

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, 12 June at 7.30 p.m.**

MINUTES

PRESENT: Councillor D.J. Barnard (Chairman), Tom Brindley (Vice-Chairman),
John Bishop. Lee Downie, Tricia Gibbs, Jane Gray, Sal Jarvis, David
Miller and Mrs C.P.A. Strong.

IN ATTENDANCE: Jim Turner – Property Services Manager
Andrew Mills – Service Manager, Grounds
Stuart Izzard- Senior Community Development Officer
Hilary Dineen – Committee and Member Services Officers.

Approximately 18 members of the public at commencement of
meeting.

NB Councillor Sal Jarvis left the meeting at 8.10 pm.
Councillor Mrs C.P.A. Strong left the meeting at 8.45 pm.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Alan Bardett

5. MINUTES – 3 APRIL 2008 & 15 MAY

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 April 2008 be approved as a
true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman, subject to the
following amendment:

Minute 64 – 3 April 2008

That the correct spelling of the name of the person who presented a petition for a
pedestrian crossing be recorded as Emma Pelling;

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2008 be approved as a
true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

6. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

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

7. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (1) The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially to those making
a presentation to the Committee.
- (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.

**8. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – TRAFFIC ISSUES IN LITTLE WYMONDLEY AND
TODDS GREEN**

Mr Seller thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to make a presentation to the
Committee. He informed the Committee that he was speaking on behalf of

Wymondley Parish Council and the residents of Wymondley and Todds Green. He advised the Committee that the main area of concern in the area was the amount and speed of traffic passing through the villages. He highlighted that: cars were being driven in an aggressive manner, at speed; that the volume of traffic prevents residents from exiting their driveways in a timely and safe manner; that results of a survey undertaken had not been made public; that there is no footway through Todds Green making it dangerous and sometimes impossible for residents to walk through the village and that children are unable to walk to school or take cycling proficiency tests in the area. Mr Seller also informed the Committee that the problems listed are exacerbated by the traffic lights adjacent to Sainsbury's, Coreys Mill, Stevenage which puts pressure on the flow of traffic encouraging drivers to divert from the main routes. Mr Seller stated that a new traffic survey was required to encourage the County Council to take action.

Members debated the information that had been given by Mr Seller and agreed that traffic issues were a problem in the Wymondley and Todds Green area and that solutions were required to vehicular access to Stevenage at both the North and South entrances. They also agreed that an invitation would be sent to Steve Greenhill of Hertfordshire Highways and Parish Councils to attend the Southern Rural meeting to be held on 2 October 2008

The Chairman advised that this was not a District Council function, but matters would be referred to the Hertfordshire Highways Partnership.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Mr Seller be thanked for his informative presentation;
- (2) That the Ward Councillors liaise with Wymondley Parish Council and residents of Wymondley and Todds Green regarding traffic issues in those areas;
- (3) That Members of the Southern Rural Committee attend a relevant Wymondley Parish Council Meeting;
- (4) That Steve Greenhill of Hertfordshire Highways and Wymondley Parish Council be invited to attend the meeting of the Southern Rural Committee to be held on 2 October 2008;
- (5) That the Chairman and Vice Chairman will liaise with the Wymondley Parish Council and North Hertfordshire Highways to ensure that the traffic issues in and around Wymondley and Todds Green are brought to the attention of the North Hertfordshire Highways Partnership – Joint Member Panel.

RECOMMENDED TO NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP – JOINT MEMBER PANEL:

- (1) That the North Hertfordshire Highways Partnership – Joint Member Panel be requested to authorise the North Herts District Manager at the meeting to be held on 13 October 2008, to investigate the level and speed of traffic passing through Wymondley and Todds Green and the effect that the traffic lights adjacent to Sainsbury's, Coreys Mill, Stevenage has on the traffic flow through these areas;
- (2) That the North Hertfordshire Highways Partnership – Joint Member Panel is requested to authorise the North Herts District Manager to arrange for an up to date traffic census in the areas of Wymondley, Todds Green and the traffic lights adjacent to Sainsbury's, Coreys Mill, Stevenage.

REASON FOR DECISION: To assess and take actions required to alleviate traffic issues in the Wymondley and Todds Green area.

9. THE GREAT ASHBY RURAL RESOURCE CENTRE

The Service Manager – Grounds (SMG) presented a report on the development of a Rural Resource Centre at Great Ashby. He advised the Committee that the proposed resource centre would: provide a new headquarters for HCC's North East Area Countryside Management Service; "touchdown" facilities for NHDC and other potential partners; showcase the principal of sustainable building construction; provide an example of HCC and NHDC commitment to sustainable development;

encourage involvement of the Great Ashby community in the management of their green spaces and provide premises to develop CMS. The SMG advised that initial work had been undertaken and that a comprehensive feasibility would be required.

Members debated the report, with the general tenor of the debate being that Members supported the development of the Rural Resource Centre, but had concerns regarding potential traffic flows for the access; the conclusions of the scope requirements of the access road and parking for use of the resource centre.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Southern Rural Committee supported the recommendation that Officers were authorised to proceed with the detailed feasibility study so as to identify the viability of the proposed Rural Resource Centre;
- (2) That Officers be requested to provide a report regarding Highway access and traffic flow for the access to the proposed Rural Resource Centre via Dixons and Serpentine Way to the Southern Rural Committee as soon as is possible.

10. DISPOSAL OF AMENITY AND ALLOTMENT LAND AT THE REAR OF ELMTREE AVENUE COCKERHOE TO FACILITATE A PROPOSED HOUSING REDEVELOPMENT BY NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE HOMES LIMITED

The Chairman informed the Committee of the background to the disposal of the above land as that Section 106 obligations would be used to develop a village hall in Cockernhoe; that the normal discounted price would be offered. The Property Services Manager advised that benefits of the disposal included the re-provision of open areas for the use of residents; nomination rights to housing; landscaping and provision of a new village hall. The Chairman confirmed that, to his knowledge the area was disused and overgrown and that the Cockernhoe community welcomed a suitable redevelopment of the area. The three ward Members confirmed that they had been consulted by the Property Services Manager regarding the disposal. Members agreed that the proposed development was a positive step for the area and the community. There was some discussion regarding the price that the land was being offered for sale and the proposed Social Landlords who would develop the site.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET: That the Southern Rural Committee supports the disposal of Amenity and Allotment Land at the rear of Elmtree Avenue, Cockernhoe to facilitate a proposed housing re-development by North Hertfordshire Homes Limited.

REASON FOR DECISION: To facilitate redevelopment of the area and provide community facilities.

11. PROPOSED ARRANGEMENTS FOR DISPOSAL OF NORTH HERTS DISTRICT COUNCIL OWNED HOUSING LAND AT LLOYD WAY, KIMPTON TO NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE HOMES LIMITED

The Property Services Manager presented the report and advised the Committee that the site was partially developed by NHDC in 1974 and that approximately half of the site remained undeveloped; North Hertfordshire Homes proposed to use the land to re-house residents of Probyn House, Kimpton, a sheltered housing scheme in Kimpton for older people.

Members held a robust discussion and agreed that guarantees would be needed regarding the re-housing of current residents of Probyn House and that further guarantees would be required regarding provision of sheltered housing now and in the future.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET: That the proposed arrangements for the disposal of Council owned land at Lloyd Way, Kimpton be approved with the following condition to be included in the final contract:

“That an agreed level of provision of sheltered housing for current and potential residents of Kimpton is provided in perpetuity.”

REASON FOR DECISION: To ensure provision of sheltered housing for present and future residents of Kimpton.

12. CHAMPION NEWS AND COMMUNITY REPORT

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

Particular attention was drawn to the following:

- That a review of Service Level Agreements was currently underway;
- That Pirton Parish Council was considering re-marking the MUGA for sports rather than tennis to encourage greater use of the area;
- That the next meeting of the Codicote Parish Plan Action Group would be held on 9 July 2008;
- That a letter had been sent to Parishes regarding the NHDC Rural Community Grants Launch 2008/09;
- That the Parish & Town Councils Conference 2008 would be held on 16 June 2008;;
- That Wymondley Football Club premises had unfortunately burnt down, but the hope was to reinstate it;
- Members were encouraged to refer groups seeking grant funding to the Community Development Officers who will support the groups with completion of forms and advise regarding other funding streams available.

Members debated some of the issues including: that the SDCO request that at least 1 Southern Rural Parish be appointed to the North Hertfordshire Partnership (LSP); that grant applications were complicated, it was sometimes difficult to meet the criteria of certain grants and there was some confusion regarding the different criteria for the different grants.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the information provided by the Senior Community Development Officer on activities since the last meeting of the Southern Rural Committee held on 20 February 2008 be noted;
- (2) That the Senior Community Development Officer and the Community Development Team be thanked for their support and hard work during a difficult period;
- (3) That the Senior Community Development Officer be requested to take forward that there should be at least 1 Southern Rural Parish appointed to the North Hertfordshire Partnership (LSP) ;

13. 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 Great Ashby Fun Day to be held on 28 June 2008.

RESOLVED: That the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forward items from the Ward Development Budgets and allocated Visioning budgets as set out at Appendix 1 be noted;

- 14. REALLOCATION OF GRANT FROM DEVELOPMENT BUDGET**
 The Chairman advised the Committee that the proposed Lilley Fete would now not take place.
RESOLVED: That £579 allocated to the Lilley Village Fete Committee from the Development budget be reallocated to this budget.
- 15. GRANT REQUEST – ICKLEFORD PARISH COUNCIL**
RESOLVED: That a grant of £757.00 be awarded to Ickleford Parish Council from the 2008/09 Discretionary Budget as support funding for the production of a Village Information Handbook.
- 16. GRANT REQUEST – KNEBORTH FESTIVAL COMMITTEE**
 The SDCO advised that this grant had been to Committee previously, but a decision was postponed pending receipt of a formal Management Committee Constitution, this Constitution had now been received.
RESOLVED: That a grant of £1000.00 be awarded to Knebworth Festival Committee from the 2008/09 Discretionary Budget as support funding towards the provision of the 2008 Knebworth Festival.
- 17. SOUTHERN RURAL – THE WAY FORWARD**
 The Chairman lead a discussion on the way forward for the Southern Rural Committee. Members made suggestions about future topics including: the procedures regarding the allocation of grants; an invitation to Hertfordshire Highways to discuss traffic issues; Section 106 monies relating to Southern Rural Wards and PACIF. Members also discussed that the pre Christmas meeting would be held in a Southern Rural location rather than at the Council Offices.
- RESOLVED:**
- (1) That the Committee administrator and Community Development Officer be asked to arrange for the topics mentioned to be placed on suitable agendas;
 - (2) That the meeting of the Southern Rural meeting to be held on 27 November 2008 be held at Codicote at the Sports & Social Club.

The meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.

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Chairman