

**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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

**Minutes of the meeting held at Codicote Sports and Social Centre, Codicote on  
Thursday, 27 November 2008 at 8.00 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Councillors D.J. Barnard (Chairman), Tom Brindley (Vice-Chairman), Alan Bardett, John Bishop, Lee Downie, Tricia Gibbs, J. Gray and Sal Jarvis.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mary Caldwell (Planning Control & Conservation Manager), Patrick Candler (Head of Community Development and Cultural Services), Barrie Jones (Head of Financial Services), Garry Gover (Community Development Officer), Hilary Dineen (Committee and Member Services Officer).

Two members of the public at commencement of meeting.

**30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Miller and Mrs C. P. A. Strong.

**31. MINUTES – 31 JULY 2008**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 31 July 2008 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

**32. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman advised that the Southern Rural Committee – Community Open Public Forum would be debated at this meeting as a matter of urgency as a decision regarding future meetings would be required as soon as practicable.

**33. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

(1) The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting;

(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.

**34. SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY OPEN PUBLIC FORUM**

The Chairman had previously announced that this item would be taken as a matter of urgency as a decision regarding future meetings would be required as soon as practicable.

The Chairman thanked everyone who attended the Open Public Forum, which was held immediately prior to this meeting, and opened the debate regarding feedback on the meeting and Members requirements for future Open Public Forum meetings.

Members considered that the Open Public Forum held prior to this meeting had been a resounding success with over 30 local people in attendance with many pertinent issues raised and deliberated on how often and where future Open Public Forum meetings should be held.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the next Open Public Forum be held on 12 March 2008 immediately prior to the Southern Rural Committee Meeting due to be held on that day;
- (2) That Members be asked to email the Committee and Member Services Officer (hilary.dineen@north-herts.gov.uk) with proposed venues for future Open Public Forum;
- (3) That the Committee and Member Services Officer be requested to investigate the availability of any venues suggested by Members.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To enable full community engagement with the Southern Rural Committee.

**35. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD**

Tony Gearing gave a presentation regarding the Young People of the Year Award. He informed the Committee that the award started 4 years ago in response to the bad press that young people invariably receive; that the awards travel round the counties in the area and is now returning to Hertfordshire; that it is hoped that a cash prize will be offered to the winner; that the awards are given out at a ceremony which recognises the work of young people in the community. Mr Gearing gave some examples of the work that young people undertake and informed the Committee that he wanted to hear of any young people who may be eligible to receive the award. He advised that nominations would be open until February 2009, with the awards being presented in April 2009.

Members asked several questions including how much would the prizes be; whether other Area Committees had been approached and where entry forms would be available.

Mr Gearing informed the Committee that the first prize would be £1000 and the second prize £500; that Royston Committee had contributed last year, but no other Committees had yet been consulted and that entry forms would be available in schools, youth centres and community centres.

**RESOLVED:** That Mr Gearing be thanked for his presentation.

**36. HIGHWAY ISSUES – KNEBWORTH HIGHWAY ISSUES**

Councillor Jane Gray thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee. She advised that there were serious 'on street' parking problems in Knebworth, which appeared to be caused by Commuters using the train station and that more commuters used Knebworth station as opposed to stations further north, as return journeys were not time limited and parking was free in Knebworth. The Parish Council received many comments regarding parking issues in Knebworth and the issue was now a safety problem; a questionnaire had been sent to village households and a 25 per cent response had been received. Councillor Gray advised that double yellow lines were necessary at Park lane and at the junction of Milestone Road and Pondcroft Road as this would prevent parked cars obstructing the view and exit when pulling out of the relevant junctions. She informed the Committee that she had been advised that the total cost would be approximately £5000 and requested that the Committee support the request with an offer of matched funding in the amount of £2500.

Members debated whether new yellow lines, once installed, would be patrolled and that a request to the NHDC Parking Service Manager be made that yellow lines in the area were patrolled.

Councillor Gray advised that current parking restrictions applicable to Yellow lines in the area were respected.

**RECOMMENDED TO NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP – JOINT MEMBER PANEL:**

- (1) That the North Hertfordshire Highways Partnership – Joint Member Panel be requested to consider the request for double yellow lines to be painted on Park Lane and at the junction of Milestone Road and Pondcroft Road, Knebworth;
- (2) That £2500 be allocated to North Hertfordshire Highways Partnership – Joint Member Panel as proposed joint match funding for the provision of a Traffic Regulation Order and the painting of double yellow lines on Park Lane and at the junction of Milestone Road and Pondcroft Road;
- (3) That the Parking Services Manager be requested to arrange for the double yellow lines to be patrolled post painting.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To support actions that will increase road safety in the Knebworth area.

**37. HIGHWAY ISSUES – KNEBORTH PARISH COUNCIL**

The Chairman updated the Committee on the position regarding a funding request to Knebworth Parish Council regarding funding for highways project in Knebworth, which was discussed at the Southern Rural Committee meeting held on 31 July 2008.

He advised that contact had been maintained with Knebworth Parish Council, that they would be discussing the matter at their meeting to be held on 3 December 2008 and a further update would be given once a response was received.

**38. HIGHWAY ISSUES – GRAVELEY PARISH COUNCIL**

The Chairman updated the Committee on the position regarding a funding request to Graveley Parish Council regarding funding for Highways projects in Graveley, which was discussed at the Southern Rural Committee meeting held on 31 July 2008.

He advised that there was some concern that the promised consultation had not happened and that Graveley had agreed to fund the requested £1000 towards the projects.

**39. HIGHWAY ISSUES – LITTLE WYMONDLEY AND TODDS GREEN**

The Chairman updated the Committee on the position regarding the request for a traffic survey to be undertaken in Little Wymondley and Todds Green, which was discussed at the Southern Rural Committee meeting held on 12 June 2008.

He advised that traffic surveys were currently being undertaken in the area as part of the Stevenage and Hitchin Urban Transport Plans.

**40. HIGHWAY ISSUES – OLD KNEBORTH LANE, KNEBORTH**

Councillor Alan Bardett informed the Committee that traffic in Old Knebworth Lane, Knebworth had increased dramatically and more commercial vehicles were using the route; that the road had become more busy in recent months.

Members debated this road safety issue and considered that the solution would be a restriction on commercial vehicles using the road.

**RECOMMENDED TO NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP - JOINT MEMBER PANEL:**

- (1) That consideration be given to the provision of a Traffic Regulation Order that would restrict commercial vehicles using Old Knebworth Lane, Knebworth.
- (2) That the views of the North Hertfordshire Highways Partnership – Joint Member Panel regarding the restriction of commercial vehicles using Old Knebworth Lane, Knebworth be made available to the Southern Rural Committee.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To support actions that will increase road safety in the Knebworth area.

**41. HIGHWAY ISSUES – LUTON ROAD COCKERNHOE**

The Chairman advised that the issues affecting Luton Road Cockernhoe had been discussed at the meeting of the North Hertfordshire Highways Partnership – Joint Member Panel at the meeting which was held on 13 October 2008 (minute 27 refers). He advised that the proposal was to provide hard standing areas on Luton Road to allow safe passing of motor vehicles.

During the debate Members agreed unanimously that it was disappointing that site visits with officers of Hertfordshire Highways had not yet taken place and that proposed costings had not been provided for this meeting.

**RECOMMENDED TO NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP – JOINT MEMBER PANEL:**

- (1) That the planned site visit by officers of Hertfordshire Highways with Councillor D. J. Barnard be arranged at the earliest convenience;
- (2) That costings regarding the proposal to place hard standing areas along Luton Road, Cockernhoe be provided to the Southern Rural Committee meeting to be held on 22 January 2008 via Champions News;
- (3) That the Southern Rural Committee supports the proposal to place hard standing area along Luton Road, Cockernhoe.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To support actions that will improve road safety in the Cockernhoe area.

**42. SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS AND UNILATERAL UNDERTAKINGS**

The Planning Control & Conservation Manager presented the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control. She summarised the reasons for and the content of the report including that PARC had requested that the report be circulated round the Area Committees; it included Section 106 Agreements put in place before and since regulations; and included those received and waiting to be received; it covered all agreements from 1 house upwards; that the monies were intended to mitigate the effect of a development and that this was the start of an ongoing process which will be in the form of an annual report, with the first report being due in June 2009. She advised the Committee that the reporting format will change over time and will highlight monies available for Highways projects in 2010/11.

Members debated the report including who decided how Section 106 income would be spent; how Hertfordshire County Council allocates the monies in their control; whether money allocated for a specific Parish are spent in that Parish and how payback dates would be advised to Ward Councillors and Parishes.

The Planning and Conservation Manager informed the Committee that monies are allocated in relation to strategies of NHDC; that the County Council makes decisions regarding monies under their control, although feedback will be given regarding any issues raised; that wherever possible monies allocated to a particular Parish are used for the benefit of that Parish and that payback dates would be included in future reports.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Committee notes the contents of the report regarding Section 106 agreements and unilateral undertakings;
- (2) That the Committee notes the progress for the utilization of the monies, which would be included in the report to PARC on 11 December 2008;
- (3) That the Head of Planning & Building Control be requested to provide further reports on an annual basis, with the first annual report being presented to the meeting of the Southern Rural Committee due to be held in June 2009.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To ensure a robust system for the negotiation and management of Section 106 and Unilateral Undertakings and to provide a regular updates.

**43. CORPORATE BUSINESS PLANNING 2009-2014 – EFFICIENCIES AND INVESTMENTS**

The Head of Financial Services presented the report of the Strategic Director of Financial Services and Regulatory Services. He informed the Committee that that the report will be presented to Cabinet at the meeting to be held on 16 December 2008 together with responses from Area Committees, Parishes and workshops; that the October RPI of 4.2% was being used to determine increases in income; that significant balances will be used and efficiencies sought to balance the budget and that recent changes in interest rates had a significant effect on the budget.

The Chairman advised the Committee that Mr Jones, the Head of Financial Services, would be retiring in March 2009 and proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Jones for his service to NHDC and advice to the Committee over many years and that he had a long and happy retirement.

The Committee unanimously supported the Chairman's vote of thanks to Mr Jones.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the information provided on the proposed Efficiencies and Investments for 2009-2014 be noted;
- (2) The Chairman proposed and it was agreed unanimously that a vote of thanks be recorded in respect of the service by Mr Barrie Jones as Head of

Financial

Services to North Hertfordshire District Council and in particular the advice provided to the Southern Rural Committee on the Corporate Business Planning Process, with every best wish to Mr Jones for a long and happy retirement.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To allow the opportunity for NHDC Councillors participate in the Corporate Business Planning Process.

**44. SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS**

The Head of Community Development and Cultural Services presented the report which set out proposed Service Level Agreements for 2009-2012 and detailed the progress of the report through Committees.

He advised the Committee that Cabinet had agreed the strategy in October 2008; that the list of proposed Service Level Agreements could be altered by the Committee; that the aim was to give 3 year funding through Service Level Agreements, which gives the organisation some weight when requesting funding from other sources as well as giving financial security.

Members debated the issues including whether the Service Level Agreements were subject to inflationary increases and whether the term was a fixed or rolling 3 year period

The Head of Community Development and Cultural Services informed the Committee that Service Level Agreements were subject to inflationary increases at a level agreed by Cabinet each year and that the term was for a fixed 3 year period which would start in April 2009.

The Chairman stated that each proposed Service Level Agreement would be debated separately:

#### Great Ashby Youth Club

Members debated that Great Ashby Youth Club was struggling to survive financially; that Hertfordshire County Council had responsibility for youth provision; that NHDC had paid ad hoc grant requests in the past and that further information would be required regarding youth provision to enable a decision to be made.

**RESOLVED:** That the Head of Community Development and Cultural Services be requested to update the Southern Rural Committee at the meeting due to be held on 22 January 2008 regarding restructuring of youth provision in North Herts.

#### Young People of the Year Award (YOPEY)

Members debated that this was as yet an unproven venture and as such were reluctant to grant 3 year funding at this stage however an update from the Head of Community Development and Cultural Services regarding any restructuring of youth provision in North Herts may further inform any decision

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee consider a Service Level Agreement for the Young People of the Year Award for April 2009 – March 2012 at the meeting to be held on 22 January 2009 after consideration of the update on youth provision to be supplied by the Head of Community Development and Cultural Services at the same meeting.

#### Wymondley Baptist Church

**RESOLVED:** That a Service Level Agreement of £650 per annum be granted to Wymondley Baptist Church for April 2009 – March 2012 to support a one week holiday club that takes place during summer holidays.

#### Knebworth Town Twinning

**RESOLVED:** That a Service Level Agreement of £130 per annum be granted to Knebworth Town Twinning for April 2009 – March 2012 to support costs of town twinning visits.

#### SCooTS

Members debated that they were delighted with this project and the success of a Southern Rural initiative.

**RESOLVED:** That a Service Level Agreement of £5000 per annum be granted to SCooTS for April 2009 – March 2012 to provide revenue support to the rural transport scheme.

#### Codicote Village Day

Members debated that this was a unique event and that it was hoped that this 3 year agreement would not need to be renewed.

**RESOLVED:** That a Service Level Agreement of £750 per annum be granted to Codicote Village Day for April 2009 – March 2012 to provide support for an annual village day event.

#### Service Level Agreements

##### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) that the rebalancing of funding of Service Level Agreements to better reflect the district wide/local area focus be noted;
- (2) that detailed negotiations with individual projects be conducted by relevant officers, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement and Rural Affairs and the Chairman;
- (3) that the proposed timescale for implementing the new Service Level Agreements be noted.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** to confirm the future strategic policy direction for the programme of financial assistance for the voluntary and community sector, through the negotiation of Service Level Agreements.

**45. CHAMPION NEWS AND COMMUNITY REPORT**

The Community Development Officer updated the Committee on activities since the last meeting of the Southern Rural Area Committee held on 31 July 2008. Particular attention was drawn to the following:

- That Kimpton Village Day had been a very successful event, which had brought the community together;
- That the Committee will be advised in due course of awards made under Parish Challenge;
- That Members be requested to signpost queries and questions regarding licensing issues at events to the relevant Officer to ensure safe and legal events are held;
- That Kimpton's directory of goods and services had expanded rapidly within a short period of time and was extremely successful.

**RESOLVED:** That the information provided by the Head of Community Development and Cultural Services on activities since the last meeting of the Southern Rural Committee held on 31 July 2008 be noted.

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

The Community Development Officer presented the report to the Committee, which set out the current expenditure and balances of the Area Committee delegated budgets. The Community Development Officer also brought to the Committee's attention details of the recent request received for grant funding.

**RESOLVED:** That the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forward items from the Ward Development Budgets and allocated Visioning budgets as set out at Appendix 3 be noted.

**47. GRANT REQUEST – GREAT ASHBY YOUTH CLUB**

**RESOLVED:** That the Southern Rural Committee supports the Ward Member, Councillor Lee Downie, grant of £500 to be awarded to Great Ashby Youth Club as support funding of operating costs.

**48. GRANT REQUEST – GREAT ASHBY YOUTH CLUB**

**RESOLVED:** That the Southern Rural Committee supports the Ward Member, Councillor Sal Jarvis, grant of £500 to be awarded to Great Ashby Youth Club as support funding of operating costs.

**49. GRANT REQUEST – LILLEY OVER 60S CLUB**

**RESOLVED:** That a grant of £130 be awarded to Lilley Over 60s Club as support funding for hire costs for the hall and entertainment at the 2008 Christmas lunch.

**50. GRANT REQUEST – LILLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

**RESOLVED:** That a grant of £500 be awarded to Lilley Parish Council as support funding to establish a new village website.

**51. GRANT REQUEST – PIRTON SCHOOL ASSOCIATION**

**RESOLVED:** That a grant of £318 be awarded to Piton School Association as support funding to provide portaloos and an event shelter for the annual Pirton Boxing Day Run.

**52. GRANT REQUEST – PIRTON VILLAGE HALL**

**RESOLVED:** That a grant of £500 be awarded to Pirton Village Hall as support funding to provide lighting along the driveway to Pirton Village Hall.

**53. GRANT REQUEST – PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL**

**RESOLVED:** That a grant of £375 be awarded to Preston Parish Council as support funding to undertake routine maintenance of the village pavilion.

**54. GRANT REQUEST – ST IPPLOYTS BOWLS CLUB**

**RESOLVED:** That a grant of £1000 be awarded to St Ipployts Bowls Club as support funding towards the costs of purchasing a specialised commercial mower.

**55. GRANT REQUEST – ST IPPOLYTS PARISH COUNCIL**

**RESOLVED:** That a grant of £530 be awarded to St Ipployts Parish Council as support funding towards the costs of a kissing gate and lockable gate at Dell Field.

**56. CHRISTMAS GREETING**

The Chairman wished all present a Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year and thanked the Officers and Councillors for their contributions and hard work during the last year.

The meeting closed at 10.25 p.m.

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Chairman