

**Ashford Rural West Forum
(Weald area)**

Monday 31 Jan 2011
Smarden Village Hall 6:30 pm

Present: Richard King (KCC), Martin Newman (Pluckley), Tim Lee (Egerton), Richard Braiser (Little Chart), Alistair Boyd (Bethersden), Robert Taylor (ABC), John Lowing (Smarden), Clair Bell (ABC), Carolynn Buckley (Bethersden), Tim Bratton (High Halden) and David Geoghegan (notes).

Apologies: Hugh Ellison (ABC)

Introductions

Richard King opened the meeting by saying that this was an informal meeting and asked each of the attendees to introduce themselves and say where they were from.

Terms of Reference

The meeting agreed to proceed without TOR on an informal basis for the time being.

Community Grants

Richard spoke about the three grant funding streams he has for community projects and invited applications for the remainder of his £10K MCG which stands as follows:-

| | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|--------|
| Youth Shelter | Westwell Playing Fields | £500 |
| New doors | Hothfield Village Hall | £500 |
| Bounce Mat | Westwell Playing Fields | £500 |
| Junior section games | Kennington Cricket Club | £500 |
| Bus shelter | Brabourne PC | £500 |
| Mini Bus | Wealden Wheels | £1,000 |
| Village Hall | Pluckley PC | £500 |
| Display case | Hothfield History Soc | £500 |
| After school Club | Egerton | £500 |
| Bethersden Youth | ABC | £500 |
| Horse carriage | RDA | £500 |
| Wealden Wheels | Hothfield PC | £350 |
| | Remaining | £3,650 |

For the Local Scheme Grant of £3,400 the agreed spend for 2010/11 was:-

| | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|--------|
| Egerton Playing Fields Committee | Sports Pavilion | £1,400 |
| High Halden | Little Acorns nursery roof | £2,000 |

Finally for the Small Community Capital Grant budget of £5,000 the spend was:-

| | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|--------|
| Egerton Millennium Hall | New Acoustic Equipment | £3,000 |
| Challock PC | Play Park | £2,500 |

These three funding streams will be available for the new financial year.

Projects must be discussed with Richard King before an application form can be issued.

KCC Budget – see attached link

Council tax for both KCC and ABC councils will be frozen.

[KCC Budget 2011/12](#)

Parish Council Issues:

The average precept was just £24 for Band D property and several PCs were freezing their precepts.

As this was an informal meeting Richard has a separate note of the other issues raised.

Highways Issues:

Richard said he had £25k of highways funding to allocate each year and any unspent could be rolled forward but that funding had now been allocated for the current financial year.

Amongst other issues, the Forum discussed the problems caused by HGVs using inappropriate roads and lanes despite weight restrictions and signage that routes were not suitable.

Richard said he would talk to John Burr the Director of Highways about what might be done. Richard also agreed to raise the issue of industrial planning applications and what input highways had where proposals in rural locations would adversely impact on minor roads. The attached paper on reporting a fault on highways was distributed.

[Reporting a fault on a highway](#)

Any Other Business

The issue of sheltered accommodation in the villages for the elderly was discussed. A cluster of local Parishes were working towards providing accommodation in one of the villages (Smarden). Richard suggested that there was a need to identify exception sites and survey needs with the view to providing suitable accommodation in each village. Richard agreed to move this forward within KCC.

The Forum ended and agreed to meet again in June.