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CENTRAL AREA COMMUNITY FORUM

Notes of the Forum held on 14 April 2008 at 7.00pm at Middleton by Wirksworth Village Hall

PRESENT

**Derbyshire Dales
District Council**

Councillor Geoff Stevens (in the Chair)

Councillors David Fearn, Peter Hume, Garry Purdy, Irene Ratcliffe, Lewis Rose OBE and Peter Slack

Sandra Lamb (Head of Democratic Services) and Ros Hession (Overview and Community Engagement Officer)

**Derbyshire County
Council**

Ian Stephenson (Strategic Director – Environmental Services), Neil Hickman, (Area Network Manager - North West) and Kay McIntyre (Democratic Services Officer)

**Derbyshire
Constabulary**

Chief Inspector Dick Hargreaves, Sergeant Steve Edwards and Partnership Sergeant Dave Parker

**Derbyshire Fire and
Rescue**

Area Commander (West Area) Ian Copstick and Community Safety Officer (West Area) David McMylor

**Peak District National
Park Authority**

Ruth Marchington (Director of Corporate Resources)

Members of the Public

Margaret Slack (Middleton Parish Council), David Mantell (Middleton Parish Council), Hildegard Wiesehofer, Jerry Climpson (National Stone Centre), Kath Alesbrook, Pauline Fox, Brian Start, Patricia Leake, Bill Quinlan (Matlock resident), Michael Wilderspin (Matlock Bath Parish Council), John Lowe (local resident), John Millward, Dave Evans (local resident), Joan Webb (Middleton resident) plus two others. 16 in total.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

In his welcome, Councillor Geoff Stevens introduced officers from the participating authorities and outlined the plan for the evening. He was pleased to bring the Central Area Community Forum to Middleton.

SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING

Sergeant Steve Edwards gave a presentation on Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) explaining that they are comprised of Police Officers, Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), residents and partner agencies who work together to identify issues in the local area and form solutions.

He outlined that the three products of SNTs are:

- Every community will have a permanent and dedicated team with responsibility for that area.
- These teams will focus on the problems worrying the public the most.
- Neighbourhood teams will work closely with and take joint action with local authorities, voluntary groups, businesses and other partners to tackle crime.

Sergeant Edwards went on to give details of local priorities and current 'operations'.

Questions and comments were then invited from the floor and issues raised were as follows:

- Mr Quinlan questioned the regularity of police attendance at meetings of Matlock Town Council. Sergeant Steve Edwards advised that, although it was not possible to attend all Town and Parish Council meetings, a representative from the police attended whenever possible. Additionally, the police receive minutes from Town and Parish Council meetings and the clerk to Matlock Town Council conveys issues of particular concern to the police.
- Councillor Slack asked if the recent arson attacks in Wirksworth were related. Sergeant Edwards responded that the 3 incidents reported in the 'Matlock Mercury' had all taken place on the same evening and there could possibly be a link which was currently being investigated.
- In response to concerns raised about illegal parking in Middleton, Sergeant Edwards undertook to follow up the matter and take appropriate action. He added that if problems arising through parking were identified as a priority within the community, then DCC Highways and the police should be contacted. A member of the public added that it was a case of enforcing the existing regulations.
- Dr Wilderspin reported problems experienced at Matlock Bath such as noise nuisance, underage drinking, drug dealing and inappropriate behaviour. These issues had been raised in a letter to the Chief Constable, but had so far, not been addressed.

- Councillor Purdy was also pursuing several issues with the police including parking problems, underage drinking, drug dealing and problems on Bonsall Moor due to inappropriate usage by 4 x 4 and off road vehicles. Inspector Hargreaves appreciated the frustration experienced by local residents and undertook to follow up the issues raised and address any outstanding correspondence.
- Inspector Hargreaves then went on to advise that an Action Plan, in partnership with others, was being drawn up, to address issues surrounding the Pavilion but that collecting relevant intelligence does take time. He gave his assurance that police officers are on duty 24 hours a day and that the Pavilion and Station Yard car parks are covered by CCTV cameras which assist post event investigations and monitoring.
- In response to a question from a local resident about the lack of policing in Middleton, Sergeant Edwards advised that 2 officers from the Safer Neighbourhood Team (based in Wirksworth) and a response team from Matlock, covered the village. He undertook to follow up concerns raised.
- Bill Quinlan raised concerns over road safety in Matlock, particularly with regard to pedestrian crossings.

DERBYSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE

David McMyllor gave a short presentation on Community Fire Safety initiatives which included:-

- Home Fire Safety Checks
- Schools Education Programme
- Community Events
- Fire Cadets / Youth Engagement Scheme (YES) Projects
- Fire Safety
- Enforcement

David gave details of the Home Fire Safety Checks and how to go about arranging one.

He then talked about projects with young people such as the Fire Cadets which have proved highly successful. A two-year programme of study takes place which includes practical and academic study. During the course, the Cadets work towards the Fire Services Youth Training Association Young Persons Development Programme.

The YES initiative was also enjoying success with schemes having taken place in Staveley and others planned for Derby (Kingsway), Glossop and Ilkeston. As well as developing the individual's potential, the course helps the youngsters to develop and understand the implications of health and safety and give them knowledge of basic first aid, which in turn will improve their employment prospects. The key aims of the YES are: reducing anti-social behaviour; improving school attendance levels; improving self-esteem and self-confidence and developing an understanding and appreciation for communities.

- Following the presentation, a member of the public asked if the young people were likely to get jobs in the Fire and Rescue Service upon completion of the schemes to which David replied that whilst not guaranteeing a route into the fire service, completion of the schemes would certainly be advantageous.

NEW NATIONAL TRAVEL SCHEME

Sandra Lamb outlined the new National Travel Concession which took effect from 1 April 2008 and entitles residents in England that are aged 60 or over, or eligible disabled, to enjoy free off-peak travel (9.30 am until 11.00 pm Monday to Friday, and all day weekends and Bank Holidays) on local buses anywhere in England. The scheme has also been extended to include half price local rail travel. Further details of the scheme were given and advice on how to get a pass.

Additional benefits for Derbyshire residents includes the Gold Card which entitles the holder to discount (usually around 10%) in local shops, restaurants and services and also acts as a library card.

Questions and comments were then invited from the floor and issues were raised as follows:

- Bill Quinlan perceived some confusion with the disabled classification and asked if this was due to data being lost. Sandra Lamb advised that there had been a grey area originally surrounding the disability criteria. The District Council had, therefore, used the age criteria (if applicable) in the first instance to ensure that passes were processed in a timely fashion.
- In response to a comment that disability eligibility is based on physical rather than mental health issues, Sandra clarified that if an individual was in receipt of a high rate disability allowance, or were likely to be refused a driving licence, they would be eligible under the scheme.
- Sandra undertook to look into cross county boundary rail travel in response to Councillor Slack's enquiry if the scheme extended to, for example, a train journey from Matlock to Nottingham.
- Councillor Fearn raised concerns about the data that had been gathered and whether it could be used for other purposes. Sandra advised that the cards are 'smart' and will eventually be presented to 'smart card readers' on buses to allow accurate monitoring of the scheme, but gave assurance that the data could not be used for other purposes, such as a potential national identity card, unless a piece of primary legislation was passed.
- Dr Wilderspin raised further concerns about data protection if legislation was altered. Sandra explained that the data had been gathered originally for the Gold Card Scheme. Card holders had been asked to validate their personal data for use with the new Concession. The personal data could not be used for any other purpose.

- In response to a question from Bill Quinlan, Sandra advised that she believed full fare was payable before 9.30 am (when the scheme came into operation). Mr Quinlan went on to ask if there was any intention to extend the scheme nationally. Sandra advised that both Scotland and Wales had their own schemes and there was no indication of any proposed change to the current schemes.

QUESTION TIME

Questions and comments were then invited from the floor on the responsibilities of the participating partners. Issues were raised as follows:

Highways Matters

- In response to a question from Councillor Fearn regarding the timescale for the introduction of a 30 mph limit on the A6 in Darley Dale, Neil Hickman advised that no definite date was set, but it would be in a relatively short space of time.
- Councillor Slack asked if any thought had been given to operating a traffic control laser system in Matlock to allow emergency vehicles approaching from Matlock Bath to cross the bridge (ie against the traffic flow) to gain quicker access into Matlock. Neil Hickman advised that consultation on the new road layout had taken place with the emergency services and no issues had been raised and there were no plans to look into such a proposal.
- A representative from Middleton by Wirksworth Parish Council asked what had to be done to ensure that grit bins are filled, as requests back to November 2007 had not yet been actioned. Neil believed that the bins should have been filled and would look into the matter. A response for the parish council meeting, 15 April, would be appreciated. Neil went on to explain that the County Council have a list of their own grit bins and that most of the parish council ones are identified accordingly.

Recycling

- Councillor Slack enquired if any date had yet been set for the introduction of plastic and can collection from households. Councillor Rose was not able to provide a definite date.

Developments in Matlock

- In light of the recent developments in Matlock, particularly Sainsburys and the new relief road, a member of the public asked whether this had increased the potential to develop Halldale Quarry. Councillor Rose noted increased potential for the site, but advised that there were no current plans for its development.

Bonsall Moor

- Mr Millward expressed his thanks to councillors and officers from Derbyshire County Council who had followed up issues, raised at a previous Area Community Forum, in connection with Dobb Lane and Moorlands Lane at Bonsall. However, Dobb Lane was still being used by trail bike riders, despite it being a restricted by

way. Signs had also been removed. Sergeant Edwards reported that the issue of motorcyclists using this land and its ownership had been raised at the last Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) meeting which was held at Cromford. The next SNT meeting was to be held at Bonsall. Whilst the matter was being investigated, this was not solely a police matter: other agencies were involved. In addition there were issues surrounding the classification of the lane.

- The Clerk to Bonsall Parish Council advised that Dobb Lane had been cleared by volunteers, but proper signage was now required. There were major issues with activities on the moor and most organisations with whom the Parish Council worked were very amenable.
- Part of the area fell within the Peak District National Park. Ruth Marchington advised that the National Park Authority now had new powers and were actively working with other agencies to address problems.
- Councillor Purdy had had several meetings with the parish council and various authorities who were also trying to address the matter.

Matlock Bath

- Dr Wilderspin highlighted problems caused by 'boy racers' on the Station Car Park in Matlock Bath which he believed to be an issue that should be partly addressed by the police and partly the District Council. One of the CCTV cameras was obscured and he suggested that more prominent and larger signage on the cameras may deter this behaviour. Councillor Rose undertook for this to be looked into and Sergeant Edwards added that the matter had been raised at a SNT meeting. CCTV footage was methodically analysed and because this issue had been flagged up as a priority area, regular patrolling took place.

CONCLUSION AND THANKS

Councillor Stevens thanked everyone for their participation.

Meeting closed 8.30 pm