

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

**Minutes of the meeting held at The Council Offices, Letchworth Garden City on
Thursday, 3 April 2008 at 7.30 p.m.**

MINUTES

PRESENT: Councillor D.J. Barnard (Chairman), Tom Brindley (Vice-Chairman),
Alan Bardett, Lee Downie, Tricia Gibbs, Sal Jarvis and David Miller .

IN ATTENDANCE: Mark Simmons – Conservation Officer
Liz Marten – Principal Conservation Officer
Garry Gover- Community Development Officer,
Nigel Schofield and Hilary Dineen – Committee and Member
Services Officers.

Approximately 23 members of the public at commencement of
meeting.

59. APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: John Bishop, J Gray and Mrs
C.P.A. Strong.

60. MINUTES – 20 FEBRUARY 2008

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2008 be approved
as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

61. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman confirmed that there would be no other items of business at this
meeting.

62. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (1) The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially to those making
a presentation to the Committee and apologised for the length of time
speakers were kept waiting at the last meeting of the Southern Rural
Committee held on 20 February 2008.
- (2) The Chairman reminded the Members that any declarations of interest in
respect of any business set out in the agenda, should be declared as either a
prejudicial or personal interest and are required to notify the Chairman of the
nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the relevant item on
the agenda. Members declaring a prejudicial interest should leave the room
and not seek to influence the decision during that particular item.

63. PARISH PLANS (NO OFFICER REPORT)

Five members of the public gave presentations as follows:

Codicote Parish Plan

Mr Phil Hatch thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to give a presentation
regarding the Codicote Parish Plan. He informed the Committee that a questionnaire
was produced which would enable the understanding of concerns, which received a
35 per cent response rate. A group was formed to take forward actions and a leaflet
was sent to every household asking for residents to identify the one thing they would
change. Mr Hatch explained that an open day attended by 40 residents was held and
a Chairman and Secretary were elected to enable activities to be distinguished from
those of the Parish Council. Ten to twelve people were meeting regularly working
towards moving projects forward and the actions taken so far included the creation of
a web site and publication of a Parish Directory.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Mr Hatch be thanked for his presentation regarding the Codicote Parish Plan;
- (2) That the people of Codicote be congratulated on their Parish Plan.

Ickleford Parish Plan

Mr Miles Maxwell thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to give a presentation regarding the Ickleford Parish Plan. He informed the Committee that the concept was to have the views of the villagers to ensure all demographics were included; that plans for an open day were prepared to advise people of the issues; A questionnaire was distributed to every household with a response rate in excess of 80 per cent; the open day was very positive, with 100 people volunteering to participate in the future; that the biggest issues for Ickleford were speeding traffic and plastics recycling; That an action plan had been developed for inclusion in the Parish Plan.

The Chairman advised that Ickleford is a preferred village on the Highways list, so work should start over the next 12 months.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Mr Maxwell be thanked for his presentation regarding the Ickleford Parish Plan;
- (2) That the people of Ickleford be congratulated their Parish Plan.

Kimpton Parish Plan

Mr Bob Finch thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to give a presentation regarding the Kimpton Parish Plan. He informed the Committee that the concept was triggered by the Kimpton Protection Group. The public were asked for ideas at a Village May Day celebration. He advised that 200 people attended a Village Day at which the Parish Plan was finalised. The main concerns for Kimpton included Rights of Way, seating and leaflets showing public footpaths. Actions included promotion of more business in the area including mobile butcher, fishmonger and fish & chip vans which now visited the area. A "Green Bag" had been produced for Kimpton promoting reduction in the use of plastic bags and advertising support for the local Post Office. Mr Finch informed the Committee that a booklet had been produced showing more than 100 businesses in Kimpton, that a Youth Day had been organised for 2008, that the Scout Troop had reformed and that the young people of Kimpton had requested an enclosed 5 a side pitch, which would be the next project.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Mr Finch be thanked for his presentation regarding the Kimpton Parish Plan;
- (2) That the people of Kimpton be congratulated on their Parish Plan.

Knebworth Parish Plan

Mr John Bantick (Chair of Knebworth Parish Council) thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to make a presentation regarding the Knebworth Parish Plan. Mr Bantick informed the Committee that a survey of the whole village had more than 600 responses. The urgent issues for the people of Knebworth were: traffic congestion, the future of Chas Lowe builders yard and crime/anti social behaviour. He advised that the youth had been involved including choosing equipment for the recreation ground. Mothers had chosen play equipment for younger children. The completed Parish Plan had a comments form, and if these are received they are responded to as soon as possible.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Mr Bantick be thanked for his presentation regarding the Knebworth Parish Plan;
- (2) That the people of Knebworth be congratulated on their work in the local community and the development of the Knebworth Parish Plan.

Community Development Agency for Hertfordshire

Mr Herbert Dzapata thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to make a presentation regarding the work carried out by the Community Development Agency for Hertfordshire. Mr Dzapata outlined the role of the Community Development Agency for Hertfordshire which included: to support communities; promote the concept of Parish Plans; give advice on projects; support the communities through the process of developing a Parish Plan; Advice on funding sources; provide sample documents; pass on best practices; encourage networking; promote social inclusion, especially the youth; getting Parish Plan groups involved with other agencies and supporting villages in the preparation of their Parish Plans.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Mr Dzapata be thanked for his presentation regarding the work of the Development Agency for Hertfordshire;
- (2) That the Community Development Agency for Hertfordshire be thanked for its work with local communities towards community engagement.

64. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – PETITION FOR PEDESTRIAN CROSSING.

Emma Pilling thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to present a petition to the Southern Rural Committee. Mrs Pilling presented a petition containing 345 signatures from local residents extremely concerned for the safety of children and parents walking to Round Diamond School and having to cross Whitehorse Lane, Great Ashby, which was very busy with motor vehicles at peak times. It was considered by local residents that a pedestrian crossing at this location would provide a safe means of crossing Whitehorse Lane to the school.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Pilling for the presentation of the petition and her comments on road safety. The Committee agreed that the petition would be referred to the next meeting of the North Herts Highways Partnership– Joint Member Panel to be held on 21 April 2008.

RESOLVED: That Mrs Pilling be thanked for the petition regarding a pedestrian Crossing at White Horse Lane, Great Ashby.

RECOMMENDED TO NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP– JOINT MEMBER PANEL: That at the next meeting of the JMP to be held on 21 April 2008, that the North Herts District Manager be requested to receive the petition and consequently undertake appropriate investigation as to the feasibility of a pedestrian crossing at Whitehorse Lane, Great Ashby.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable the North Herts Highways Partnership – Joint Member Panel to consider the feasibility of a pedestrian Crossing at Whitehorse Lane, Great Ashby.

65. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – PETITION OPPOSING PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBER 08/00269/1 - USE OF LAND FOR "OFF AIRPORT " CAR STORAGE FACILITY FOR 268 CARS AND PARKING AREA FOR COACHES/MINI BUSES. CONSTRUCTION OF ANCILLARY ADMIN BUILDING, RENEWABLE ENERGY PLANT AND NEW VEHICULAR ACCESS.

Richard Davies thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to present a petition to the Southern Rural Committee. Mr Davies presented a petition containing 360 signatures from residents in the area extremely concerned about a proposed car park, in Cockernhoe Parish, to accommodate vehicles from Luton Airport. Mr Davies advised that the residents concerns included an increase in traffic congestion and environmental pollution, erosion of Green Belt land, inadequacies in existing local highways infrastructure and unnecessary impact on a protected species (bats). Mr Davies also informed the Committee that the road leading to the proposed car park was prone to flooding and that the development would not enhance the area nor have benefit for the local residents.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Mr Davies be thanked for the petition regarding planning application
- (2) 08/00269/1 – “Use of land for "off airport " car storage facility for 268 cars and parking area for coaches/mini buses. Construction of ancillary admin building, renewable energy plant and new vehicular access” and his comments regarding the local area;
- (3) That the petition received by the Southern Rural Committee be handed to the
- (4) Head of Planning and Building Control for consideration regarding the planning application number 08/00269/1 – “Use of land for "off airport " car storage facility for 268 cars and parking area for coaches/mini buses. Construction of ancillary admin building, renewable energy plant and new vehicular access”.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable the views of the petitioners to be considered by the Planning Department when considering application number 08/00269/01 - “Use of land for "off airport " car storage facility for 268 cars and parking area for coaches/mini buses. Construction of ancillary admin building, renewable energy plant and new vehicular access”.

66. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - GRANT APPLICATIONS

1st Codicote Scout Group

Ms Dawn Bonfield was unable to attend this meeting to give a presentation.

Codicote Village Day Committee

Mr Charles Unwin was unable to attend this meeting to give a presentation.

Codicote Parish Council

Mrs Lorraine Ellis thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to make a presentation. She informed the Committee that the Council had moved its offices to a more prominent location; that IT lessons for the public were planned and that grant funds would be used to purchase chairs and a colour printer also provide internet access.

Codicote Youth Project

Ms Laura Wilson thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to make a presentation. She informed the Committee that she was a volunteer worker in the Codicote Youth Project; that weekly dance activities were being held at Codicote Primary School; that costs have now increased and funding was needed to keep the dance activities going.

CodiFest

Ms Caroline Mayger thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to make a presentation. She informed the Committee that the CodiFest Committee consisted of volunteers; that this was a not for profit making organisation and event; that this event was well received in 2007; that the CodiFest Committee had worked closely with the Police and that the event last year had received no complaints from the public or the Police: That grant funding would be used to cover insurance costs.

Lilley Parish Council

Mrs Liz Sheppard thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to make a presentation. She informed the Committee that the current notice board in the Village had been in use for more than 25 years and was now at the end of its useful life; that grant funding would be used to purchase a new notice board for the Village.

Offley Pre-School

Mrs Nicky Sadler thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to make a presentation. She informed the Committee that Offley Pre School had an active fund raising Committee; that it was a charity; that grant funding would be used as support funding for building maintenance to prefabricated classrooms.

Pirton Playgroup

Ms Amanda Goodman thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to make a presentation. She informed the Committee that Pirton Playgroup had charitable status; that all places available has been taken up; that new staff are required; that grant funding would be used to purchase a laptop computer which would help raise awareness of Information Technology; and that it aimed to implement a web site.

Knebworth Parish Council

Mr John Bantick thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to give a presentation. He informed the Committee that the male urinals in Knebworth Village Hall were cracked and no longer serviceable; that funding would be used to purchase replacements.

RESOLVED: That all the speakers be thanked for their presentations.

67. **CHAMPION NEWS AND COMMUNITY REPORT**

The Community Development Officer (CDO) updated the Committee on his activities since the last meeting of the Southern Rural Committee held on 20 February 2008.

Particular attention was drawn to the following:

- Transport Fundamental Service Review
- North Hertfordshire Rural Strategy 2005 – 2010: the CDO will advise when this has been completed.
- Annual Parish & Town Council Conference: the Committee noted that invitations have yet to be sent out regarding this.
- North Hertfordshire Highways Partnership – Joint Member Panel: Members were requested to forward ideas regarding schemes for joint funding and possible locations for disabled parking bays to the Planning Projects Manager.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the information provided by the Community Development Officer on his activities since the last meeting of the Southern Rural Committee held on 20 February 2008 be noted;
- (2) That Policy Partnership & Performance department be requested to send invitations regarding the Annual Parish & Town Council Conference as a matter of urgency;
- (3) That the Committee Administrator be requested to forward the following suggested road schemes and locations for disabled parking bays to the Planning Projects Manager before the deadline of 11 April 2008.

Disabled Parking Bays

- Grimstone Road, Little Wymondley.
- Peace Memorial Hall, High Street, Codicote.

Road Schemes

- Stevenage Road, Little Wymondley - minor resurfacing.
- A600 Ickleford to Stondon – resurfacing.
- Pound Farm, Lower Stondon (near landfill site) – potholes to be repaired.
- Vehicle Activated Sign in Turnpike Lane, Ickleford.

Footpaths

- Pondcroft Road to London Road, Knebworth
 - Westland to New Close, Knebworth
- (4) That all Members of the Southern Rural Area Committee be requested to submit any further locations and type of traffic management controls that could be considered for matched funding by the Hertfordshire Highways Joint Member Panel to the Planning Projects Manager by email (louise.symes@north-herts.gov.uk) or the Committee Administrator (hilary.dineen@north-herts.gov.uk) no later than 11 April 2008;

- (5) That all Members of the Southern Rural Area Committee be requested to submit any further possible locations of disabled parking bays to the Planning Projects Manager by email (louise.symes@north-herts.gov.uk) or the Committee Administrator (hilary.dineen@north-herts.gov.uk) no later than 11 April 2008;

68. ANNUAL GRANTS, DEVELOPMENT, DISCRETIONARY AND VISIONING BUDGETS 2007-2008

The Community Development Officer (CDO) presented a report of the Head of Community Development and Cultural Services to the Committee, which set out the current expenditure and balances of the Area Committee delegated budgets. The CDO also brought to the Committee's attention details of recent requests received for Area Committee Development Discretionary Grant Funding, made by community groups and local organisations. The CDO made specific reference to the financial support made for the SCooTS 2 Wheels Scheme and updated the Committee on use of the scheme.

The CDO drew attention to the procedure regarding grant funding and acknowledged that it may be difficult under these procedures to fund an event that was to take place in the month of May.

The CDO advised the Committee of the possibility of a North Herts Village of the Year Award, which would be organised by the Campaign for Rural England. The Members asked for various issues with this award to be investigated by the CDO

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forward items from the Ward Development Budgets and allocated Visioning budgets as set out at Appendix 5 be noted;
- (2) That the Head of Community Development and Cultural Services be requested to consider the procedure regarding grant funding including the proposal that events to be held within the time scale of 2 meetings of the Area Committee after the end of each financial year could be considered for funding in the current financial year.
- (3) That the Community Development Officer be requested to research further the option of a North Herts Village of the Year Award including: discussion with other area CDO and provisional costings.

69. GRANT REQUEST – WYMONDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

RESOLVED: That a grant of £875.00 be awarded to Wymondley Parish Council from the 2007/08 Discretionary Budget as support funding to purchase mesh fencing and metals posts to provide safety at Great Wymondley Recreation Ground.

70. GRANT REQUEST – 1ST CODICOTE SCOUT GROUP

RESOLVED: That a grant of £500.00 be awarded to the 1st Codicote Scout Group from the 2007/08 Discretionary Budget as support funding to replace camping & cooking equipment.

71. GRANT REQUEST – CODICOTE VILLAGE DAY COMMITTEE

RESOLVED:

- (1) That a grant of £1000.00 be awarded to the Codicote Village Day Committee from the 2007/08 Discretionary Budget as support funding towards the cost of printing programmes for the event;
- (2) That the grant be subject to a satisfactory written constitution being drawn up by The Codicote Village Day Committee.

72. GRANT REQUEST – CODICOTE PARISH COUNCIL

RESOLVED: That a grant of £100.00 be awarded to Codicote Parish Council from the 2007/08 Discretionary Budget as funding to purchase folding chairs for use by visitors to the internet training sessions.

73. **GRANT REQUEST – CODICOTE PARISH COUNCIL**
RESOLVED: That a grant of £140.00 be awarded to Codicote Parish Council from the 2007/08 Discretionary Budget as funding to purchase a colour printer for use by the public in internet training sessions and Internet link.
74. **GRANT REQUEST – CODICOTE YOUTH PROJECT**
RESOLVED: That a grant of £1250.00 be awarded to the Codicote Youth Project from the 2007/08 Discretionary Budget as support funding for hall hire costs enabling the maintenance of dance classes
75. **GRANT REQUEST – CODIFEST**
RESOLVED: That a grant of £1000.00 be awarded to CodiFest from the 2008/09 Discretionary Budget as support funding towards the costs of staging the one day music festival.
76. **GRANT REQUEST – LILLEY PARISH COUNCIL**
RESOLVED: That a grant of £490.00 be awarded to Lilley Parish Council from the 2007/08 Discretionary Budget as funding for a replacement notice board within the village.
77. **GRANT REQUEST – OFFLEY PRE-SCHOOL GROUP**
RESOLVED: That a grant of £1250.00 be awarded to Offley Pre-School Group from the 2007/08 Discretionary Budget as support funding for maintenance to it's premises.
78. **GRANT REQUEST – PIRTON PLAYGROUP**
RESOLVED: That a grant of £400.00 be awarded to Pirton Playgroup from the 2007/08 Discretionary Budget as support costs towards the setting up of a web site.
79. **GRANT REQUEST - KNEBWORTH PARISH COUNCIL**
RESOLVED: That a grant of £500.00 be awarded to Knebworth Parish Council from the 2007/08 Discretionary Budget as matched funding towards the upgrade of the Gents toilets in Knebworth Village Hall.
80. **REALLOCATION OF GRANT FROM REVENUE VISIONING BUDGET**
It was noted that there had been a £990 under spend regarding the grant allocated from the Revenue Visioning Budget in support of Village Halls Networking Events.
RESOLVED:
(1) That £990 allocated to Village Halls Networking Events from the Revenue Visioning Budget be reallocated to this budget;
(2) That any uncommitted funds for the 2007/2008 Discretionary Budget be allocated in principle to match funding projects with North Hertfordshire Highways Partnership – Joint Member Panel Discretionary Budget for 2008/2009.
81. **REALLOCATION OF GRANT FROM 2006/07 BUDGET**
It was noted that the costs of the Highways project in Codicote for which grant funding of £4500 was allocated from the 2006/2007 budget would now cost less than anticipated. There would be an under spend on this project of £2500.
RESOLVED:
(1) That £2500 allocated to the Highways project in Codicote, now under spent, from the 2006/07 budget be reallocated to that budget.
(2) That any uncommitted funds for 2006/2007 be allocated in principle to matched funding projects with North Hertfordshire Highways Partnership – Joint Member Panel Discretionary Budget 2008/2009.

82. OLD KNEBWORTH CONSERVATION AREA

Declaration of Interests:

Councillor Alan Bardett declared a personal interest as Chairman of North Herts District Council and his appointment (during his tenure) to the Knebworth House Education and Preservation Trust and advised that he would remain in the room and reserved his right to speak and vote.

Councillor Tricia Gibbs, the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement advised the Chairman that, after due consideration, there would be a strong likelihood that she would have pre-determined a decision should she vote on this item prior to any decision made by Cabinet at the meeting to be held on 10 April 2008. Councillor Gibbs advised the Chairman that she would participate in the debate, but not vote.

At the Chairman's request the Conservation Officer (CO) reminded the Committee of the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control presented at the last meeting of the Southern Rural Committee held on 20 February 2008 (minute 51 refers). He confirmed that the officers' recommendation remained as detailed during the meeting held on 20 February 2008.

At the Chairman's invitation, the Hon. Henry Lytton Cobbold made a presentation to the Committee. He stated that he believed that the greater part of Knebworth Park should not be included within the Old Knebworth Conservation Area boundary, although he felt it totally appropriate that Jubilee Park was included. He informed the Committee that Knebworth Park was in the business of conservation and that there would already be sufficient levels of control in place. The deer park and method of tree maintenance in Knebworth Park was clarified. The Hon. Henry Lytton Cobbold asked the Committee to support the amendment that Councillor Bardett was expected to propose as an alternative substantive motion to the Committee.

At the Chairman's invitation, Mr Roger Woodward gave a presentation to the Committee. He stated that he supported the proposals made by the Hon. Henry Lytton Cobbold, that he supported the extension of the Old Knebworth Conservation Area, but feels that it should only include Jubilee Park, not the greater area of Knebworth Park.

The Chairman thanked the speakers for their contribution.

Councillor A. Bardett presented an alternative substantive motion (which was seconded) regarding the proposed boundary of the Old Knebworth Conservation Area. He gave as his justification for this amendment as follows: that Knebworth Park was working to survive the next decade; that Knebworth Estates would need freedom to undertake its' business; that Knebworth Park had an annual plan regarding tree management; with three layers of control already in existence that also included control measures applicable within the Green Belt; that extending the boundary of the Old Knebworth Conservation Area would cause delays and increased costs for the business of Knebworth Estates.

The Conservation Officer reminded the Committee that the area was considered to be of architectural and historical interest; that the inclusion of more land within the Old Knebworth Conservation Area would not necessarily prevent development taking place; that planning applications would still be considered; that trees in Knebworth Park were not protected without this designation, but could still be subject to Tree Preservation Orders; that it was considered that there would be no cost implications regarding the officer recommendations; that the public response to consultation raised no objection for the inclusion of the additional land identified as Area A.

Members raised questions on Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) and Open Air concerts at Knebworth Park. The Conservation Officer advised that the extension of the Conservation Area boundary would not affect any current legislation pertaining to TPOs or concerts (temporary structures).

Members debated the issues raised by Councillor Bardett, the two presentations and the responses of the Conservation Officer.

The Chairman invited the Committee to vote on Councillor Bardett's substantive motion, after the vote the motion was lost.

The Chairman asked for a proposer and seconder for the Officer recommendations, which were forthcoming, and following the vote the Officer recommendations were agreed.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Southern Rural Area Committee supported the revised Old Knebworth Conservation Area appraisal and map as considered at paragraphs 5.1 to 5.25 of the report taken to Southern Rural Area Committee on 20 February 2008
- (2) That the Committee's views together with the recommendations made at the Southern Rural Area Committee on 3 April 2008 be reported to Cabinet at its meeting to be held on 8 April 2008.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

That the Southern Rural Area Committee supported the revised Old Knebworth Conservation Area appraisal and map as presented at Paragraphs 5.1 to 5.25 and Appendix G in the Conservation Areas report as presented to Southern Rural Committee on 20 February 2008.;

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

To allow North Hertfordshire District Council provide an up-to-date review of Old Knebworth Conservation Areas with appropriate documents that would inform planning decisions.

83. SOUTHERN RURAL – THE WAY FORWARD

The dates of the Southern Rural Committee Meetings for the 2008/2009 Civic Year were agreed as follows:

- Thursday, 12 June 2008;
- Thursday, 31 July 2008;
- Thursday, 2 October 2008;
- Thursday, 27 November 2008;
- Thursday, 22 January 2009;
- Thursday, 12 March 2009.

RESOLVED: That the Committee will discuss Southern Rural – The Way Forward at the next Committee Meeting to be held on 12 June 2008.

The meeting closed at 10.30 p.m.

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Chairman