

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL BOARDS

Notes of Meeting

SANDWICH NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

Date: Thursday, 22 May 2008

Venue: The Phoenix Centre, Jubilee Road, Sandwich CT13 0QP

Present:

Local Board Members: Trevor Bartlett, Sue Chandler, Stephen C Manion, Ian Martin, Leyland Ridings and Kit Smith

KCC Officers: Will Farmer (Community Liaison Manager)

A1.	Welcome – Leyland Ridings to invite the Vice Chair to take the Chair
	<p>Cllr Sue Chandler thanked Leyland Ridings, took the Chair and welcomed everyone present to the meeting.</p> <p>1a. Apologies <i>None</i></p> <p>1b. Matters Arising: <i>Community Transport: A business plan is being developed for a 'Wheels to Work' Scheme in the Ash area and trying to get funding.</i></p> <p>1c. Declarations of Interest: <i>None.</i></p>
A2.	Tackling Climate Change in Kent
	<p><i>Alison Cambray, Climate Change Project Manager, Kent County Council was in attendance for this item.</i></p> <p>Alison gave a presentation on the impact of climate change in the county; her role and the work she does on behalf of KCC on reducing the impact of climate change in Kent; and who KCC are working with at district and local levels.</p> <p>Kent is likely to be badly affected due to its long coastline, population demographic; location in South East and proximity to Europe. The climate is already changing and this has implications for design standards and infrastructure. KCC is following a twin-track approach.</p>
A3.	Reducing the impact of Climate Change
	<p><i>Shaun Cline, Energy Efficiency Officer, Dover District Council was in attendance for this item.</i></p> <p>Shaun spoke about his role within Dover District Council and what the council is doing to reduce the impact of climate change. He gave brief background to the duties placed on local authorities by the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 and Energy Conservation Act 1996ⁱ. Fuel poverty: Dover district has the highest proportion of homes in Kent hard to heat. The Council has a website and advice line. Shaun gave examples of micro-generationⁱⁱ such as wind</p>

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	<p>turbines and air and water source heat pumps.</p> <p>DDC is looking to implement a Carbon Reduction Management Programme and will then sign a Climate Change Declaration (similar to the Nottingham declaration). The Council is also looking at introducing a Code for Sustainable Homes.</p> <p>A Climate Change Officer post has been ratified but not yet appointed.</p>
A4.	The Deal with It campaign
	<p><i>Rosie Rechter, Deal With It campaign, was in attendance for this item.</i></p> <p>Rosie spoke on how she got involved the Deal With It Campaign. She spoke of the need to get out into the community and encourage everyone to accept individual responsibility and take small steps – which add up to make a big difference. This campaign has been extremely successful; banning bags is a visible and easy exercise to raise community awareness of environmental issues. Hopefully, people will now start thinking about other changes they can make.</p>
A5.	Group sessions
	<p>Each table was asked the following questions:-</p> <p>Tackling Climate Change</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Do you have any questions you would like to ask about climate change?2. Thinking about what you have heard, what is your vision for how you would like Kent to respond to climate change? What is important to you about life in Kent in the future? <p><i>Responses included:-</i></p> <p>There was limited discussion on what they would like Kent to be like or on Climate change but the Tables focused on actions and what could be done Should be addressed by USA/China/India as well, but important that UK set standard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• local –ve effects of climate change: N. Deal sea flooding, possibly to Sandwich.• local +ve effects of climate change: Broad Oak reservoir scheme being looked at again (but very long term)• Individual small actions do help to raise public awareness (e.g. ban plastic bags)• More carrot, less stick approach = active encouragement and support, publicising targets reached, will incentivise others.• small groups which can bring pressure on local Councils. Pressure from individuals and communities for action on climate change will put pressure on Councils and Government to put serious money into policies and actions.• Constant messages of doom and gloom are a turn-off. Add some focus on

positives.

- Nationwide small groups ultimately pressure Government to change
- Make government more local, increase the political will, politicians should look at the long term not just to elections.
- No time to take an incremental approach;
- Don't play at recycling, get serious and enforce.
- Have realistic, tangible, clear targets.
- KCC needs to practically support initiatives by funding rather than promises.
- Incineration and landfill produces more CO² than is saved by recycling
- Wingham Issues: listed buildings and no insulation; tried holding an open day about 6-months ago but poorly attended;
- Individual's taking small steps can lead to bigger actions;
- St. Margaret's Pines Calyx is an excellent example of an eco-build house and raising national interest. Hoping to obtain planning permission to set up as a demonstration home in the area, so that people can see how their homes can be improved;
- Planning Restrictions – DDC is working on these;
- Basic barriers to making a lifestyle change – cost; how low can you get the price for people to be willing to change?
- Is there a suppliers scheme?
- Village energy club or car club;
- Lack of willingness to volunteer;
- Themed project or activity: achieve quick wins and save money;
- Encourage take-up of grants;
- More information needed from DDC and KCC
- Want to carry on trying to do something – could form the “Wingham Warmers”

Reducing Impact of Climate Change

1. Do you know your carbon footprint? Are you already taking steps to reduce your carbon footprint?
2. What more could be done in your area

- By individual people?
- By local communities and parish councils?
- By councils in Kent? (or others?)

Responses included:-

Energy saving initiatives

- There is a potential energy champion in Wingham (according to Shaun Cline);
- Low energy light bulbs – don't work with dimmers;
- How do you calculate your Carbon Footprint? Individuals need more, easy to understand information;
- Central Government should reduce VAT level for energy efficiency products and measures. Village initiatives (Communities): need support from KCC and DDC;
- Information from local govt explaining what can be done, energy saving,

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grants available (e.g. DDC@yourservice newsletter);

- Simple step people can take is increase household insulation, put extra jumper on in doors, turn off stand-by on appliances;
- Conflict between Planning/Conservation laws and energy efficient schemes
- Decent Homes Standard may not achieve carbon footprint reduction, e.g. where cavity wall insulation cannot be applied to homes with solid walls.
- Individuals and Councils can turn down thermostats in their homes/buildings and can install energy efficient light bulbs but why do Council offices have all lights on at night, over weekends and holidays?
- Bulbs, boilers, etc. should only be changed to more energy efficient models when they reach end of life span – don't generate waste by replacing before then.
- Energy generating coils under Deal Pier – what happened to that scheme?
- Buy on-line – saves energy;

Car use/public transport

- Car sharing (Individuals);
- More investment in Bus shelters (Ash)
- More emphasis on walking to school/Walking Buses
- Car free day in Deal (easier if live in a town than for rural communities);
- Stronger regulation on exhaust from cars/lorries
- Fuel price increase is now making people think about alternatives;
- Pool cars (for local govt./other public bodies and businesses);
- Cannot get to DDC office without car

Super markets and packaging/recycling

- make supermarkets take back their own packaging; act in groups and unwrap everything at the checkout leaving packaging behind.
- Not all packaging is bad if it saves food items rotting early and being thrown away to generate methane.
- More investment needed in providing wheelie bins, separate recyclates collections on different days – look at European examples, also Dartford and N. Kent
- No point in collecting materials for which there is no outlet. £1.3m needed for wheelie bins for whole district. Large bins increase waste output, can't be used in flats.
- Collecting by one agency (Council) saves multi trips by private vehicles.
- DDC achieves a high quality recyclate – we need to get the message out to encourage individual efforts. There is a will to recycle and it's improving.

Local Food

Support locally produced food/Farmers Markets. However, some imported food has smaller carbon footprint

Building standards/housing

- there is a Sustainable Code for New Buildings but developers are reluctant to build to this code;

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- Is it more expensive for developers? This was questioned. What is the additional cost? Thought it must be cheaper to do when building new than trying to adapt an existing property;
- The commercial property side should have to meet the new standard: Registered Social Landlords already have to; didn't think it would stop the developers building;
- Local Government should lobby central government to impose the standard;
- A balance is needed: could the Council afford to enforce?
- BREEM standards – how many homes are built to the standard? (Building control)
- Energy performance certificates;
- Give a financial inducement: reduced VAT;
- Increase grants and incentives to developers and individual householders to achieve highest energy efficiency standards including micro-generation

Street lighting

- It has been suggested this should be turned off after midnight; but energy saving needs to be weighed against Health and Safety, especially in rural areas.
- The credit crunch: this will impact on what people do and force a life-style change to save money as well as energy;

Need ready access to information

Suggestions about what individuals can do and link this to how they can save money as well. Carbon footprint: what it is and how to calculate it (what your lifestyle is costing) How?: DDC Newsletter; websites; knocking on doors (incentives for volunteers to do this); face-to-face; involve schools and community organisations

Adaptation

1. What do you think the impacts of the changing climate are likely to be in your local community?
2. What more could be done in your area
 - By individual people?
 - By local communities and parish councils?
 - By councils in Kent? (or others?)

Water/weather issues

- Hotter, drier summers: likely increased need for air conditioning. Therefore, need more café culture Effects of climate change already noticed: coldest, wettest Spring 07 affected Farming
- Small, individual actions create a groundswell of opinion which puts pressure on government but it takes time.
- Use of water butts to save rain water and grey water recycling
- Heavier, shorter rain fall is likely
- Stop paving over gardens – rain needs to be able to soak away into ground and not create run-off

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- Dredging of river at Sandwich
- Less canalisation of rivers and clearance of ditches.
- Water shortage: need drought resistant plants in agriculture;
- Water-mains wastage: industry needs to address and local councils take action;
- Extreme weather events: evaluate the cost over the past 10 years;
- Need to consider when deciding whether to build roads differently (drains etc)
- Impacts of climate change are not sudden – takes a long time for people to realise and see for themselves what is happening;
- What is the truth about climate change? There seems to be a lot of conflicting information;
- Partnership between KCC, DDC and Town and Parish Councils;
- There needs to be a balance between preserving the landscape and changing or adapting to climate change: for example growing different fruit/agricultural products;

Transport

- More employers like Pfizer's putting on buses to get workers to work
- More small buses used in rural areas

Coastal flooding

- Government needs to take stronger lead on developments, particularly in flood plains, achieve target of 10% energy to be generated on site. However – this could push developers out of District, result in reduced regeneration and increased commuting.
- Storm surges and flood protection; information needed to help minimise damage and impact;
- The Environment Agency are producing maps; Website link?
- Will lose a lot of coastline and low lying areas. Need to stop building in these areas (depends on use and where)
- Secure power supplies
- Lobby government about the Environment Agency reducing funding for flood prevention
- Get children and schools involved early as they do care.

LONG TERM PRIORITIES

- Enforce low energy use, eco-build standards.
- Increase grants and incentives to developers and individual householders to achieve highest energy efficiency standards including micro-generation
- Grey water recycling and more efficient retention of rain that we do get i.e. increased storage on land, reservoirs to prevent flooding down stream

QUICK FIX

- Get information out to individuals and communities (homes, businesses, local groups, schools)
- Introduce plastic and cardboard recycling in the District
- Promote more increased use of low energy light bulbs

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Change Christmas lights in Sandwich to low energy• Arrange events on ecological issues/arrange events more locally
A6.	Summary of the Evening
A7.	Dates for future meetings
	24th July 2008 Ash Village Hall, theme: Independence and Support for Older People
	9th October 2008 Venue and topic to be confirmed
	5th February 2009 Venue and topic to be confirmed

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- i These placed a duty on local authorities to:
- Promote energy efficiency
 - Eliminate fuel poverty
 - Report energy efficiency savings to the Government
- ii Micro-generation - is the generation of zero/lower carbon heat and power by individual householders, small businesses and communities to meet their own needs. Micro-generation includes small-scale wind turbines, water turbines, ground source heat pumps, solar thermal collectors, solar electricity and micro CHP installations.