006 to allow for the provision of the additional information requested by the Committee.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

- (1) The report was intended to apprise Members of the financial resources available to this Committee. It drew attention to the current budgetary situation, assisted in the effective financial management of the Committee's budget and ensured actions were performed within the Authority's Financial Regulations and the guidance contained in the Grants procedure;
- (2) The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and strategic priorities of the Council.

12. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The Committee heard an oral representation from Mrs Zoe Coles, the applicant, in relation to planning application reference 06/00414/1HH – Fairways, Church Lane, Preston. Details of this representation can be found at Minute 8 above.

**RESOLVED:** To determine the applications as set out in the report of the Planning & Building Control as submitted to the Committee in the following schedule:

**SCHEDULE**

<b>Reference Number</b>	<b>Description of Development and location</b>	<b>Decision</b>
06/00572/1	<b>Jacks Hill Reservoir, Jacks Hill, Graveley</b> Widening of entrance to site from B197 to allow emergency access for water tankers.	<b>GRANTED</b> (see (a) below)
06/00438/1	<b>Offley Place, Kings Walden Road, Great Offley</b> Conservatory extension to hotel/conference centre.	<b>GRANTED</b> (see (b) below)
06/00439/1LB	<b>Offley Place, Kings Walden Road, Great Offley</b> Listed Building Consent – Conservatory extension to hotel/conference centre.	<b>GRANTED</b> (as per report)
06/00429/1	<b>Heath Lodge Residential Home, Danesbury Park Road, Welwyn</b> 63 Bedroom residential nursing home with 49 parking spaces, as extension to existing nursing home, following demolition of existing motel buildings and canopied areas.	<b>GRANTED</b> (as per report)
06/00458/1	<b>The Kerne, Pottersheath Road, Codicote</b> Erection of 5 bedroom dwelling and detached garage following demolition of existing dwelling (as variation to application reference no. 05/00666/1 granted 5 July 2005).	<b>GRANTED</b> (as per report)
06/00591/1HH	<b>Churchfields, Hitchin Road, Codicote</b> Single storey rear extension to pool building.	<b>GRANTED</b> (as per report)
06/00420/1	<b>Old Cottage, Kimpton Bottom, Kimpton</b> Single storey rear extension.	<b>GRANTED</b> (as per report)
06/00351/1	<b>St. Pauls Walden JMI School, Bendish Lane, Whitwell</b> Erection of freestanding temporary pre-school classroom (as amended by plans received 12 April 2006).	<b>REFUSED</b> (see (c) below)
06/00414/1HH	<b>Fairways, Church Lane, Preston</b> First floor side extension over existing garage. Single storey front extension.	<b>GRANTED</b> (as per report)

- (a) **RESOLVED:** That, with regard to planning application reference 06/00572/1, planning permission be **GRANTED** as per the report of the Head of Planning & Building Control, and the following additional

conditions:

3. *The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the proposed access has been re-constructed as drawing number PO14009-001 to the current specification of Hertfordshire County Council and to the local Planning Authority's satisfaction.*

*Reason: In the interests of highway safety and amenity.*

4. *The new gates provided shall be set back a minimum of 8 metres from the carriageway and shall open inwards to the site.*

*Reason: To allow a vehicle to wait clear of the carriageway or footway while the gates are being opened and closed.*

5. *The development shall not be brought into use until a properly consolidated and surfaced turning space for tanker vehicles has been provided within the curtilage of the site as details provided on external works drawing number 3721/111. The turning space should be free from obstruction and available for use at all times.*

*Reason: To allow vehicles to enter and leave the site in forward gear in the interests of highway safety.*

6. *The access shall be 4.5 metres wide and the kerb radii shall be 6 metres.*

*Reason: So that vehicles may enter and leave the site with the minimum of interference to the free flow and safety of other traffic on the highway and for the convenience and safety of pedestrians and disabled people.*

- (b) **RESOLVED:** That, with regard to planning application reference 06/00438/1, planning permission be **GRANTED** as per the report of the Head of Planning & Building Control, and the following additional condition:

3. *No development shall place within the application site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological observation and recording of the construction groundworks in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*

*Reason: In order that a record is made of anything of archaeological interest within the site.*

- (c) **RESOLVED:** That, with regard to planning application reference 06/00351/1, planning permission be **REFUSED** for the following reason:

*"By reason of its proposed location in front of the forwardmost wall of the school building, together with the associated loss of trees, the proposed building would have an adverse impact upon the visual amenities of the locality."*

### 13. PLANNING APPEALS

The Area Planning Officer informed the Committee that no planning appeals had been lodged since the meeting of the Committee held on 27 April 2006. However, the following appeal had been determined:

Appellant	Ms S. Moore
Reference number	05/00966/1
Address	Gosmore End House and land adj. 20 Maydencroft Lane, Gosmore
Proposal	Retention of existing greenhouse
Decision	Appeal ALLOWED

**14. PLANNING ENFORCEMENT UPDATE**

The Area Planning Officer provided an oral update on the current status of previously authorised enforcement action. The Committee had requested this report at the meeting held on 27 April 2006.

The Area Planning Officer advised that the following enforcement authorisations remained outstanding:

<b>Address</b>	<b>Date of Authorisation (Committee Meeting)</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
Land at and to rear of Pulmore Water, St Albans Road, Codicote	14 April 2005	Further legal advice being sought
Land to the rear of the Old Coach House, Maydencroft Lane, Gosmore / Land to the rear of Gosmore Nursing Home, off Maydencroft Lane, Gosmore / Land adjacent to 20 Maydencroft Lane, Gosmore / Lane to the North West of Birch Cottage, Hitchin Road, Gosmore / Land to North East of Gosmore End House, Hitchin Road, Gosmore	22 December 2005	Clarification upon appeal decision referred to at Minute 13 being sought and dependent upon the advice received the expediency of pursuing enforcement action would be further assessed.

Following discussion by the Committee, it was felt that the information provided was useful as it meant Members were aware of the situation at all times. It was also felt that the updates were best provided at Committee, not through the medium of the Members Information Service.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the information provided by the Area Planning Officer be noted;
- (2) That a written update in a tabular form of the current situation on authorised enforcement action be presented by the Area Planning Officer to all future meetings of the Committee.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To keep members of the Committee apprised of the status of enforcement actions in the Southern Rural area.

The meeting closed at 9.27 p.m.

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Chairman