

PELSALL AND RUSHALL LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP

held on Monday 30 October 2006 at 6.00 pm

**at Education Development Centre, Pelsall Lane, Rushall,
Walsall**

Present

Councillor Catherine Micklewright (Chairman)
Inspector Greg Bates
Mr Ron Carpenter
Councillor Al Griffiths
Mrs Margaret Hayes
Mr Robert Hughes
Ms Rachael Humphreys
Councillor Marco Longhi
Mr Anthony Orlick
Councillor Garry Perry
Mr John Ree
Mr James Thomas
Councillor Rachael Walker

In attendance:

Lesley Jones
Parveen Sangha
James Walsh

In the absence of the Chairman, members of the LNP introduced themselves to the meeting. The meeting was informed that the Chairman had been delayed but that she was on her way to the meeting.

155/06

Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf on Mrs Anne Rice and Lorraine Randell of the Youth Service.

156/06

Election of Vice Chairman (2)

Resolved

- (1) That Mr Rob Hughes be appointed Vice Chairman from Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership nominated partners.
- (2) That Mr John Ree be appointed Vice Chairman from the Locally Appointed Partners.

Mr Rob Hughes (Vice Chairman) in the Chair.

157/06

Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Pelsall and Rushall Local Neighbourhood Partnership held on 5 September 2006, a copy having been previously circulated to each member of the Partnership, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

158/06

Update on items from Last Meeting

Councillor Perry reported on the progress of the Petitions he had submitted to the last meeting.

With regard to the request for the resurfacing of Wolverhampton Road, Pelsall from local residents, Councillor Perry said that he had received a response from the Executive Director and would be writing to local residents to inform them of the contents of the response.

In respect of the request by the residents of St David's Close, Pelsall for tidying up of the rear garage area and additional fencing to provide extra security at the rear of St Paul's Crescent, Councillor Perry said that a site meeting had been held with residents two weeks ago and a quotation for the cost of the additional security fencing had been submitted to Council Officers for approval.

Councillor Perry referred to the request by the residents of Avon Crescent, Pelsall, for improvements to enhance the area, in particular the flats, including replacing missing fence panels, tree pruning, low level fencing in communal area and general street cleaning. He said that Walsall Housing Group and the Council Street Pride Team would be working with residents to tackle these problems. This would include an environmental scheme for the site and rubbish clearance.

Councillor Longhi referred to the Public Forum at the last meeting when local residents had voiced their concerns in respect of anti-social behaviour in the Cartbridge Lane area of Rushall. He said that these issues had been discussed at length at previous meetings of the former Brownhills/Aldridge District Committee and this had been referred to at the last meeting. He asked that copies of these minutes from February 2002 be made available to the local residents who had raised concerns at the last meeting.

The Neighbourhood Partnership Team Officer (Parveen Sangha) said that this issue had also been discussed at the Community Action Group meeting on 18 September 2006 and was referred to at agenda item 12.

159/06

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

160/06

Petitions

Councillor Perry presented the following Petitions:-

1. Traffic problems at Allens Lane junction and Goscote Road, Heath End, Pelsall

Heath End Residents Association was requesting either a raised crossing or traffic calming measures (possibly a speed cushion, at or near the junction) due to the heavy amount of traffic using this route from Pelsall Village via Commonside, to avoid rush hour traffic to and from Walsall, on Walsall Road, Pelsall.

Councillor Perry advised the meeting that a proposal to install speed cameras along Walsall Road, Pelsall was presently under discussion.

2. Pedestrian crossing by the Finger Post traffic lights Wolverhampton Road, Pelsall.

Local residents were requesting the construction of a pedestrian crossing on Wolverhampton Road, Pelsall, near the junction with Abbey Drive and Charles Crescent, Pelsall.

Both Councillor Longhi and Councillor Perry spoke of their long standing campaign to have safer crossing areas created and suitable measures to be taken to reduce the speed of traffic along this road whose many users included heavy lorries travelling from the Aldridge industrial estate to Wolverhampton.

3. Campaign for Alcohol Free Designation Zones in Pelsall

Local residents had signed a petition supporting the creation of Alcohol Free Designation Zones in Pelsall.

Councillor Perry referred, in particular, to Pelsall “hot spots” such as Commonside, the Heath End area, North Common, the area behind the public toilets in Norton Road and the Memorial Gardens in Church Road where residents had suffered continuing alcohol related problems and anti -social behaviour.

Resolved

That the petitions be received and noted and forwarded by the LNP to the relevant officers for action and that progress reports on all the petitions be submitted to the next meeting.

161/06

Public Forum

Violation of Common Land, North Common

Mrs Maureen Payton, Chair of Friends of Pelsall Common, said that a group of travellers had moved on to Huddocks Moor farmland in Pelsall. She said that the land actually came within the Staffordshire boundary but could only be accessed by driving across North Common, Pelsall. When this had happened previously it had taken many years to resolve this problem and the travellers had now erected a gate in an attempt to access this piece of land. Mrs Payton said this was an area of Special Scientific Interest which needed protection and she requested that action be taken by the Council to resolve this matter.

Proposed Pedestrian Crossing by Finger Post, Wolverhampton Road, Pelsall.

Mrs Maureen Payton of Wolverhampton Road, Pelsall referred to the petition which had been submitted to the meeting requesting approval for the construction of a pedestrian crossing on Wolverhampton Road, Pelsall. She suggested that rather than constructing a crossing near the junction with Abbey Drive and Charles Crescent, which she believed would create additional problems, it would be preferable to seek approval to install a pedestrian phased crossing at this junction, similar to that constructed in Selmans Hill, Bloxwich. She believed that this would enable pedestrians, including the elderly who had particular difficulty, to cross Wolverhampton Road in safety.

Slacky Lane, Pelsall and the Regeneration of Goscote Valley

Mr Bob Parker of Heath End Residents Association was concerned about the impact of the Goscote Valley Regeneration Scheme on Slacky Lane and, in particular, the residents of the Allens Lane area of Pelsall. He also reported that the recently installed wooden walk-in gate in the proximity of the hump back bridge in Slacky Lane had been vandalised within a week of its installation.

Councillor Perry said that there had been a presentation on the Goscote Valley Regeneration Scheme to Blakenall and Bloxwich LNP. He agreed that although it was outside the LNP area, it would have an impact on Pelsall residents as it would affect the whole of the corridor at the rear of Livingstone Road and the back of the Goscote Hospital site. He understood that a mix of housing and open space and a new hospice on the Goscote Hospital site was planned. Local residents were concerned to see the open space retained. He believed it was imperative for Pelsall and Rushall LNP to be involved in the proposals for this area. He suggested that officers be requested to make the same presentation on the Goscote Valley Regeneration Scheme to a future meeting of Pelsall and Rushall LNP. There was general support for this proposal.

Councillor Longhi referred to the problems reported to the last meeting about fly tipping in Slacky Lane. He said that it was important for everyone to report these incidents to the Council. He understood that action was being taken by the Council against the owner of a vehicle who had been caught fly tipping in Slacky Lane, and he thanked Mr Parker and other residents for reporting these problems to the LNP.

Anti-Social Behaviour in Cartbridge Lane, Rushall

Mr Kevin O'Connell of Cartbridge Lane, Rushall reported that the rubbish which had been dumped in Cartbridge Lane had been cleared the previous week but someone had set fire to hay which has been left in the field. He said that there was still a problem with briar bushes encroaching on the pathway in Cartbridge Lane South.

Mr O'Connell said that he also wished to report that local residents were still being troubled by nuisance and anti-social behaviour from gangs of children, youths and adults riding uninsured and untaxed off road trial bikes on the Council- owned land backing on to Cartbridge Lane, Rushall. He said that on Sundays in particular there was often noise and nuisance from 9 o'clock in the morning until late in the evening.

Mrs Amanda Ryder of Pelsall Homewatch said that police officers had had some success in sorting out the problem of motor bikes in Goscote Valley over the summer months.

Mr Jim Thomas said that there were similar problems with trial bikes and their riders on Pelsall North Common and he had been driven at by one of the riders whilst walking his dog on the Common.

Inspector Bates said that following the last Pelsall LNP meeting and requests for action to be taken, he and the Neighbourhood Police Teams had looked into this matter. He said the LNP area was covered by H1 and H2 Police Divisions. The land in question came under H1. Several operations had been mounted against motor bike riders but unfortunately the police had limited resources to chase the riders and the police motor cyclists had to be trained officers. He said that from the minutes of the last meeting he was aware that an operation was pending in the Cartbridge Lane area but he was unsure whether this had gone ahead.

Inspector Bates said that one way to get results would be if residents were willing to make statements to the police. Many of the motor bikes were unregistered and were therefore not known through the DVLA. Another problem was that if the police were successful in taking bikes off the offenders, they often just went out and bought another one.

Mr Thomas said that the problem with off-road motor bikes in Cartbridge Lane had been brought to the LNP on two previous occasions and also to the Community Action Group meetings. He queried why the police could not apprehend the culprits on the main road before they reached the land in Cartbridge Lane. He said the problem had worsened over the last few months and local residents needed to know that something would be done about this.

Inspector Bates said that he sympathised with local residents but the police had to plan their operations. They also had to take into account health and safety implications. The police were subject to policing priorities and, for example, instances of robbery and burglary had to take priority over problems with off-road motor bikes. He went on to say, however, that he would take away from the meeting the concerns of local residents, although an immediate solution could not be promised. He also said that he would liaise with officers of H1 and H2 Divisions to see how they could work together to reduce these problems.

Councillor Walker said that the local residents, including Mr O'Connell, had given evidence of the problems that local residents were experiencing, particularly on weekends, from the off-road motor cyclists. She asked if it were not possible for the police to make a presence in the area once in a while just to let bikers know that they were being observed.

Councillor Perry said that it had to be recognised that this was not just a police problem. Inspector Bates had spoken about the limited resources of H1 and H2 Divisions but everything that had been reported in the minutes of the Brownhills and Aldridge District Committee in 2002 was happening again. He said that the District Committee had taken a number of actions to help solve this problem at that time. Local residents found themselves in a dreadful situation and he believed it would take similar action to sort this matter out again. He suggested that working through the Community Action Groups, the LNP repeat the process previously followed by the District Committee. This involved the Council taking joint action in partnership with the police, local residents and other agencies such as the New Deal Board to resolve these problems satisfactorily.

Mr John Ree said that this matter had been discussed at the last Community Action Group meeting. He said that local residents were encouraged to report incidents to the police. However, when he had reported motor bikes being ridden illegally on the Manor Farm Association site, on one occasion at 3 o'clock in the morning, the police had not responded. He said that this was a very serious matter which concerned local residents greatly as it appeared that the riders had no respect for the law. The police did not consider this high on their list of priorities, but he was concerned that someone could get hurt or even killed if no action were taken in this respect.

As a point of information Inspector Bates said that each report of an incident by members of the public was logged at the Police Station. If local residents rang the police they should ask for a log number as this would enable the police to get a true picture as to what was happening and enable them to make better use of their resources. He also said that each Police station had a Duty Inspector and if local residents had a problem in logging reports of incidents then this should be reported to the Duty Inspector. He said that if residents would supply him with dates and times of when they had reported incidents, he would investigate these matters further.

163/06

Dispersal Order at Education Development Centre, Pelsall Lane, Rushall

Mr Phil Hall of Pelsall Lane, Rushall said the Anti-Dispersal Order had worked and had stopped young people who had been causing the problems previously, from congregating in the area. He was concerned however, what would happen when the Dispersal Order expired in December 2006.

The LNP requested that all matters raised in Public Forum be investigated further with the relevant Council Officers and other service area representatives and that the results of these investigations be reported back to the LNP.

164/06

Increasing Life Expectancy

A presentation was made by the LNP, tPCT representative, Rachael Humphreys, the Head of Health Promotion.

Ms Humphreys set out the background to the Increasing Life Expectancy by Reducing Inequalities Project which had been commissioned by Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership in 2005. The aim of the project was to reduce the inequalities in health outcomes by 10% as measured by infant mortality and life expectancy at birth in Walsall by 2010. Ms Humphreys said that the findings of the project had identified variations in life expectancy between wards. The top five indicators were income, health, employment, access to own transport and crime and safety.

In respect of Hatherton and Rushall Ward the key issues identified were actions needed to prevent falls, including offering home safety checks to all householders over the age of 70 years plus. With regard to Pelsall Ward, the key issues identified were maternal and child health and management of long term conditions.

In conclusion, Ms Humphreys spoke of the way forward and the need to ensure these priorities were reflected within Pelsall, Rushall and Shelfield LNP pledges and for the LNP to ask for updates in line with the project milestones. To publicise the project a number of stakeholder events were planned in the Autumn to help local people see what were the most important needs in their neighbourhood and to seek their views on current health priorities. Ms Humphreys said that she hoped the LNP would be represented at the stakeholder events and she would be able to supply anyone interested with more information.

Following the presentation, Ms Humphreys was questioned by Partnership members and members of the public.

Mr Rob Hughes said that it was important for LNP members themselves to be involved in actions to bring about health improvements in the LNP area.

There was general support for this view and it was agreed that members bring ideas and proposals to the next Health and People Community Action Group meeting on 19 December 2006 in order to move the health priorities forward.

Councillor Perry referred to the Expert Patient programme, of Walsall Teaching Primary Care Trust and requested that Louise Mabley of the tPCT be asked to make a presentation to a future meeting of the LNP.

Resolved

The LNP agreed:-

- (1) To note the presentation and health priorities identified in the project.;
- (2) To invite Louise Mabley of the tPCT to make a presentation to a future meeting of the LNP on the Expert Patient Programme.

165/06

Proposed Pelsall Medical Centre

A briefing was given by Councillor Gary Perry and Councillor Marco Longhi on progress to date on this issue.

Councillor Longhi advised the meeting that the PCT Strategic Services Development Plan included proposals for a Pelsall Medical Centre with an opening date of 2010 but that he and other campaigners were working to bring the date forward.

Councillor Perry said that there was a proposal for a combined new library and medical centre on the present Pelsall library site. There was a great need to extend medical services in Pelsall as it had the fourth worst rate of GP per population. As well as increasing the numbers of GPs in the area, there was a need for a local district nursing team to serve the community. Unfortunately the £10 million pound budget reduction made to the PTC budget in Walsall in order to bail out failing health authorities in the country had impacted on initiatives planned in the borough but the PCT was committed to providing a medical centre in Pelsall.

In congratulating Councillor Perry and Councillor Longhi on their campaign, the Chairman urged Pelsall residents to sign the petition circulating in Pelsall in support of a medical centre.

166/06

LNP Funding

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Parveen Sangha of the Neighbourhood Partnership Team, referred to progress on active projects in the Pelsall and Rushall LNP area, including the landscape feature on Ryders Hayes Lane/ Norton Road, the dog fouling awareness campaign and the greenhouse project for local primary schools. She said that £441.40 remained to be spent from the resource allocation from 2005/6. The next Safer and Stronger Community Action Group meeting would explore the use of the £10,000 that had been allocated for 2006/7 and she urged as many people as possible to attend the next meeting on 20 November 2006 to explore potential projects.

Councillor Perry introduced local resident, Mr Chris Morgan to the meeting. Chris was campaigning for resurfacing work to be carried out on the tennis courts in Railswood Drive, Pelsall. He represented a core group who used the courts on a regular basis. Councillor Perry said that he was seeking the support of the LNP to help Chris Morgan's campaign through the use of the Local Area Agreement Green Spaces funding.

Mr Morgan said that health problems had been referred to earlier in the meeting. There had been a lot of press coverage about obesity problems of young people. He believed that if the tennis courts could be resurfaced and facilities improved for young people in the area then this would encourage others to make use of them.

Following further discussion it was agreed that the LNP support Chris Morgan in his campaign.

Resolved

The LNP agreed:-

- (1) To note the progress on the projects outlined in the report to date;
- (2) To support Pelsall resident Chris Morgan's campaign for resurfacing work to be carried out on the tennis courts in Railswood Drive, Pelsall through the Local Area Agreement Green Spaces funding.

167/06

Updates on Community Action Groups

The respective Chairmen of the Safe and Stronger Community Action Group and the Health and People Action Group, Councillor Perry and Mr John Ree gave update reports on the recent meetings. Mr Ree referred to a request for two nominations for appointment to Walsall Hospitals Foundation Trust Stakeholders Reference Group. He said that this would be considered at the next Community Action Group meeting. He asked for anyone interested in being appointed to contact either himself or Parveen Sangha before 6 December 2006.

Anyone having specific issues for inclusion on the Safer and Stronger CAG meeting agenda on 20 November 2006 was asked to contact Parveen Sangha at the Neighbourhood Partnership Office.

Resolved

The LNP agreed:-

- (1) To continue to attend Community Action Group meeting.
- (2) To note the progress of the Community Action Groups outlined in the report.

168/06

Proposed Limited Waiting in High Street, Pelsall

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Resolved

The LNP agree

- (1) To note the contents of the report, including proposals to consult with the various High Street business people on the proposals.
- (2) To request regeneration officers to put forward proposals for the improved utilisation of Pelsall village centre and for regenerating trading conditions in Pelsall village.

169/06

Update on Various Issues Raised in Public Forum

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

The LNP was informed that Mr David Donaldson, General Manager, Travel West Midlands, had agreed to attend the next LNP meeting on 18 December 2006 to report on the results of the survey conducted in the area. This was in response to requests to re-instate the 158 Travel West Midlands bus service through Pelsall and High Heath.

Resolved

The LNP agreed to:

- (1) Note the contents of the report;
- (2) To request Councillor Andrew, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Enterprise, to attend a future LNP meeting and to give a briefing update on Walsall Town Centre's Regeneration.

Termination of Meeting

The meeting terminated at 8.30 pm.

Chairman

Date: