

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

**Minutes of the meeting held at Council Offices, Gernon Road,
Letchworth Garden City
on Thursday 30 July 2009 at 7.30 p.m.**

MINUTES

PRESENT: Councillors D.J. Barnard (Chairman), Alan Bardett (Vice-Chairman), Tom Brindley, Lee Downie, Sal Jarvis, David Miller and Mrs C.P.A. Strong.

IN ATTENDANCE: Simon Young (Transport Policy Officer), Garry Gover (Community Development Officer), Hilary Dineen (Committee and Member Services Officer).

19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Bishop, Tricia Gibbs and Jane Gray.

20. MINUTES – 17 JUNE 2009

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 June 2009 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

21. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman advised that one item of urgent business would be discussed as follows:

Local Development Framework proposals – to be introduced by Councillor Tom Brindley.

22. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (1) The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting;
- (2) The Chairman announced that the next meeting of the Southern Rural Committee would be held at Knebworth Village Hall on 1 October 2009 and that there would be a Public Open Forum prior to the meeting;
- (3) 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.

23. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no presentations to this meeting of the Southern Rural Committee.

24. CHAMPION NEWS AND FINANCE REPORT

The Community Development Officer (CDO) presented the report of the Acting Head of Community Development and Cultural Services and drew Members attention to the following:

2009 Village of the Year North Award

The Chairman thanked Councillor Miller for his work regarding judging this competition.

Members noted that Baldock and Royston Committees had both awarded grant funding to the award and that Parish Councils had been approached to encourage entry into the competition.

2009 Annual Parish & Town Councils (P&TC) Conference

Members requested feedback regarding this event including why certain Parish Councils did not attend; whether any ideas had arisen for the next conference and why suggested agenda items were not used.

Graveley and Great Ashby Youth Clubs

Members reported that feedback from the meeting held on 28 July 2009 had been positive and that discussions had been wider than initially reported in the Champions News report.

Highways Work Programme

The CDO reminded Members that this Committee had previously match funded the feasibility study regarding the Whitehorse Lane, Great Ashby Pedestrian Crossing and advised that this study recommended that the existing crossing remain on Great Ashby roundabout, with a new crossing being installed on the speed table. He also informed Members that the pre allocated Highways fund had been fully allocated, meaning that any grants awarded for Highways matters would reduce the amount available to community groups; that £500 from Knebworth Parish Council, which was their contribution to the scheme at Pondcroft Road/London Road, Knebworth, had not yet been paid to Hertfordshire Highways and that Hertfordshire Highways had over estimated the cost of the this scheme and therefore needed to return £700 to this Committee's budget.

Members debated that Parish Councils raise money via an uncapped precept and therefore should be asked for contributions to Highways schemes and that this should be done at the earliest possible stage.

Work Plan

The CDO drew attention to the work programme and requested that Members contact him with any new projects.

Publicity

Members were pleased to note that Hitchin Helping Hands had received publicity in the local news following a grant from this Committee to fund a replacement minibus. They also debated that Members should inform the Communications Department when ever there was Council support for groups or events.

Un-adopted roads in Great Ashby

The Chairman informed the Committee that an initial response had been received from Hertfordshire Highways, following a letter to the County Council Portfolio Holder for Transport advising that investigations were taking place and that Members would be informed once the full response was received.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forwards from the Ward Development Budgets and the allocated Visioning Budgets be noted;
- (2) That the actions taken by the Community Development Officer to promote greater community capacity and well being for rural communities be endorsed:

- (3) That the Policy Officer be requested to prepare a report regarding the success of the 2009 Annual Parish and Town Councils (P&TC) Conference and present it to the next meeting of the Committee due to be held on 1 October 2009;
- (4) That a grant of £3,000 be awarded to North Hertfordshire Highways Partnership – Joint Member Panel as 50 percent joint matched funding towards the cost of a pedestrian crossing at Whitehorse Lane, Great Ashby.
- (5) That Graveley Parish Council be requested to provide £1,500 as matched funding towards the cost of a pedestrian crossing at Whitehorse Lane, Great Ashby.
- (6) That a grant of £500 be awarded to North Hertfordshire Highways Partnership – Joint Member Panel as 50 per cent matched funding towards the cost of an advisory “not suitable for large vehicles” sign at Old Knebworth Lane, Knebworth;
- (7) That the Community Development Officer release £500 to North Hertfordshire Highways Partnership – Joint Members Panel being Knebworth Parish Council’s contribution towards the cost of the scheme at Pondcroft Road, Knebworth;
- (8) That the Community Development Officer seek a refund of £700 from North Hertfordshire Highways Partnership – Joint Member Panel being the amount overpaid for the scheme at Pondcroft Road, Knebworth.

25. HIGHWAYS ISSUES

There were no additional Highways Issues.

26. NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL DRAFT PARKING STRATEGY

The Transport Policy Officer presented a report on the NHDC Draft Parking Strategy. He informed Members that the current policy would expire in 2009; that the draft strategy was a 10 year strategy that had been heavily influenced by the transport fundamental service review (FSR) and the Town Centre Strategy; that the aim of the strategy was to be flexible and that once approved, an action plan would be produced. He then drew attention to the following:

Policy 1	Aimed to provide flexibility
Policy 5	Would suggest that tariffs be reviewed annually
Policy 6 & 9	Reinforce that the word used is “consider”
Policies 16 – 19	Considered on street parking issues
Policy 21	The review of existing Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ)

He also advised that the take up of permits in Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ) had not been good, resulting in alternatives being considered; that 40 percent of people abuse on road parking limits by staying longer than the restrictions allow and that charging for on street parking would finance the cost of enforcement.

Members debated that in many rural area there was no useable alternative method of transport; that Great Ashby would need to be considered when the action plan is drawn up; that new developments with shared access and no off street parking would cause problems; that parking charges needed to be set at a realistic level, with short term parking being reasonably cheap and long term parking charged at a much higher rate; that consideration needed to be given to the numbers of spaces allocated to short and long term parking; that schemes which give priority to residents must be self financing; that garages should not be considered as a parking space;

The Transport Policy Officer advised that Government standards had been relaxed, with Councils now able to determine standards for their own area and that this has resulted in NHDC undertaking survey work to aid the review of parking standards.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the contents of the Draft Parking Strategy be noted;
- (2) That the Transport Policy Officer be requested to include the following comments regarding the NHDC Draft Parking Strategy, in his report to the next meeting of Cabinet to be held on 8 September 2009:
 - That Great Ashby be considered when the action plan is drawn up;
 - That consideration be given to management of new developments where access roads are shared and no off street parking is provided;
 - That parking charges be set at realistic levels;
 - That short term parking charges be kept to a minimum
 - That long term parking charges be set at a much higher rate;
 - That consideration be given to the numbers of spaces allocated to long and short term parking;
 - That schemes that give priority to residents be self financing;
 - That when calculating parking spaces, garages are not included.

27. URGENT BUSINESS – LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK PROPOSALS

The Chairman had previously announced that this item would be discussed as a matter of urgency.

Councillor Brindley introduced the item. He referred Members to the CD containing details of the additional sites under the Local Development Framework, and advised that the sites identified were not NHDC approved, but had been identified by developers as possible sites and that the consultation process would identify any sites that would remain. Councillor Brindley encouraged Members to seek the views of Parish Councils and urged that villages consider carefully before responding and reminded Members that this document was not planning permission, but was to identify land that could be built on in the future.

Members debated that land identified near village could enable local people to stay in the area; that restrictions could be places on developments which required a certain amount of that development to be allocated doe local people; that the Stevenage and North Herts Action Plan (SNAP) was continuing, with consultants recommending how best to work with Stevenage Borough Council to ensure that any development was appropriate to the needs of North Hertfordshire; that the Parish Councils should be updated on the situation

RESOLVED: That the Regional & Strategic Sites Manager be requested to update Parish Councils on the progress of the Stevenage and North Herts Action Plan (SNAP).

28. NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE

The next meeting of the Southern Rural Committee will be held on Thursday 1 October 2009 at Knebworth Village Hall, Knebworth.

The meeting closed at 9.40 p.m.

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Chairman