

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL BOARDS

NOTES OF MEETING

FAVERSHAM LOCAL ENGAGEMENT FORUM

Date Tuesday, 21 April 2009

Venue: Alexandar Centre, Preston Street, Faversham

Present:

Local Board Members: Andrew Bowles and Tom Gates

Apologies for absence:

KCC Officers:

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| A12. | Welcome from the Chair | |
| | <p>MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Gatefield Hall, Alexander Centre, Preston Street, Faversham on Tuesday 21st April 2009 from 7:04 pm to 8:52 pm.</p> <p>PRESENT: Councillor Anita Walker (Chairman), Councillors Mark Baldock, Barnicott, Cindy Davis, Trevor Fentiman and David Simmons. Kent Association of Local Councils Representatives: Councillor Duncan (Selling Parish Council) and Councillor Vaight (Oare Parish Council). Kent County Councillors: Mr Bowles and Mr Tom Gates (Vice-Chairman).</p> <p>OFFICERS PRESENT: Philippa Davies, Della Fackrell, Mike Fisher, Brian Planner, Bob Pullen, Peter Speakman and Jean Wood (all Swale Borough Council (SBC)) and Phil Gilbert, Bill Ronan and Andrew Rourk (all Kent County Council (KCC)).</p> <p>ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Gerry Lewin (Swale Borough Council), Claire Davies (AmicusHorizon), Chief Inspector Tony Henley and Inspector Kevin Swinney (Kent Police), Jenny Knight (East Kent Primary Care Trust) and Elise Stickler (Environment Agency). Mrs Sue Akhurst, Mr Campbell Forsyth, Mr Michael Gates, Mr Nigel Kay, Mr Findlay Macdonald, Ms Alison O'Connor, Mr Oswald-Jones and Mr John Winlow (local residents).</p> <p>APOLOGIES: Councillors Bobbin, Mike Cosgrove, Mike Henderson and Bryan Mulhern.</p> | |

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| | <p>842 MINUTES</p> <p>The Minutes of the Meeting held on 10th February 2009 (Minute Nos. 654 - 662) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the amendment to include as those present Kent Association of Local Council representative, Parish Councillor Sue Vaight, Councillors Gerry Lewin and John Morris (SBC) and County Councillor Paulina Stockell.</p> | |
| | <p>A13. Declarations of Interest</p> | |
| | <p>843 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>No interests were declared.</p> | |
| | <p>A14. Public Session</p> | |
| | <p>844 PUBLIC SESSION</p> <p>The Chairman read a response to a question received from Mr Forsyth regarding the decision taken on the best traffic flow option for Faversham town centre and the public obtaining £12,000 from Tesco by way of a Section 106 Agreement. Mr Forsyth had asked when Swale would provide the remaining budget to complete the scheme.</p> <p>The response from the Planning Monitoring (S106) and Enforcement Officer (SBC) was as follows:</p> <p>'Obligation - Reverse Traffic Flow - £12,000 towards the cost of traffic reversal on Preston Street is to be paid by Tesco on or prior to the service of the Implementation Notice which is notice in writing to be served upon the Council by the developer notifying us of their proposed implementation of the permission.</p> <p>As far as I am aware, the notice has not been served.'</p> <p>The Head of Environment and Amenities (SBC) explained that Tesco were required to hand over the £12,000 when the developers commenced work. No date had been received and it was subject to commercial aspects. He added that the traffic flow issue would be discussed later in the meeting.</p> <p>The Chairman read a response to a question received from the Mayor of Faversham regarding potholes in Faversham, following the recent bad weather. The Mayor had added that whilst many had been patched, many roads were in a poor state of repair and</p> | |

needed major work. He asked what the Borough plans were for this.

The response from the Community Delivery Team Leader - Swale (KCC) was as follows:

'It depends where the pothole is.

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AA risk assessment is carried out by our inspector which will include speed of road, volume of traffic, position of hole, depth of hole, size of hole, structure of road.

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So unfortunately I can not give a dimension.'

The Community Delivery Team Leader explained that there was more money in the budget this year to carry out repairs to road surfaces and two extra gangs had been employed, since February 2009, to fill in potholes caused by icy conditions on the roads. He reported that most of the main roads would be surveyed this year, and minor roads would be surveyed every other year. In response to a question, the Community Delivery Team Leader explained that time constraints determined the quality of the repair and whether a repair was carried out with a temporary finish or a more permanent one.

Mr Macdonald, a local resident, raised concern that concrete slabs were being replaced by tarmac when repairs were being carried out to footpaths and questioned whether this was a temporary measure.

The Community Delivery Team Leader explained that in areas where there were trees, tarmac was added where repairs were needed as this resulted in a safer surface than paving slabs which could become uneven. He added that tarmac was also added where corner protection was needed for reinforcement. The Community Delivery Team Leader confirmed that tarmac was often added as a temporary measure and suggested that Mr Macdonald contacted him with more specific details of the area of footpath that he was concerned with.

Parish Councillor Duncan highlighted the problem of passing areas used by heavy vehicles in rural areas. The Community Delivery Team Leader was unaware of the problem but advised that KHS priority was safety, especially as vehicles could be driving over mud.

Mr Forsyth, a local resident thanked the Police for their contribution to reducing anti-social behaviour in Faversham town centre over the last few months.

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| A15. | Alexander Centre | |
| | 845 ALEXANDER CENTRE | |
| | <p>The Interim Chief Executive explained that this item would not be discussed at this meeting due to related staff issues. He advised that a report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Forum on 9th June 2009.</p> | |
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| A16. | Kent Highway Services | |
| | 846 HIGHWAYS | |
| | <p>The Head of Environment and Amenities (SBC) reminded the Forum that the Swale Joint Transportation Board had considered the options for traffic flows in Faversham town centre. He explained that the option to reverse the direction of flow of traffic in Preston Street and maintain the one way direction in East Street had been agreed. He explained that some initial work had been carried out but more detailed design and surveys needed to be done. This was dependent on the Section 106 contribution from the developers.</p> <p>A Member advised that a working group had been set up which included County, Borough and Town Councillors to look at the future changes within the town centre.</p> <p>Mr Forsyth raised concern with the amount of time that was being taken to move the scheme forward.</p> <p>The Head of Environment and Amenities advised that there was no further funding identified for the scheme. He explained that at the moment any work that was being done was being carried out within current staff resources. In response to a request for more details of the proposed option, the Head of Environment and Amenities provided this. He explained that an option to close the town centre had been considered, but this had raised issues of access to both delivery vehicles and disabled users. The scheme had been chosen as it looked at reducing the amount of through traffic from Court Street and there would be phased traffic lights to the exit, via East Street. He advised that it was hoped to keep signage to a minimum so the area did not appear cluttered. He explained that more work needed to be carried out in terms of the detailed design.</p> <p>In response to a question about how much more funding was needed to carry the scheme forward, the Head of Environment and Amenities explained that this was difficult to judge as the detailed design had not been carried out and funding may have to be spent on altering junctions and changing locations of CCTV</p> | |

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| | <p>cameras. Mr Gates advised that each County Member would have funding after June 2009 to contribute to highway schemes.</p> <p>Mr Bowles acknowledged that it was frustrating waiting for the scheme to be implemented. He suggested that in the meantime steps could be taken to reduce the speed of cars travelling up Preston Street by installing speed humps and he brought the Forum's attention to Minute No. 228/06/07 of the Faversham and Swale East Area Forum.</p> <p>The Local Transport and Development Manager (KCC) explained that the introduction of traffic calming could produce other problems such as the noise created when vehicles crossed them and being located too close to junctions. He advised that consultation would need to be carried out first.</p> <p>A Member suggested that the upgraded traffic lights needed to be audible as well. He also considered that the design details should be co-ordinated with the improvements that Tesco were planning. The Local Transport and Development Manager explained that it was not always practical to use audible traffic lights as in some areas they could cause confusion.</p> | |
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| A17. | Flood Risk Emergency Planning in Parishes | |
| | <p>847 FLOOD RISK EMERGENCY PLANNING IN PARISHES</p> <p>The Chairman welcomed Elise Stickler, Flood Incident Management, Environment Agency to the meeting.</p> <p>Miss Stickler gave a presentation on Flood Risk Management - Emergency Planning. She outlined what could be done to minimise the risk of flooding and how communities should react to emergencies. She advised that an Emergency Plan was needed to cope with any emergency situation, not just flooding. Miss Stickler emphasised the need for Local Authorities and communities to work together. The impact of flooding could be reduced by carrying out a risk assessment, looking at areas liable to flooding and consider the different types of flooding that occurred with different weather conditions. She advised that local knowledge of an area was helpful in determining where protection may be needed.</p> <p>Miss Stickler outlined the key steps that were needed to develop a flood plan, which included setting up an information centre, stockpiling emergency supplies, getting a list of volunteers and assisting vulnerable people. She explained that it was also important to consider the aftermath of an emergency and the steps needed to return to 'normal'. She reported that the flood warning code signs were being updated.</p> | |

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| | <p>Miss Stickler emphasised the need to be prepared and gave details of the Environment Agency website for more information (www.environment-agency.gov.uk).</p> <p>In response to a question, the Head of Environment and Amenities (SBC) explained that there was a significant risk of tidal flooding in Swale. Areas on the Isle of Sheppey were well protected where there were people, but there were some vulnerable flood areas within Faversham. He advised that there were no major rivers in Swale and that major streams were looked after by the Environment Agency. Apart from tidal flooding, the number of people affected by flood risk in Swale was low. He further advised that potential flood areas could be determined by inputting your postcode onto the Environment Agency website.</p> <p>A Member suggested that the defunct Emergency Committee at SBC should meet again.</p> <p>The Resilience Partnership Manager (SBC) explained that SBC did have an Emergency Plan and staff were trained and listed in the plan and they worked with the Kent Resilience Forum. In response to a question, the Resilience Partnership Manager explained that the current Emergency Plan was being reviewed and would include Parish Council contacts and she would ensure that these were up to date when it was issued.</p> <p>Discussion ensued and Members considered that it would be a good idea to have a Member Briefing on the Emergency Plan. This would be an opportunity for Members to be updated and provided with any new information. Mr Bowles suggested that the briefing be opened up to allow any Parishes affected by flooding to send a representative to the briefing.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>(1) That Members and Parishes affected by flooding attend a briefing on the Emergency Plan.</p> <p>Resilience Partnership Manager</p> | |
| A18. | Partners Update | |
| | <p>848 UPDATE FROM PARTNERS</p> <p>Inspector Swinney updated the Forum on Police matters in Swale.</p> <p>He reported that there had been good performance figures at the end of the last financial year. He advised that crime figures were down, including a four per cent decrease in burglary and theft and</p> | |

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| | <p>a seven per cent decrease in violence. All crime in Swale was down by eight per cent. Inspector Swinney explained that there had been 197 less crimes over the last year and 526 less incidents of anti-social behaviour. He reported that although there were ongoing problems, there was gradual improvement, with hopes that the situation would improve further. He advised that there had been a campaign to look into anti-social behaviour issues at the beginning of April.</p> <p>With regard to PACT meetings, Inspector Swinney advised that few of them raised crime related issues; they were normally low level anti-social behaviour issues. He advised that priorities were set for each PACT meeting. Anti-social behaviour was a current priority and improvements were started to be seen. It was hoped that the PACT meetings would engage more with other organisations.</p> <p>Mr Bowles informed the Forum that the Community Scrutiny Panel was submitting their final report to the Executive on 22nd April 2009 with regard to their review of PACT meetings.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked Inspector Swinney for the work he had carried out.</p> <p>The Community Liaison Manager (KCC) reported that the Community Empowerment Network for Swale had recently been launched which gave volunteer groups the opportunity to have a voice and have greater influence. He explained that the Network would increase the opportunity for the volunteer sector to become more engaged and let their views be known.</p> | |
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| <p>A19.</p> | <p>Bysingwood Community Centre</p> | |
| | <p>849 BYSINGWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE</p> <p>The Chief Community Services Officer (SBC) introduced the report which followed a request to SBC to provide the West Faversham Community Association (WFCA) with a longer term lease of the Community Centre, including a lease of the adjoining public open space. He outlined the facilities within the centre and explained that the current lease had nine years left to run. He explained that although the hall was quite well used, storage in the building was poor. The hall did not meet the expectations of the local community and the WFCA wanted to do more with the hall. The Chief Community Services Officer advised that a longer lease on the building could assist the WFCA in obtaining more funding. He explained that a legal process would need to be adopted, if the WFCA wished to take over and use the land adjoining the hall, as this was public open space.</p> | |

The Chief Community Services Officer explained that this was an opportunity for local people to engage and contribute to the proposals in place.

Mr Winlow (WFCA) explained that the hall was an important part of the community, especially within an area of deprivation where it was needed as a base for improving social needs. He reported that the building was old and tired and expensive to run. There was a committee of people at the hall to move the proposals on and the project was bringing local people together.

Mr Kay (WFCA) explained that halls similar to this one existed throughout the country, some in areas similar to Faversham. He emphasised the importance of gaining community involvement with the proposals.

Mr Gates thanked Mr Winlow, Mr Kay and the Chief Community Services Officer for their work on the proposals. He welcomed the type of hall that would be there, in that part of Faversham.

A Member welcomed the forward thinking of the plans but raised concern with the sustainability of the project and its knock-on effect on other halls in Faversham. He highlighted the possible problem of the scheme not being successful and SBC being left with a long lease.

Mr Gates considered that Faversham could sustain another hall.

The Chief Community Services Officer suggested that there should be two separate leases, one on the hall and one on the adjoining land.

Members welcomed the proposals and considered the long lease would give stability to the hall, but concern was raised on the land being used as a football pitch, close to a residential area.

RESOLVED:

(1) That the Faversham Local Engagement Forum supports the following recommendations and these be included in the Chief Community Services Officer's report to the Executive.

(i) That the Executive is asked to agree that a new lease be agreed with WFCA subject to legal process concerning local consultation on the disposal of the open space to WFCA.

(ii) That the Executive is asked to agree that Swale Borough Council, together with other local community centre/hall providers, continue to work with WFCA with the objectives of meeting local needs in the most accessible and effective ways for users and providers.

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| A20. | Dates and Times for Future Meetings including venues. | |
| | <p>850 DATES, TIMES AND VENUES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS</p> <p>Discussion ensued on the location of the next meeting of the Forum on 9th June 2009. Members considered that as the Alexander Centre was on that agenda, the meeting should be held there. Concern was raised with the acoustics of the Gatefield Hall and suggestions made that one of the smaller rooms be used instead.</p> <p>Mr Bowles considered that the location of future meetings should be at a venue suitable to what was on the agenda for that meeting.</p> <p>A Member considered there should not be so many presentations as these took time that would otherwise be available for discussion and debate and that in any case Councillors received briefings, training and presentations from their respective Councils. Another Member said that the primary purpose of the Forums was to enable locally elected representatives to engage with and respond to local community needs and to create opportunities for residents to gain a greater voice and influence over local services and issues of concern to them.</p> <p>The Forum discussed the format of the meetings and were reminded that the LEFs were a chance for the public to become involved in local issues. In response to a question, the Community Liaison Manager (KCC) explained that it was still early days with the progress of the LEFs and attendance in the three areas varied. He reminded the Forum that this was an opportunity for County, Borough and Parish Councillors and Partners to meet with local people for dialogue.</p> <p>The Forum discussed ways of increasing the attendance at the meetings which included greater publicity and possibly changing the time of the meetings. Members were reminded that they too had a role to play in encouraging attendance by their constituents. A Member believed the general public only attended meetings if there was something controversial on the agenda, such as discussion at the last meeting on the Cottage Hospital.</p> <p>Chief Inspector Henley explained that it was important to add value and show what was being done with regard to issues that were of concern.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>(1) That the next meeting on 9th June 2009 be held in the</p> | |

Tuesday, 21 April 2009

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| | Alexander Centre, Faversham. POST MEETING NOTE: The Alexander Centre is not available for hire on 9th June 2009. | |
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