

Notes of: WHITWORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

Venue: Whitworth Civic Hall

Date of Meeting 1st July 2009

Present: Councillor L Barnes (Chair)
Councillors Aldred and Neal
County Councillor P Steen
Julie Jackson, Area Manager, Communities Team
Alison Wilkins, Area Manager, Communities Team
Keith Bell, Building Control Manager
Alan Dixon, District Building Control Officer
Jenni Cook, Committee Officer
Inspector Neil Wilkinson, Lancashire Constabulary
Karen Derbyshire, Lancashire Link

Also Present: 22 members of the Public and 1 representative of the Press

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed members of the public to the meeting and the Councillors and Officers introduced themselves.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Wilson and Whitworth Town Councillor David Barnes.

3. NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17TH MARCH 2009

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

a) Action Sheet:

The Action sheet was discussed and updates since publication of the agenda were noted. It was agreed that those actions that were outstanding would be carried over to the next meeting.

4. LOCAL INVOLVEMENT NETWORKS (LINKs)

Karen Derbyshire, the LINKs Community Engagement Officer gave a short presentation on Local Involvement Networks. LINKs was a government initiative to give community groups, organisations and members of the public a stronger voice on Health and Social Care issues. Leaflets on how to get involved had been placed on display in Libraries, and events in Libraries and Mobile Libraries were being organised. Leaflets were available at the meeting and all present were encouraged to get involved in this initiative.

5. POLICE UPDATE

Inspector Wilkinson provided an update on crime rates and policing in the area. It was noted that crime in general had reduced, however burglaries were up. Inspector Wilkinson stated that a prolific burglar had been recently convicted and he was confident that these figures would now be reduced.

Inspector Wilkinson updated the Forum on measures taken since the last meeting, which included:

- Hand held speed cameras had been in use on Market Street at the Tonacliffe end. It was noted that further operations later on into the evening would be actioned.
- An operation to stop and search cars entering Whitworth from the Greater Manchester area. This had resulted in the seizure of 4 cars, 2 arrests for possession and 1 offence of using red diesel.
- A drugs operation using intelligence from the community.
- Illegal off-road vehicles were being targeted and more operations were planned.
- A recent release from prison was briefly discussed. It was noted that this person had received 13 visits since his release and he would continue to be monitored.

Inspector Wilkinson took the opportunity to thank Whitworth Town Council for their support of the community policing vehicle. Councillor Barnes stated that the vehicle was a great asset to the community and also thanked the Town Council.

5. AREA MANAGER COMMUNITIES UPDATE

Albert Mill

The Forum heard from the Building Control Manager and District Building Control Officer with respect to the security and condition of Albert Mill. It was noted that although the Council were not responsible for the site, due to the limited resources of the site owners, the Council had erected secure fencing and would reclaim the costs in due course. Discussion took place about the condition of the mill and a Section 215 Notice would be served shortly.

It was noted that the asbestos at the site was white asbestos cement. This was non-reportable and it is recommended that this type of asbestos is left in situ until such time as it can be entirely and completely removed by a specialised contractor.

Discussion took place on the future of the mill and it was agreed that the Regeneration Team would be asked to comment on the possibility of compulsory purchase of the site.

New Arrangements for Neighbourhood Forums

The Area Manager updated the Forum with the new arrangements. It was noted that there would be 4 business meetings with community representatives and Councillors per year plus 2 public meetings.

Discussion took place on the new arrangements and it was noted that there was extreme concern amongst those present. Concerns were expressed that it appeared the public were being excluded from attending the business meetings and those present were assured that the new way of working would be monitored very carefully over the next 12 months.

All present were encouraged to complete nomination forms in order to be considered for inclusion on the Neighbourhood Forum Panels.

6. DETERMINING OF GRANT APPLICATIONS

The Chair reported the receipt of one application for neighbourhood forum grant funding.

The following was agreed:

Organisation Name	Funding Granted
Whitworth Elderly and Disabled Care Trust	None – deferred
Total funds granted	£nil

Total funds remaining	£2850.00
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It was agreed that the award of the grant would be deferred due to an offer from the Probation Service to complete the works as part of 'Community Payback.' If this work was not carried out by the Probation Service then the application would be reconsidered.

The Working Group had also considered an 'Events Grant' Application and the following was recommended:

Organisation Name	Funding Granted
Whitworth Sports Council	£750.00
Total funds granted	£750.00
Total funds remaining	£1,200.00

Whitworth Town Councillor Mellor updated the Forum on the application which had been applied for retrospectively to help fund the Whitworth Sports Festival. It was noted that the event had been a great success and it was hoped that it would be repeated next year.

Whitworth Town Councillor Grogan thanked the Forum for money awarded to the Town Twinning Committee.

Grant forms could be obtained from the Communities Team on 01706 252551 or by emailing lesleycropper@rossendalebc.gov.uk

9. OPEN FORUM

Members of the public raised the following issues:-

- Blocked cycle Track located near the bridge at Masseycroft. Councillor Lynda Barnes agreed to take this matter up.
- It was noted that a pedestrian crossing would be erected in Shawforth before the end of the year after consultation with the relevant authorities.
- County Councillor Steen agreed to look at the following areas and report to Lancashire County Council Highways:
 - Hall Street/Masseycroft: pavements not finished and kerbs have not been lowered.
 - Yellow lines need reinstating outside Whitworth Post Office.
 - Hall Street/Church Street bus stop requires yellow lines reinstating and the bus stop marking out properly.
 - Pot holes on Station Road.
 - Road surfacing issues on Cowm Park Way North/Tong Lane.

- Road surface at Market Street/Oakenshaw Avenue.
- Road surface at Eastgate on the Wallbank Estate.
- It was noted that there was a meeting on 6th July to discuss the land at Knowsley Crescent. Councillor Aldred would provide feedback on this matter.
- The Forum requested that the Chief Executive of Rossendale Borough Council be contacted and made aware of the dissatisfaction of Whitworth Forum attendees in respect of the decision to exclude public from the new Neighbourhood Forum Business Meetings. The minutes would be passed onto the Chief Executive with a note that the Forum wished consideration to be given to allowing the public access to the business meetings to observe.

Announcements and Votes of Thanks

County Councillor Steen gave his congratulations to the staff and pupils of St John with St Michael Primary School who had been awarded third prize for a Lancashire County Council competition for the collection of domestic batteries.

A vote of thanks was given to the former County Councillor Serridge for his hard work during his time as the County Councillor for Whitworth.

The meeting commenced at 7pm and finished at 8.30pm

Signed: _____
(Chair)

Date: _____