

Notes of: WHITWORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

Venue: Whitworth Civic Hall

Date of Meeting 18 June 2007

Present: Councillor A Neal (Chair)
Councillor T Aldred
Councillor R Wilson
Inspector Neil Wilkinson, Lancashire Constabulary
Julie Jackson, NEAT Officer
Pat Couch, Democratic Services, RBC

Also Present: 12 members of the Public

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed members of the public to the meeting and also the two new elected Members, Councillor Roger Wilson and Councillor Tom Aldred.

He informed the meeting that at the Rossendale Borough Council's Annual Council Meeting he was appointed Chair of the Whitworth Neighbourhood Forum for the next 12 months.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Councillor Lynda Barnes, Jerry Smith, Lancashire County Council District Partnership, David Barnes (Co-opted Member) and Betty Taylor, Pathways Group

3. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 18 JUNE 2007

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a correct record .

a) Action Sheet:

- NEAT Team actions had been updated since publication of the agenda and the updated actions had been circulated.
- Councillor Neal indicated that he had met with Lancashire County Council and identified four locations where pelican crossings are needed.

A member of the public indicated that at the last meeting there was an issue of vermin at Peel Terrace, but this is much wider problem and she felt the main cause of this was changes to collection of waste to fortnightly.

b) Information Presented to Lancashire Locals

County Councillor Sean Serridge indicated that he would make enquiries as to the widening of speed ramps on Hall Street and would report back to the next meeting.

In relation to the 'patching up' of the road surface on Peel Terrace and who is responsible for this. Councillor Neal indicated that he thought Peel Terrace was the responsibility of Rossendale Borough Council and therefore he would make enquiries and report back to the next meeting.

Councillor Serridge reported on a number of areas which would be re-surfaced in Whitworth.

A member of the public raised concern on the proposed development on Hall Street in relation to the throughput of traffic and the concern that provision should be made for those vehicles exiting via Hall Street or Lloyd Street, as there are already existing problems. It was suggested that a mini roundabout would relieve traffic. County Councillor Serridge agreed to look further into the possibility of this.

Councillor Neal commented that there would have to be consultation with local residents, but more importantly they would need to speak to planning officers. This proposal was still in the early stages and that Rossendale Borough Council had tight guidance on planning issues.

4. POLICE ISSUES

Summary of Update from Inspector Wilkinson

There had been a reduction of crime figures during the last six months in comparison to the same time last year, January –June 2006 there were 262 reported crimes and in the same period this year this had reduced to 217.

Inspector Wilkinson enquired as to whether there had been problems with speeding cars, and members of the public indicated that there were still problems with speeding but it occurred more in the evening. Inspector Wilkinson agreed to undertake a couple of speed enforcements during the

evening, although he indicated that mobile enforcement only work until 10pm.

Public Questions/Issues

A member of the public commented that problems not only exist on main roads but also on side streets and Inspector Wilkinson responded by indicating that if there are areas of community concern with speeding on side streets they would need to receive a number of letters from concerned residents, as they cannot act on one individual concern. Every three months the Police identify sites of community concern and act upon this. There was a possibility of hand held laser speeding device being used on these streets, but Inspector Wilkinson would need to ensure that Community Officers are trained to use them.

A question was raised in relation to the logging of phone calls and the issuing of fixed penalty notices. Inspector Wilkinson indicated that not all penalty notices are recorded as a crime and he would provide a list of areas where they can issue fixed penalty notices for the next meeting.

A question was raised in relation to bicycles around Masseycroft, with youths riding bikes on pavements. Inspector Wilkinson explained the process of the Youth Referral Scheme for young offenders, which is a low level enforcement. It was agreed that Inspector Wilkinson would look into providing signs as a temporary measure informing people not to ride on the footpaths.

An issue was raised about incorrect mobile phone numbers of Community Support Officers which had been published in Whitworth News. Inspector Wilkinson agreed to look into the issue.

5. NEAT TEAM UPDATE

Julie Jackson, NEAT Officer reported that all outstanding actions had been completed following the last meeting. She gave an update on recent accidents in the area and repairs required following the accidents.

The NEAT team had received a letter from an MP requesting the closure of Old Lane next to Knott Hill Farm, due to the number of fly-tippers leaving rubbish bags on the Lane. Following discussions with Lancashire County Council she was informed that it would be too difficult to close the Lane, but that the Council agreed to use the mobile CCTV to try to catch the fly-tippers. She then explained the problems in identifying and prosecuting the fly-tippers.

Councillor Neal indicated that new legislation clearly states that where a third party paid to have their rubbish removed and was dumped illegally, then they would be held responsible. If the public are paying to have rubbish removed they should ask to see evidence of a waste licence. Julie Jackson agreed to speak to Catherine Taylor for further details and an update would be provided at the next meeting.

Councillor Neal agreed to ask a question of the Council in relation to fly-tipping at its Council Meeting on 27 June.

Other concerns raised included:

- Need for clearing the subway on Knowsley Crescent, which Julie Jackson agreed to look at
- Discussion on re-cycled waste and how to buy additional bins.
- Concern following erection of new fencing and the collection of shrubs removed which had been left around Knowsley Crescent – Julie agreed to make enquiries
- Cleaning of the play area on Knowsley Crescent.

In relation to dog-fouling it was agreed to ask Catherine Taylor to speak to the dog warden requesting letters be sent to local residents reminding them of possible fines for dog fouling.

6. ALLOCATION OF GRANTS TO NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS

Councillor Neal explained the process to apply for money that has been made available to neighbourhood forums. A total of £20,000 had been allocated on population by Ward, Whitworth having a population of 7,263 would receive £2,200.

Councillor Wilson commented on the need for a more simplified system.

Councillor Neal indicated that the process had to be agreed at the Council Meeting on 27 June before any applications would be accepted.

7. NOMINATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM WORKING GROUP

Councillor Neal asked for nominations for appointments to the Working Group, who would consider grant applications received and make recommendations to the Forum.

Councillor Neal indicated that it may be appropriate to ask for one member of the Town Council and two Rossendale Council Members to be appointed onto the Working Group.

Councillor Neal and Councillor Wilson from the Borough Council indicated they would like to serve on the Working Group and it was agreed that a Town Councillor be approved at their Whitworth Town Council meeting on 21 June.

Julie Jackson indicated that the relevant Neighbourhood Manager would also be part of the Working Group.

8. NEIGHBOURHOOD NOTICE BOARDS

Councillor Neal reported that this item had been included on the agenda following the request by a Borough Councillor in Haslingden asking for neighbourhood notice boards

It was noted that there was already approximately 10 notice boards around Whitworth which were provided by Whitworth Town Council and it was agreed that there was no need for any additional ones.

9. OPEN FORUM

A member of public had submitted two questions which are summarised and answered below:

In response to a question about progress of enforcement action relating to the felling of trees between Tonnacliffe Road and Market Street the Council's legal department had provided a written response which indicated that the prosecution in this matter had now been served upon the defendant and their legal representatives. The matter was before the Rossendale Magistrates Court for a preliminary appointment. There was to be a brief adjournment to allow the defendant the opportunity to consider his plea being now in receipt of all the evidence the Council is seeking to rely upon. The matter went before the magistrate on 18 June and at the defendants request had been adjourned for four weeks (16 July) to enable them to consider the evidence and decide on a plea.

In response to a request for a review of trees in Whitworth to assess whether Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) were required a written response from the Planning Department had been received which indicated that the Council does not have a policy of visiting areas to assess if any trees require a TPO. However, if a person feels that there is a tree, or clump of trees that would be worth placing a TPO you could phone 01706 238640.

They would check to make sure a TPO had not already been placed on the trees in question. If not they would send a map to mark the location of the trees which should be returned with a letter explaining the reasons why it was felt that the trees should be protected. This would be sent to the arboricultural consultant that the Council use. He will then visit the site to assess the trees and send a report to the Council. If he suggests a TPO is warranted, then he will pass this on to the Legal Department.

A member of the public indicated that at a meeting in Whitworth to discuss cycle lanes through Whitworth there was a mention of the iron bridge across from Peel Terrace, which was alleged to be removed for health and safety reasons. At that meeting there had been discussion about Whitworth losing some of its heritage yet it was felt that to lose the iron bridge would be losing more heritage. Councillor Neal indicated Rossendale Borough Council would make enquiries to the English Heritage Board to look at the possibility of the iron bridge being listed.

Councillor Aldred commented that the work needed on this bridge could be taken forward to the Neighbourhood Forum Grant's Working Group.

It was also suggested that it may be appropriate to set up a group of Whitworth residents to look at this in more detail with a view to setting up a support group.

In response to a request for the County Council to look at the pedestrian bridge between the Poodle Parlour and Sunbed Centre on Market Street, County Council Sean Serridge agreed to look at this and report back to the next meeting.

A request was made for the urinal on land adjacent to Market Street/Cown Street and Old Lane to be removed. It was agreed that contact be made with Property Services requesting that the urinal be dug up and removed.

In response to a question about the public conveniences on the prom it was reported that these would be closed.

In response to a question about why only has of Burnage Close had been resurfaced, County Councillor Serridge commented that he was continuing to pursue the matter, but it was not included in this year's project as there were other areas in need of improvements.

There was concern about a catering van located at Hallfold Church and Councillor Neal commented that this would be taken up with the Environmental Health Team to look into this further.

Councillor Neal asked those interested in finding out more about the Campaign to Protect Rural England to pick up a leaflet at the end of the meeting.

Councillor Aldred asked for an article to be published in the next Rossendale Alive updating the public on the list of items which can be recycled.

The meeting commenced at 7pm and closed at 8.55pm