

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
HEATH HAYES, NORTON CANES AND RAWNSLEY COMMUNITY FORUM
TUESDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 2009 AT 7.00 P.M.
AT THE THEATRE, NORTON CANES HIGH SCHOOL, NORTON CANES

PRESENT:
Councillors

Jillings, J. F. (Chairman)
Bernard, J. D. (Vice-Chairman)

Ansell, Mrs. P.A.	Mawle, D. L.
Bernard, Mrs. A. F.	Todd, Mrs. D. M.
Bullock, L.W.	

Cannock Chase Council Officers

Mrs. C. Bowker, Committee Officer
Mr. D. Hoare, Director of Service Improvement
R. Gudgin, Street Warden

Also Present:-

Inspector Pat Shannaghan, Cannock Police
PC 5603 Lucy Spicer
PCSO 16718 A. Crowther
Michelle Lucas, Cannock Chase Chamber of Commerce
and Industry
Wayne Mortiboys, Staffordshire County Council

Local Residents (approximately 20)

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Beddows, K. L. Bennett, M. J. Holder and County Councillor J. Rowley).

9. Notes

The notes of the meeting held on 23 June 2009 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the correction on page 3 item 5 second paragraph reading 'Heath Hayes Parish Council considered that P C Dean Cooper had made a big difference to their area' in place of Norton Canes Parish Council.

10. Questions for Staffordshire Police

A local resident reported that he had heard gun shots being fired on land near to the Bleak House site. Inspector Shannaghan explained that fire arm legislation was complex. If a fire arm was being fired on private land with the owners permission this was allowed. If, however, it was being fired on land which the public used this was illegal. The Bleak House site came under the jurisdiction of Rugeley Police and Inspector Shannaghan reported that he would liaise with Inspector Ellerton the next day. He explained that there were farms in that area and farmers sometimes gave permission for vermin to be shot. The Police undertook to investigate this matter.

Inspector Shannaghan was asked if the high unemployment levels in Cannock Chase had led to an increase in crime. He reported that certain crimes had increased, but were still not at the levels of 10 years ago. Burglaries and reported car crime were still relatively low.

A resident reported that although good work had been undertaken to tackle alcohol being sold to under age residents, a car had been seen in the Wimblebury area selling alcohol to youths. The Police undertook to investigate this matter.

Inspector Shannaghan was asked if paperwork would continue to be reduced in line with the previous Chief Constable's instructions. P C Lucy Spicer explained that portable devices had been provided which allowed Officers to gain and relate information without having to go back to the Police Station to use computers. Systems were being improved to allow information to be compiled and duplication avoided.

A resident enquired whether the problem of 'boy racers' was being overcome. Inspector Shannaghan informed the Forum that some 5/6 months ago as many as 400 'boy racers' had been gathering in the area. Constant operations had been carried out at weekends and the numbers had greatly reduced, lately only 10 had congregated.

The Police were thanked for attending the Forum.

11. Safety Issues – Cannock and Hednesford Roads, Heath Hayes and the Wimblebury Road – position with respect to Zebra Crossings being erected on John Street and on the Cannock Road

Wayne Mortiboys informed the Forum that no plans had been formulated to locate a pedestrian crossing on the Cannock Road in the vicinity of the garage. Residents expressed concern that the County Council did not consider it was needed, especially with the increasing number of children crossing the road to get to school.

With respect to the Hednesford Road, due to the number of accidents that had occurred, this had been included in a local safety scheme programme.

He was not aware that previous requests had been made for a crossing near to John Street. Five reported accidents had occurred with 10 casualties recorded. County Councillor John Rowley was further researching the matter. It was

explained that where pedestrian crossings were situated was of utmost importance, especially due to the substantial costs involved.

Residents explained that they had been requesting a crossing near John Street for many years both directly with the County Council and to Dave Botfield at meetings of the Forum. In 1998 they had been told that a crossing was imminent. The Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish Council had also requested a crossing. Residents considered that a 'puffin' type crossing would also act as a traffic calming measure.

Wayne Mortiboys undertook to investigate the matter further.

Residents explained that many people, had to cross John Street to use the Community Centre and the shops nearby and children also had to cross the Street to get to and from school.

Appreciation was expressed for the work that the County Council had undertaken in the area. Wayne Mortiboys reported that a push button crossing had been sanctioned near to Hayes Way to make it safer for children walking to school and this was welcomed by the Forum.

It was requested that further information be provided to the next meeting of the Forum on these issues.

12. The position with respect to Bye Laws being introduced to prevent parking on grass verges

The Director of Service Improvement informed the Forum that he would be meeting with Wayne Mortiboys to discuss the options available to them. The Police and County and District Councils already had powers to address this matter, but consideration needed to be given to enforcement and resource issues. It was recognised that a problem existed and when the various options had been considered a consultation process would be carried out. Street Wardens were monitoring the situation.

The Director of Service Improvement would report back to the Forum at their next meeting.

13. Meadow Way Play Area

A local resident informed the Forum that she and her husband lived near to the Meadow Way play area and the vehicle access to it on the Gorsemoor Road and that their lives were being blighted by youths parking their scooters in the entrance and being verbally abusive to them. If they protested to the youths, damage was carried out to their car. It was reported that the play area was also being used as a urinal. She reported that Councillor J. Jillings had visited them, together with the Police and Street Wardens.

Susan Woodward explained that residents had expressed concern previously regarding the play area and asked if it could be reviewed as to its success or otherwise.

The Street Warden reported that the area had been monitored previously and little evidence of misuse had been found, i.e. no broken bottles etc. Further monitoring would be carried out.

It was reported by Councillor A. Bernard, that families came to the park which provided an excellent facility for children. The area had to be an open space and new equipment was installed to replace outdated apparatus. Excellent work had been carried out by the Street Wardens and Police in that area and the Gorsemoor entrance could be looked at again. Councillor D. Todd commented that perhaps the entrance could be ceiled off completely if not needed.

Work had been carried out by the Council to thin out the vegetation where needed and plant additional shrubs etc., to help secure neighbouring properties.

The Chairman reported that Heath Hayes & Wimblebury Parish Council together with the Street Wardens were piloting a youth scheme at Hayes Green Community Centre for those aged between 13-17 years old beginning on 17 September 2009. Initially the scheme would run for four weeks on Thursday evenings and if successful could continue to be held. It was hoped that this scheme would assist in alleviating some of the problems reported.

14. Forward Agenda for Future Meetings

The Chairman informed the Forum that forms were available to be completed for questions to be raised at the next meeting.

15. Dates of Future Meetings

The Chairman reported that the next meetings of the Forum would be held on:-

Wednesday, 25 November 2009

Tuesday, 16 March 2010

CHAIRMAN