

**Notes of:** WHITWORTH AREA FORUM  
**Venue:** Whitworth Community High School  
**Date of Meeting** 13<sup>th</sup> September 2005

**PRESENT** Councillor A Neal (in the Chair)  
Carole Todd, Head of Street Scene and Liveability, RBC  
Inspector Dave Shepherd, Lancashire Constabulary  
Dave Jackson, Whitworth Town Clerk  
Councillor J Grogan, Whitworth Town Council  
Councillor T Aldred, Whitworth Town Council  
Steve Roman, District Team Manager, Youth and  
Community Service, LCC  
Allia Baber, East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust  
Julian Joinson, Democratic Services Manager, RBC

Approximately 15 members of the public and press and representatives of local interest groups attended the meeting.

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Councillor Neal chaired the meeting and welcomed members of the public. Officers on the top table introduced themselves.

**2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies had been received from Rossendale Borough Councillors D and L Barnes and H Steen.

**3. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 16<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2005**

**Minute 2 – Notes of 11<sup>th</sup> April 2005**

A member of the public requested an update in respect of the proposed 20mph speed limit on Hall Street. The Chair replied that he had spoken to the engineer responsible today, who had indicated that they were currently marking out the project. It was envisaged that the scheme would take around 6 weeks to complete.

A question was raised about the status of the gents toilet on the Promenade, which had been cleaned following the last meeting, but had subsequently been boarded up. Officers agreed to look into this matter further.

## **Minute 9 – Floor Issues**

A member of the public enquired about progress in relation to weed killing. It was reported that the general weed killing had now taken place. Concerns were raised about knockweed on Millfold and John Street in Facit. The matter of the damage to the retaining wall caused by weeds on Railway Walk, Shawforth remained unresolved. Officers had contacted the Highways Partnership who had confirmed that the wall did not form part of an adopted highway or public footpath and was not, therefore, within their remit.

The Forum requested that officers provide a copy of its minutes to full Council.

### **4. POLICE ISSUES**

Inspector Shepherd provided an update in respect of police issues. Detailed figures were provided for Pennine Division, showing 6,333 fewer crimes, which was an 8.8% reduction. In Rossendale East there had been 126 fewer crimes, a fall of 9.6%. Burglary, vehicle crimes, violent crime and criminal damage had all fallen significantly. However, arson (including rubbish bins) and shoplifting had increased. Detailed figures were provided for Healey and Whitworth (down by 4 crimes) and Shawforth (down by 15 crimes). An increase in local vehicle crime which occurred at the start of the year had now resulted in several arrests. Inspector Shepherd reminded the public to pass as much information as possible to the police to enable them to target offenders.

The Forum was informed of the success of Operation Summer Nights, which had been funded by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. Test purchases had taken place at six off-licences; 432 containers of alcohol had been seized from young people (235 litres in total); 409 visits to hot spots had taken place; 23 fixed penalty notices for anti-social behaviour had been issued; and 154 letters had been sent to parents.

A Persistent and Prolific Offenders Group involving partner organisations had been established. The group met frequently and had recently considered the installation of CCTV in Whitworth. A large number of first warnings had been issued to those riding motorcycles off-road. A second sighting was required before vehicles could be confiscated, which resulted in a £100 fine and a charge of £100 to reclaim the vehicle. The police also worked closely with LCC Youth Services in respect of anti-social behaviour. The dispersal order for Shawforth had been largely successful, but a more permanent solution was required.

A large number of issues were raised by the public and responses were provided as indicated below:-

- Dangerous driving at night and excessive speed had been brought to the attention of the BEAT manager. Traffic police would be informed, but if there were no reported accidents this might not be a priority. The Lancashire Road Safety Partnership could deploy mobile speed cameras based upon where serious accidents had occurred. Where a lot of written complaints were received from the public, 'sites of local concern' would be assessed to see if further activity was required.
- Traffic was circulating around the wrong side of bollards opposite the Civic Hall. Mr Jackson reported that for the new Civic Hall the bollards would be repositioned, entrances to the site would be gated and locked at night and CCTV cameras would be introduced.
- A press article had stated that Yorkshire police had purchased motorcycles to pursue off-road bikers. This tactic had not been employed in Lancashire. However, the local Police and Community Support Officer (PCSO) had recently been responsible for confiscating a number of quad-bikes. Other motorcyclists had been stopped and cautioned.
- Youth nuisance had been noticeably reduced this summer. The local PCSO's actions and the targeting of off-licensed premises had contributed to this improvement. However, there was some evidence that youths now congregated at other sites.
- Off-roaders were causing nuisance at Brown Wardle Hill every Sunday. Large numbers had gained access via Church Street. In general, the vehicles had no identifying markings. A possible solution might be to use local quarries. Mr Roman indicated that the Adrenalin Centre proposals could provide off-roader facilities. It was also suggested that land owners might be able to assist in the prevention of motorcycle nuisance.
- A complaint was made that too many resources were concentrated on providing speed cameras between Whitworth and Bacup. Inspector Shepherd reminded the Forum that the siting of cameras was a matter for the Lancashire Road Safety Partnership and did not affect police resources. Police operated graded response times for different issues, eg. code 1 = 15 minutes; code 2 = 1 hour to respond.
- Youths previously used Tonacliffe School playing fields for informal football activities, but were now prevented from doing so. Lancashire County Council had a policy on unauthorised use of school premises and it was acknowledged that criminal damage of school property during the summer was a concern. However, the playing field at Tonacliffe School was separate from the school

buildings. Accordingly, it was agreed to ask the Town Council to write to LCC to see if a solution could be found.

## **5. GREEN WASTE COLLECTIONS AND FUTURE RECYCLING PLANS**

The Chair introduced Carole Todd, Head of Street Scene and Liveability, to the Forum. Ms Todd indicated that her colleague Mr Whiteman would attend future meetings of the Forum on a regular basis. She indicated that the Council was shortly due to commence the collection of organic waste. Houses in Whitworth with gardens would shortly receive a collection bag and an introductory leaflet. The green waste collection was being introduced at a time of year when the waste levels were low, to ensure smooth introduction of the service.

There were a number of changes likely to occur within the waste collection service. Consultants had been engaged to review the service. Options such as the collection of cardboard and textiles were being considered. Rather than distributing additional bins, the use of communal collection points was being considered. Residents could be provided with keys to a large waste container. Terraced streets with limited space for wheelie bins continued to present a challenge and the use of bags was a possible option.

A number of questions/issues were raised, as follows:-

- The provision of compost bins and wormeries was being considered.
- Cardboard collection might be rolled out in the future.
- Mr Whiteman had worked closely with the Town Council on a number of matters. Ms Todd would ask him to speak to the Town Clerk about the possible disposal of tree cuttings collected within Whitworth.
- Collections would continue to be made on a weekly basis, with one bin collected in the first week and the other bin collected in the alternate week.
- Consideration was being given to eliminating Monday as a collection day, to avoid problems caused by the bank holidays.
- The Chair thanked David Hall for his work in distributing the leaflets about brown bags.
- Rossendale recycled about 23% of its waste and was in the top ten of North West authorities. This achievement provided recycling credits for the Borough.
- Recycling was measured against Best Value Performance Indicators and against locally determined targets.

- The issue of requiring bulk collections to be made from the front of a property rather than the usual collection point would be considered.
- Abandoned vehicles had recently been targeted and removals had taken place quickly.
- Modern vehicles were designed to be very recyclable.

## **6. CIVIC HALL UPDATE**

Mr Jackson referred to the recent press release about the Civic Hall. A meeting had recently taken place between Rossendale Council and the Community Leisure Association of Whitworth (CLAW) to discuss a number of concerns. These had been addressed and representatives were satisfied that the successful tenderers, McGoff and Byrne Ltd, would be able to deliver the project. The Chair indicated that the Council's consultants, Tweeds, would ensure the day to day management of the project.

## **7. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Mr Roman, Lancashire County Council, provided an update on youth and community facilities. It was hoped that the development of youth facilities would help to reduce juvenile nuisance. A new 'Centre 515' was being developed, which would offer seven sessions per week for young people. It was reported that a multi-purpose hall was being built at Whitworth High School, which would include some community use. The County Council was also working with Groundwork to provide a multi-use games area in Whitworth, which would be completed by Spring 2006. In addition, some grant funding would be provided to Rossendale Leisure Trust to undertake some outreach work. Some concerns were expressed about the access points to the games area site and the time permitted for floodlighting. These would be addressed during the planning permission stage. Concern was also expressed that these facilities did not cater for youths at the top end of the valley. However, it was noted that staffing resources were limited.

A member of the public enquired about the Adrenalin Gateway proposals. It was reported that the project had been initiated by the Leisure Trust with the support of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The intention was to provide a national centre for outdoor activities.

A member of the public asked whether the area at the top of Hall Street would be tidied up. The Chair indicated that Mr Whiteman was looking into this matter.

A member of the public enquired about the light on the step at the Civic Hall Car Park, which was inoperative. The matter had been referred to the Street Lighting Partnership following a previous meeting of the Forum.

A member of the public expressed concern about vehicles parked on the pavement. Particular concerns were expressed about Tong Lane, Tong End, Cowm Park Way North and South, Hall Street and Market Street. It was reported that the ParkWise traffic wardens would be requested to look into the alleged offences.

**The meeting commenced at 7.00pm and closed at 8.55pm.**