

**CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL**  
**NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE**  
**RUGELEY AND BRERETON COMMUNITY FORUM**  
**TUESDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER, 2012 AT 7.00PM**  
**AT COUNCIL CHAMBER, RUGELEY TOWN COUNCIL, TAYLOR'S LANE,**  
**RUGELEY**

PRESENT: Cannock Chase Councillors:

Jones, R. (Chair)  
Johnson, J.P. (Vice)

Ault, Mrs. A.	Lovell, A.
Bennett, C.	Molineux, G.N.
Bottomer, B.H.	
Fisher, P.A.	Other District
Grocott, M.R.	Councillor(s):
	Rowley, J.

Cannock Chase Council Officers:

S. Brown	Chief Executive
K. Lawlor	Head of Environmental Services
S. Partridge	Democratic Services Manager
Mrs. V. Tolliss	Consultation and Engagement Officer

Representatives from the following organisations:

Staffordshire Police	(Chief Insp. C. Ratcliffe) (Insp. C. Ellerton)
Neighbourhood Watch	(Ms. V. Singleton)
Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service	(P. McFarlane, Head of Prevent & Protect)
Staffordshire County Council - Highways	(M. Keeling)
Staffordshire County Council	(SCC Cllr. G. Martin)
Mid-Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust	(R. Courtney-Harris, Medical Director)
England Illegal Money Lending Team	(Nadeem Mahammed, LIAISE Officer)
Town / Parish Councils	

Approximately 15 local residents

## 1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D.N. Davies; A. Dudson; County Councillor R. Easton; a number of Town / Parish Councillors; and some local residents.

## 2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr. M. Grocott declared that he was a Trustee of Rugeley Cricket Club.

## 3. Notes

The notes of the meeting held on 11 June, 2012 were accepted as a correct record.

## 4. Matters Arising (Not Otherwise Covered on the Agenda)

### Item 7. Partial Collapse of Bridge over Brook, Adjacent to Western Springs Road

The Head of Environmental Services read out an update from the Council's Property Services section:

"An inspection has shown there to be a dangerous structure within the Heritage Trail necessitating the closure of a section of the pathway.

A brick arched footbridge/weir is showing serious evidence of structural failure and the remedial work necessary is not minor and it is probable that this part of the trail will be out of use for at least 6 to 9 months.

Attempts to erect temporary fencing with notices have failed as the local youngsters remove and destroy them. Metal palisade fencing was erected on Monday, 3 September and metal warning signs have been made and are due to be bolted to the fencing on Wednesday, 12 September. Three barriers have been erected one on each side of the bridge and a one to prevent access from Hagley Field leading up to the bridge.

This section of the trail gives access to Western Springs Road and the closure means users of the trail cannot get to Western Springs Road as Hagley field is fenced off. There is a gate in the boundary fence that could be used as part of a temporary route but both the gate and access to it are in SCC ownership. The Council's Parks and Open Spaces Manager is in discussion with SCC to secure the granting of permission to put in this alternative access and the erection of temporary signage.

Details of the problem have been supplied so that telephone enquiries can be answered at our call centre and Ward Councillors and Portfolio

Holders informed.

A complaint has been received that youths are gaining access via a damaged boundary fence to the secured off pathway leading to the bridge but we would find it difficult to prevent a determined attempt to gain access to the area although consideration is being given to this.”

A Member commented that:

- Ward Councillors should have been kept informed of the issues as a matter of course.
- On the Rugeley rugby pitch side the fencing was incomplete / holes existed through which youths were gaining access.
- There was no signage advising walkers of an alternative route; in fact, a resident of Bank Top had had walkers knocking on his door asking which way to go as they thought part of his garden was the alternative route.

And suggested that the big double gates adjacent to Hagley Fields be used as an alternative route. (This was done in October, 2012. One gate secured in the open position; one in the closed position. Diversion signage installed when received from the manufacturer.)

Item 9 / 10 (ii) – Public Footpath Between Wolseley Road and Bloody Steps

The Vice Chairman advised that work was being undertaken to improve the state of the footpath. Another Member confirmed that a work party would also be there on 3 and 4 November, 2012.

**5. Question Submitted by Mr. A. Wharton, Local Resident**

“The public were invited to see plans for the regeneration of Rugeley about 3 – 4 years ago. What has happened to the plans; and will the regeneration still take place?”

Mr. Wharton was not present, but a full response had been provided with the agenda, by the Planning Department (reproduced below):

*“As part of the Local Development Plan process to set future planning policy for the District an Area Action Plan (AAP) is being prepared for Rugeley Town Centre. Public consultations on the plan were undertaken in 2008 (Issues and Options), 2009 (Preferred Options) and 2010 (Pre Publication Draft).*

*In moving the AAP forward it has now been combined with the former Core Strategy setting planning policy for the whole District and will be published for further consultation in August 2012. The*

*combined document is now called Local Plan Part 1 and reflects new national policy set out in the recently published National Planning Policy Framework.*

*The AAP aims to regenerate Rugeley's historic town centre and make more of the canalside east of the centre, as well as improving the linkage between the two areas.*

*Some aspects of the plan have already been progressed, including:*

- *Planning approval for a new Tesco store on the former Celcon blockworks site east of the canal. Construction is due to start in Feb/March next year with an opening date in September 2013. Planning obligations required to accompany this development will provide an improved pedestrian route between Leathermill Lane and Rugeley Town Centre, a cycle route along Leathermill Lane, improvements to the canal towpath and some environmental improvement of the town centre,*
- *A partnership scheme established with English Heritage to provide grants for the repair and reinstatement of certain commercial properties in three of the town's conservation areas. Grants have been offered to the first four properties and work is expected to commence shortly,*
- *A feasibility study to assess potential viable uses for the former canal warehouse. The study will be completed later in 2012."*

Members sought specific assurances that the Tesco development would, in fact, be going ahead in 2013. The Chairman advised that he had spoken with the Planning Department, and he had been assured that steps were being taken to address the issues delaying the project, such as an onsite bat colony.

#### **6. Question Submitted by SCC Councillor G. Martin**

"Can Cannock Chase District Council please update me on the erection of the barbed wire fencing around the Cricket Club in Chaseley Road, Rugeley. I have had many complaints from residents living in the area about what they consider an eyesore, and the fact that they were not consulted beforehand."

*Mr. Tony McGovern, Corporate Director, Cannock Chase District Council has provided a written response to Councillor Martin, a copy of which was attached to the agenda.*

The Chairman advised that he had also spoken to the Planning Department for an update. A retrospective planning application was being considered on 12 September, 2012, so it was not considered appropriate for a Planning Officer to attend the meeting.

There was further discussion on the matter and the consensus was that

the fencing was producing far less nuisance than originally anticipated as plants began to establish themselves and grow through it.

Representatives of the Cricket Club also advised that they had purchased several 100's of plants to further disguise and reduce the visual impact of the fence.

**7. Question Submitted by Mrs. P. Edgington, Huntsmans Walk, Rugeley**

- “1. 14, Burnfield Drive, Rugeley. Can something please be done to cut back foliage which now means the public have to walk on the bank to avoid.
2. Stinging nettles. Bottom end Huntsmans Walk to centre path Green Lane playing fields.
3. The Council are still not cutting the grass where the leak was due to Council failure to remove rocks.”

*Officers of the District Council and County Council had provided written responses to the questions which had been included on the agenda to the meeting (reproduced below):*

1. *“Burntfield Drive (Response from SCC Highways) - There are no highway hedges along this section however there is some shrubbery / overhang from properties etc. The area will be inspected and the County's Neighbourhood team will carry out maintenance works where applicable.*
2. *Huntsmans Walk / Green Lane (Response from CCDC Parks & Open Spaces) – This work has now been done.*
3. *Green Lane Playing Fields (Response from CCDC Parks & Open Spaces) – The matter is still under investigation by South Staffs Water and so no reinstatement has occurred; hence the Council is unable to cut the grass. Officers have met them (SSW) on site and are awaiting determination of where the feed is in the ground in order that it can be capped off.”*

The County Council had also advised that cases, such as 1 or 2, above, could be reported directly to the Highways Hotline in the first instance on 0300 111 0820, where the resident would be given a reference number and an Inspector would investigate.

In respect of Q.3, the Chairman advised that his nephew was a senior manager at South Staffs. Water, and he would ask him to intervene in the matter.

## **8. Community Safety Partnership Update**

Representatives of the Community Safety Partnership from Cannock Chase Council; Cannock Chase Local Policing Team; and the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service representative(s) provided an update on Partnership activities and answered questions from the public.

## **9. Mid-Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust**

Mr. Robert Courteney-Harris, Medical Director, attended to answer questions and provide an update on Trust related matters.

In response to questions, Mr. Courteney-Harris advised that the Trust Board had met the previous week. The Board was of the opinion that the majority of conditions required to be met to enable overnight (re)opening of A & E at Stafford Hospital had been met. However, a final sign-off would require the support of the Clinical Commissioning Group, an announcement on which would be made on Wednesday, 12 September, 2012.

It was stressed that this was not linked to the announcement that day that Monitor, the health service watchdog, was to appoint independent experts to look at long-term solutions for patients using Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust. Financial advisors, accountants, administrative and legal service firms would form part of the team recommending how clinical care services could be made sustainable, possibly through a solvent restructuring of the trust or putting it in special administration. A final report would be delivered to Monitor in spring 2013.

Mr. Courteney-Harris confirmed that he and his colleagues had no wish or intention of overseeing the closure of the Hospital and were, in fact, committed to providing as many services as it was properly able to do so at Stafford.

Whilst he was not in a position to second guess the outcome of the Stafford Hospital Inquiry, he said that he did not believe it would impact unduly on the services provided.

## **10. Illegal Money Lending**

Nadeem Mahammed, LIAISE Officer, England Illegal Money Lending Team, gave a presentation to raise awareness of the issues associated with illegal / unregulated money lending.

## **11. Questions for Staffordshire County Council (Highways)**

There were no Officers in attendance from the County Council, however, a written response had been provided to the question

submitted by Cllr. Bottomer, a copy of which had been included on the agenda for the meeting.

Councillor Bottomer advised that he was not satisfied with the answer given. There were over 160,000 drains in Staffordshire and only 6 crews of gully cleaners.

The Chairman said that wished to insist on attendance at the next Forum by a County Council representative to answer Highways related questions.

## **12. Questions for Staffordshire Police**

Vehicles Parked on Kerb Between 36 and 46, Green Lane – A Member expressed concern that vehicles parking on the kerb / verge (near the junction with Frank McGhie Close?) were blocking the view of vehicles turning. The concerns were twofold: possible illegal parking (double yellow lines); (ii) potential accident.

The Head of Environmental Services advised that the Council only has responsibility for Civic Parking Enforcement where a Road Traffic Order applies.

The Police advised that they can only act where there is an obstruction on the highway.

Leathermill Lane Canal Bridge – A Member said she understood that the bridge was meant to be for access only, but there appeared to be a high volume of vehicles – some of them quite large – using it.

## **13. Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Services**

No questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting for the Fire and Rescue Services, consequently no representative had been sent to the meeting.

No other matters were raised for referral back to the Fire and Rescue Service.

## **14. Any Other Business**

No other matters were raised.

## **15. Next Meeting**

Monday, 26 November, 2012. Venue to be confirmed, but the Chair advised he would like to take the Forum “on the road”, possibly to Brereton.

## **16. Forward Agenda for Future Meetings**

The Chairman reminded those present that pro formas were attached to

their agendas for questions / items to be raised at the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm.

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CHAIRMAN