

## SHEPPEY LOCAL ENGAGEMENT FORUM

MINUTES of the Meeting held Leysdown Village Hall, Wing Road, Leysdown, Isle of Sheppey on Tuesday 27th January 2009 from 7:00 pm to 9:15 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor John Morris (Chairman), Councillors Andy Booth, Mick Constable, Mark Ellen, David Garside, Paul Hayes, Lesley Ingham, Kenneth Pugh, Pat Sandle and Worrall. KALC Representatives: Mr Pye (Queenborough Town Council) and Ken Ingleton (Minster Parish Council). Kent County Councillors: Adrian Crowther and Harrison (Vice Chairman).

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mike Fisher, Ross Gill, Heather Knowler (Capital Projects Development Manager - KCC), Kellie Mackenzie, Louise Matthews, Ketra Najjingo, Bob Pullen, Bill Ronan, Kelly Walker, Jean Wood, Carol Valentine (Kent Highways Services (KHS) and Laurence Young.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Inspector Applegate (Kent Police), Kent County Councillor Bowles, Councillor Ben Stokes, Mick Durkan (Station Commander - Sheppey Fire Station), Chief Inspector Tony Henley, Sergeant Neil Kimber (Kent Police), Anthony Fox (Fire Station, Sheerness), Brian Horton (Swale Housing Association) and John Mills (Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC)).

APOLOGIES: Councillors David Sargent and Swale Centre for Voluntary Services (CVS).

### 609 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED:

(1) That Ms Harrison (Kent County Councillor) be elected Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

### 610 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Sheppey Area Forum Meeting held on 21st October 2008 (Minute Nos. 388 & 397) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the following amendments: that an update from Age Concern be included on the agenda at the next Partners and Communities Together (PACT) meeting in Queenborough, not at the next meeting of the Sheppey Area Forum and that the Executive Member for Regeneration had stated there were various contributing factors as to why a large number of people were selling their chalets.

Councillor Worrall requested that SBC Officers ensure the footbridge in Cromwell Road is regularly inspected as it was still unsafe.

Head of Environment and Amenities

Councillor Paul Hayes reported that the last Halfway PACT meeting had been well attended by SBC Officers.

Councillor Hayes further reported that he had been informed on the procedure for creating a Parish Council in Halfway. He had passed the information on to local residents.

## 611 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

## PART B MINUTES FOR INFORMATION

## 612 PUBLIC SESSION

Mr William Tatton, resident of Warden referred to the KALC meeting held on 1st December 2008 where the creation of the Local Engagement Forums (LEFs) had been discussed. He stated that it had been agreed that all Parish Councils would be asked to put forward nominees to sit on the LEFs. Several Parish Councils on the eastern end of the Isle of Sheppey had received no such notification. He also wanted to know who had given authority for only two nominees to be allowed from the KALC.

Mr John Mills, (KALC) reported that they had been asked to provide two representatives to sit on each of the Swale LEFs. The two representatives chosen for the Sheppey LEF regularly attended KALC meetings.

The Chairman suggested that Parish Councils on the Isle of Sheppey and KALC arrange a meeting to resolve the situation.

Mrs Constable, Queenborough Town Council, requested views on the current planning application to erect four wind turbines at the Port of Sheerness.

Mike Fisher, Interim Chief Executive, advised that it would not be appropriate to consider the matter as it was to be considered at the Swale Borough Council (SBC) Planning Committee on 5th February 2009. He advised that local residents would be consulted by the Planning Department and any concerns should be raised under that process. He further advised that they could register to speak at the Planning Committee.

Mrs Betty Pye, Queenborough and Rushenden in Bloom, asked whether as part of the impending budget cuts, provision of flower pots and baskets would be lost.

The Chairman reported that the budget would be considered at a meeting of the full Council on Wednesday 25th February 2008.

Brenda Hardman, a resident of Bayview, raised concern that the gullies in Jenkins Hill were often blocked. She was concerned that this may lead to surface water on the road freezing.

The Chairman suggested the issue be considered under agenda item no. 7 " Safety Issues B2231.

Mr Pursord, resident of Leysdown, requested that as part of the regeneration proposals for Leysdown, the occupancy period for the camp sites be extended. As a trader himself he considered that this would be a great help to local businesses, particularly under the present economic climate.

Mr Bowles (Kent County Councillor) reported that extending the chalet occupancy period had been discussed previously and suggested it be considered as an agenda item for a future meeting.

Democratic Services Officer

Jenny Hurkett, Blue Town Heritage Centre, raised concern that Sheppey Heritage was not being promoted enough. She reported that funding had been secured for the Heritage Centre and a leaflet "Bluetown Regeneration"™ was being produced. She explained that the Heritage Centre were experiencing problems gaining permission to erect tourism signs, as Kent Highway Services did not recognise Bluetown as a "town"™. Jenny hoped to be able to have a promotional stand at the Kent County Show in July 2009.

Bill Ronan (KCC Community Liaison Manager), advised that with regard to attending the Kent County Show, KCC had a corporate stand. The focus of the stand for 2009 was "Kent Means Business"™, he suggested that may be a way forward.

Bill Ronan (KCC Community Liaison Manager)

Mr Bowles (Kent County Councillor) agreed to do all he could to help with regard to the street signs.

Mr Bowles (Kent County Councillor)

Discussions ensued with regard to the lack of tourism signs on the Isle of Sheppey. Members queried why the "Welcome to the Isle of Sheppey"™ sign had disappeared after the new bridge had been constructed. It was suggested that the cost of a new sign and the process for providing one be established and that the Executive be asked if funding could be made available.

Bill Ronan (KCC Community Liaison Manager)

A resident of Bayview raised concern that there were no buses after 6 pm. He suggested that before the Borough Council spent any money on regenerating Leysdown, the bus services in the area must be improved.

Ms Harrison (Kent County Councillor) agreed to raise the issue with KCC.

Ms Harrison (Kent County Councillor)

#### 613 UPDATE FROM THE POLICE ON CRIME AND DISORDER AND PACT PRIORITIES.

The Chairman welcomed Chief Inspector Tony Henley (Kent Police) and Inspector David Applegate (Kent Police).

Inspector Applegate gave an update on PACT priorities for each area of the Isle of Sheppey. A copy is attached to these Minutes.

Inspector Applegate reported that attendance by local residents was particularly poor across the whole of the Isle of Sheppey despite the meetings being advertised. He stated that attendance by partners, particularly KHS, was also very poor. He asked the Forum for any ideas on how attendance could be improved.

Carol Valentine (KHS) reported that unfortunately they did not have the resources to attend all PACT meetings.

A Member suggested advertising the meetings two weeks in advance and placing notices in local shops.

Ms Harrison (KCC) reported that, whilst she supported the PACT meetings, she was concerned that a lot of the issues raised at the meetings were issues that should be reported to Ward Councillors. She was also concerned that the meetings took up too much Police and partner time.

Inspector Applegate advised that crime was down on the Isle of Sheppey by 11.69 per cent, the fifth reduction in a row. There had been a significant reduction in both criminal damage and violence. There was however a rise in residential burglary which was being addressed. Cases of fraud had also increased but this was mainly due to non-payment of petrol by motorists at petrol stations, possibly as a result of the "credit crunch".

Chief Inspector Tony Henley (Kent Police) reported that the PACT process was currently being reviewed. He considered that it was important to reflect and understand what issues were affecting the local community. He also considered that PCSOs at a local level needed to be accountable and to respond to priorities to help regain public confidence.

A Member asked that problems with cyclists riding on the pavement in West Walk, Sheerness needed to be publicised. He also considered that some crime was not reported, as people did not feel the Police would react.

A Member from Eastchurch advised that she had not seen their PCSO for over a year, Inspector Applegate agreed to look into this matter.

Inspector Applegate (Kent Police)

Appendix

A resident of Bayview considered lack of buses of evenings may be one reason why attendance was low at PACT meetings.

Inspector Applegate reported that a new PCSO for Halfway had been agreed. He agreed to pass details to the Ward Members.

Inspector Applegate (Kent Police)

614 UPDATE - KENT HIGHWAY SERVICES (KHS)

The Chairman welcomed Carol Valentine (KHS) to the meeting.

In response to a question from Carol on attendance at LEFs, Mr Bowles (KCC) reported that he had met with Paul Carter (Leader of KCC) and it had been agreed that KHS would attend six out of the twelve planned LEFs. He acknowledged that clear notification of highway questions in advance of the meeting would be preferable to enable answers to be provided.

Carol Valentine (KHS) drew attention to the statement from Councillor Pat Sandle with regard to the B2231. She reported that repairs to the road had been programmed for May 2007 and were completed in June 2008. Carol stated that KHS had responded to the Jacobs study and the extra works identified would be put forward for funding using the Prioritising Investments Programmes for Kent's Integrated Network (PIPKIN) scheme.

Councillor Sandle reiterated the Four Parish Councils' request for the works to the junction of the B2231 and Scocles Road and the junction of Rowetts Way with the B2231 to be programmed in for the 2010/2011 bids. She also raised concern that KHS were not doing enough to be involved with the local community.

Ms Harrison (KCC), reported that the PIPKIN process was being reviewed by an informal panel, and suggested Members contact, Mr Roger Truelove (Kent County Councillor) a member of the Panel, if they had any concerns on the process.

Ms Harrison raised concern that potholes were being filled but not sealed with bitumen. As a result the tarmac was becoming loose and they were needing to be re-filled two or three times a year.

Mr Adrian Crowther (Kent County Councillor), reported that a KHS depot had recently opened in Ashford. He was aware that several new vehicles had been ordered for repairing potholes more efficiently.

Ms Harrison (KCC) considered that with regard to attendance by KHS at meetings, they needed to understand that the public were extremely frustrated by the lack of communication currently provided by KHS.

A Member stated that repairs to the road surface were needed in Sheerness between the clock tower and Millennium Way.

## 615 EDUCATION ON THE ISLE OF SHEPPEY

The Chairman welcomed Heather Knowler (Capital Projects Development Manager) to the meeting.

Heather gave a presentation on the proposed school provision for Warden Bay/Leysdown. She reported that the proposals at Warden Bay/Leysdown were part of the three to two tier reorganisation of education on Sheppey. A Public Notice had been served in April 2008 following an extensive formal consultation.

Heather provided details of previous pupil intake and size and new intake and size for the following schools: Minster; Queenborough; Rose Street; West Minster; Richmond; St Edwards RC; Eastchurch CE; Halfway Houses and St George's CE Middle.

Eastchurch Church of England Primary School (CEPS) would remain a 2 Forms of Entry (FE) school (intake 60 pupils), but the age range would change to become a primary school. She explained that to enable enlargement of the school from September 2008, temporary accommodation at Eastchurch would be used pending the acquisition of a site for the addition of provision in the Warden Bay locality.

Heather reported that 1.2ha at Warden Bay Road between Warden Bay and Leysdown had now been purchased from White Horse Leisure in the late summer of 2008. The site was next door to a proposed Children's Centre. Fencing around the site had now been completed and surveys were now booked. Issues still to be resolved included: removal of mobiles; admissions; and formation of a relationship with the Children's Centre. Heather outlined the process to be carried out before building work could commence. It was hoped the school would be open in September 2011.

In response to a query on the Sheppey Academy, Heather suggested either Alison Osborne or a representative of the Academy be invited to attend a future meeting as they would be able to advise on the current situation.

Democratic Services Officer

#### 616 UPDATE PRESSURE JET - HIGH STREET, SHEERNESS

The Chief Executive drew attention to the report which provided an update on pressure jet washing for Sheerness High Street. He reported that full cleaning would be carried out between March and April 2009.

RESOLVED:

(1) That the report be noted.

#### 617 MARINE TOWN ALLEYGATE SCHEME

The Chairman suggested the money be used for repairs to the footbridge, Cromwell Road, Sheerness.

The Head of Policy (SBC) drew attention to the tabled paper which advised that as the money had been allocated from the Community Safety & Development Initiatives Funding it could only be used for community safety projects.

Ms Harrison (KCC) advised that there were issues in Sheerness East. She stated that as discussed at the last meeting, the public in the area needed to be encouraged to log incidents of crime to establish there were problems. Once the figures proving the need for the alleygate scheme were available SBC should then re-submit a bid to Communities and Local Government (CLG) to progress a gating order.

#### 618 SERGEANT NEIL KIMBER (KENT POLICE)

The Chairman thanked Sergeant Neil Kimber, on behalf of the residents of the Isle of Sheppey, for all his hard work over the years and presented him with a certificate of thanks.

Sergeant Kimber advised he felt an affinity with the Isle of Sheppey and felt sure that the new Sergeant would continue the good work.

#### 619 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The following items were suggested for inclusion on future agenda:

Primary Care Trust " Overview of Health on the Isle of Sheppey  
Tourism/regeneration " invite South East England Development Agency Economic  
Development Unit/Tourism (SBC)/Swale Forward/Planning(SBC)/Legal (SBC)  
Accessibility " KHS/emergency services/SBC Officers  
Sheppey Academy Update " Alison Osborne/representatives of the academy

Discussions ensued and it was agreed that written questions be made available to Democratic Services ten days before the meeting. This would enable answers and the appropriate Officers to be invited to the meeting.