

Notes of: WHITWORTH AREA FORUM

Venue: Whitworth Community High School

Date of Meeting 4th September 2006

Present: Councillor D Barnes (in the Chair)
Councillor A Neal
Inspector Dave Shepherd, Lancashire Constabulary
Linda Fisher, Head of Legal & Democratic Services, RBC
Jenni Cook, Committee Officer, RBC
Jo Jackson, Lancashire County Council Partnership
Martin Proffitt, Groundwork Rossendale

Also Present: Approximately 20 members of the Public and Press

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed members of the public to the meeting and asked the Council Officers and other representatives present introduced themselves.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from County Councillor Serridge, Councillor H Steen, Councillor L Barnes and Catherine Taylor

3. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 5TH JUNE 2006

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a correct record.

Action Sheet:

- The Action Sheet had been attached to the Agenda as Appendix B in response to a request from a member of the public at the June Forum.
- It was noted that a representative from Lancashire County Council was present and would take any comments and actions back to the relevant department.
- Councillor Neal confirmed that he had clarified the ownership of the sale of land at Edward Street to the individual concerned.

4. POLICE ISSUES

Inspector Shepherd provided an update on crime statistics and noted that crime as a whole was reduced across the Borough with 2242 crimes reported (2006 figures), when compared with 2695 crimes (2005 figures), a reduction of 453 when compared with figures at this time last year.

Inspector Shepherd stated that there had been a small increase in household burglaries in the Healey and Whitworth/Facit and Shawforth area and urged all residents to lock their doors in the summer months to deter burglars and to consider installation of a house alarm, or an alarm box

Questions from the Public:

- Inspector Shepherd was asked to confirm the Rushcart route for the coming weekend in view of the fact that Cowm Park Way was being resurfaced. It was confirmed that only the top level of the road would be taken off and that the route would remain unaltered.
- A member of the public asked what was being done in respect of cars racing up and down Market Street, particularly in between the speed cameras and it was noted that this was now happening at all times of the day, not just in the early mornings as previously reported. Inspector Shepherd agreed to report the issue and stated that the mobile camera could be used in between the speed cameras, however this had attracted criticism in the past. Inspector Shepherd also suggested that the Lancashire County Council Road Safety Partnership could investigate traffic calming measures.

Amberwatch Update:

Dave Jackson, the Whitworth Town Clerk, updated the Forum on progress with Amberwatch. It was confirmed that it was hoped the installation would be completed by the end of September 2006.

5. NEAT TEAM UPDATE

The Chair updated the Forum on behalf of the NEAT Officer as follows:

Fly Tipping & Illegal Deposit of Waste:

Problems were being experienced in respect of fly tipping and illegal collection of waste. All residents were urged to check the credentials of anyone offering to collect waste from them and the NEAT Officer reminded the Forum that you could be prosecuted if your waste was found disposed of illegally.

Spring Mill:

The owner of the site had been served with a notice and the site had been cleared and secured. However there was still a problem with fly tipping on a daily basis which was being addressed.

Linda Fisher added that the proposed development on the site was subject to a Section 106 Agreement which would be signed in the next few weeks and from there, the developer would have 3 years in which to submit a reserved matters application.

A member of the public asked for it to be noted that the developers had blocked off the bridleway running through the site. Linda Fisher agreed to take this up with the County Council.

A further query was raised about the possibility of blocking off access to the Spring Mill site at the end of the estate. It was stated that this was not possible and could lead to legal action.

Contaminated Bins:

It was noted that there were a number of blue bins in the Whitworth area which had been contaminated with household waste. Contaminated blue bins were unable to be emptied with either the blue or green bins and a special collection would have to be made. The Forum was reminded of what items could be put into the blue bins.

6. WHITWORTH CEMETERY

The Forum discussed the past and current situation with respect to Whitworth Cemetery and the problems that had been experienced in respect of opening and closing of the gates, anti social behaviour and the condition of the chapel.

Several options were discussed and it was agreed by all present that there was no easy solution, however it was essential the cemetery remained accessible to relatives.

Linda Fisher confirmed that a condition survey had been carried out and working totalling £35,000 had been identified and would be incorporated into a rolling programme of works over the next 5 years. She further confirmed that she was due to meet with the Director of Resources and would raise this issue as a priority.

Public comments included:

- People were not using the chapel for funerals due to its deteriorating condition.
- The cobbled area was the main danger in terms of potential accidents and should be included within repairs.
- Would central heating be included within the repairs?
- Have condition surveys been carried out for all the cemetery buildings?
- Would consultation be carried out with undertakers and the general public?

Linda Fisher agreed to take these comments forward to the Director of Resources and to keep the Area Forum updated on progress. She stated that ordinarily consultation would not be carried out in this instance, however she would investigate this and respond to the member of public directly.

The issue of access and anti social behaviour was discussed and the following suggestions were put forward:

1. Installation of CCTV cameras
2. Display CCTV signage to deter youths
3. Close gates but do not lock them to create a visual barrier (however it was noted that the gates were extremely heavy to open and close)

It was agreed that the suggestions above would be forwarded to the Head of Service for Street Scene and Liveability and that the Forum would be updated on any progress and decisions made.

7. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

- 7.1 A member of the public had submitted a question prior to the Forum in respect of parking at the end of Quarry Street, Shawforth. The issue raised concerned a safety issue with people parking outside the chippy and causing restricted views to drivers exiting Quarry Street. Several accidents had been noted. Lancashire County Council had responded that the matter would be investigated and an update would be given to the next Area Forum.
- 7.2 There had been an issue with illegal dumping of tyres around the Old Lane area and it was established that the tyres had been moved to several locations nearby. All present were urged to report incidents such as this to the NEAT Officer.

- 7.3 Lancashire Highways were asked to investigate the flooding around the Tonacliffe Road and Market Street area. A member of the public stated that United Utilities had confirmed it was not a water main. Jo Jackson agreed to take this matter back to LCC Highways.
- 7.4 A member of the public outlined an issue and difference of opinion regarding ownership of the road at Peel Terrace. Linda Fisher agreed to pursue this matter.
- 7.5 There was an issue with vermin to the rear of Peel Terrace. It was agreed that Environmental Health would be informed immediately.
- 7.6 It was noted that a culvert/drain installed around the Old Railway Track in Facit required clearing of debris and this would be reported to the NEAT Team.
- 7.7 Officers were asked to confirm when the damaged boundary wall of Healey Dell/Shawclough would be repaired. Linda Fisher confirmed that the work had been tendered out and that was due to be completed by the end of September 2006.
- 7.8 It was noted there was a problem with fly tipping on Daniel Street. It was agreed that this information would be passed on to the NEAT Team, however the Chair asked the complainant to consider taking photographs to aid with any potential prosecution. Linda Fisher agreed to investigate this matter.
- 7.9 It was noted that a skip used to be provided at the end of Cowm Park Way and a member of the public enquired whether this could be reinstated. The Chair stated that the new system of HIT Squads worked much better as skips encouraged more tipping.
- 7.10 Councillor Neal informed the Forum that the consultation period in respect of the 20mph restriction at Hall Street and Masseycroft was about to be completed and that progress could be expected.
- 7.11 A member of the public asked that County Councillor Serridge be reminded about a request in respect of a 15 foot drop near the children's play area on Cowm Park Way North. Jo Jackson agreed to chase this up.
- 7.12 It was noted that all matters raised that related to County would be passed to the LCC Liaison Officer with a request to raise these issues at Lancashire Local Meetings.

8. GROUNDWORK ROSSENDALE

- 8.1 Martin Proffitt of Groundwork Rossendale gave a short presentation in respect of the Open Spaces Strategies that Groundwork were working on for Rossendale Borough Council and asked all present to complete and post back a questionnaire. He confirmed that he hoped to return to the Forum in January to provide a more comprehensive update.

The meeting commenced at 7pm and closed at 8.30pm