

PELSALL AND RUSHALL LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP

Monday 9 January 2006 at 6.00 pm

at Education Development Control, Pelsall Lane, Rushall, Walsall

Present

Councillor Al Griffiths (Chairman)
Councillor Clive Ault
Mr. Ron Carpenter
Mrs Margaret Hayes
Mr. Robert Hughes
Ms. Rachael Humphreys
Detective Inspector Johal
Mr. Neil Jones
Councillor Marco Longhi
Mrs Isabel Mason
Councillor Catherine Micklewright
Mr. Colin Payton
Councillor Garry Perry
Mr. John Ree
Ms. Donna Ricketts
Mr. James Thomas
Councillor Rachel Walker
Inspector Williams

In attendance:

Aliyaah Baines
Julie Ball
Mr. Keith Stone

94/06.

Introductions

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked each member of the LNP to introduce themselves to the meeting.

95/06.

Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Mrs Ann Rice and Mr. Jack Ashley.

96/06. **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Pelsall and Rushall Local Neighbourhood Partnership held on 10 October 2005, a copy having previously been circulated to each member of the Partnership, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the addition of Mrs Isabel Mason in the list of apologies.

97/06 **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest but Councillors Micklewright and Ault advised the Chairman that they would leave the meeting if any matter relating to planning issues were discussed as they were members of the Development Control Committee.

Councillors Micklewright and Ault left the meeting

98/06. **Petitions**

Disused Railway Line between Goscote, Station Road, Pelsall and Brownhills

A petition objecting to the proposed development of the disused railway line between Pelsall and Brownhills was submitted on behalf of residents of Fairburn Crescent and Excelsior Grove, Pelsall by Councillor Garry Perry.

Resolved

That the petition be received and noted and that it be referred to the relevant executive director/assistant director for consideration and action, as appropriate; progress of such action to be reported back to the LNP.

Councillor Mrs Micklewright and Councillor Ault returned to the meeting.

99/06. **Contacts with the local business community**

A presentation was made by Mr. Keith Stanley, Manager of Walsall Chamber of Commerce and Head of Development for Business Parks.

In introducing Mr. Stanley to the meeting, the Chairman said that the LNP had spoken in the past of its wish to involve the local business community in the work of the LNP as they considered them to be a vital section of the community.

Mr. Stanley spoke of the role of the Chamber of Commerce both in the local community and in Walsall as a whole. He said that the Chamber was keen to foster involvement with the Strategic Walsall Borough Partnership and the Local Neighbourhood Partnerships in order to encourage economic development and help business prosper in the borough. He said that there were businesses in the LNP area who wished to become more involved. Part of his job was to liaise with Local Government and act as an intermediary to find ways where business could contribute to the work of the local community.

Following the presentation, Mr. Stanley answered questions from LNP members and members of the public on how the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses could become more involved in the work of the LNP.

In thanking Mr. Stanley for his presentation for attending the meeting, the Chairman invited him, on behalf of the LNP to attend a future meeting to report on progress.

100/06. **Gateways project**

A presentation was made by Mr. Glenn Buglass and Mr. Bruno Edwards of the Community Arts Team.

Mr. Bugless said that this was a follow up from the presentation made to the LNP in July 2005. As a result of that meeting and meetings with LNP members and local residents, a mock-up of a Gateways sign had been prepared showing the illustrated themes for Pelsall that it was intended to use on the sign. The sign would be located on the boundary with Staffordshire on Norton Road, Pelsall.

During the discussions which followed, the following points were raised:-

- Pelsall was the Rose Village but the illustration showed begonias not roses;
- Concern was expressed as to the suitability of using photo images of actual people;
- The pool on Pelsall Common, reference to Pelsall's mining links and Pelsall Cenotaph were also suggested as suitable photographic images.

In answer to points raised, it was noted by the LNP that gateway signs for routes through Shelfield and Rushall would be considered in future phases of the project.

Following further discussion it was:-

Resolved

That agreement be given in principle to the location of a boundary gateway sign on Norton Road, Pelsall subject to changes to the illustrated themes as suggested at the meeting.

101/06. **Partnership plan – Feedback from task group meetings**

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Resolved

- (1) That LNP members continue in attendance at workshop meetings;
- (2) That individual LNP members encourage wider participation from community members within the task groups;
- (3) That the dates of future task group meetings, as set out in the report be noted.

102/06. **Funding priorities for action**

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Julie Ball of the Local Neighbourhood Partnership reported on progress of funding priorities in the LNP area. She said that a further project which was being investigated was the encroachment of cars and vans on land in Ryders Hayes Lane. The possibility of installing barriers to prevent this was being investigated.

Councillor Mrs Micklewright asked whether the litter bins installed in Stubbers Green could be moved closer to the pool. Ms. Ball said that she would contact Mrs Micklewright about this matter.

Mrs Mason enquired about the progress of the detached youth worker project in Rushall.

Lorraine Randell of Youth Services said that a detached youth worker would be employed in Rushall hopefully from towards the end of the following week. Donna Ricketts was the youth worker covering Shelfield and mobiles were available for the use of youth workers in other parts of the LNP area. She also referred to the drug awareness programme involving young people and said that it was planned to start this the following week.

Councillor Longhi referred to the landscape feature project and said that he would like to see something that reflected the work of Sister Dora in the Pelsall mining disaster. He hoped that residents in the immediate area could be consulted about this and that it could be located adjacent to Pelsall common.

Julie Ball said that an arts feature had been suggested and that there would be local consultation on this. She hoped that the community arts team would be involved and this would be discussed at the task group meeting before the next LNP meeting.

Councillor Perry said that he was pleased to report that he had received confirmation that day that work on the new play area at High Heath park would begin next week. He also reported that fencing at Pelsall Community Centre had been installed and said that this had been partly funded by Leisure Services. He thanked Walsall Housing Group for fencing off land at the rear of Pelsall Library and Townfold which had caused considerable problems to local residents from those involved in anti-social behaviour.

The Chairman reported that the take up of local business and shop keepers for the Christmas tree holders had been 90%. Because they had been able to purchase the holders at a cheaper price, it had been possible to also supply Christmas trees through a local nursery free of charge. He said that he hoped that the holders would be used for hanging baskets during the summer months.

Councillor Walker queried whether all of the funding had been allocated for projects.

In reply, Julie Ball said that a small balance remained and the LNP team would be writing to members with information on this. This would also be discussed further at the meeting of the task group on 12 January 2006.

Resolved

- (1) That LNP members note progress to date on funding priorities;
- (2) That progress be reviewed at the next meeting.

103/06.

Supporting Neighbourhood Policing

A briefing was given by Councillor Garry Perry with the support of Inspector Williams and Detective Inspector Johal.

Councillor Perry said that there had been press coverage in recent weeks about the rise of crime in the Pelsall. He had been involved in supporting activities for young people in the area as a way of tackling anti-social behaviour but the problem was not just a lack of facilities for young people. He also wished to stress, however, that it was not just young people who were involved in crime.

Councillor Perry referred to the meeting he and Richard Shepherd MP had attended with Inspector Williams and Inspector Munro, where they had expressed the need for a more visible policing presence on the ground. He said that they had been encouraged from this meeting about the new neighbourhood policing teams that would be introduced in local communities and he believed this new police strategy would go a long way to allaying the fears of the local community.

Inspector Williams said that he had spent the past three months working on the new neighbourhood policing model. Neighbourhood policing was about the local community having access to police and support officers and each neighbourhood area would be policed by dedicated staff under the supervision of a neighbourhood policing team sergeant. There would be a dedicated team working in Pelsall and in Sheffield with a minimum of five staff. There would also be a number of community support officers and police specials.

Inspector Williams said the ethos of the scheme was to win hearts and minds and work with the local community to prevent anti-social behaviour and crime. He would be the neighbourhood police inspector and there would be a named point of access for local residents to contact the neighbourhood policing team. It was intended to establish neighbourhood police teams for the long term to work with local people in improving neighbourhood conditions and problems of crime and disorder. The neighbourhood team would have bases in all of the neighbourhoods where they could be contacted on a daily basis.

Inspector Williams was then questioned by LNP members and members of the general public. There was unanimous support for the new neighbourhood policing model from all those present.

In thanking Inspector Williams for attending the meeting, the Chairman said that the crime task group meeting would be held on Thursday 12 January 2006, at 6.00 pm at Rushall Community Centre. It was agreed that the issue of neighbourhood policing be discussed further at this meeting.

Councillors Micklewright and Ault left the meeting.

104/06.

Standing together to improve our neighbourhoods

A briefing was given by Councillor Garry Perry.

Councillor Perry spoke of his concern about the property 52 Highfield Road North which he said was one of the worst hit sites for vandalism he had seen in his eight years representing the Ward. He said that he had been called out by neighbours to the site on New Years Eve after gas canisters had been exploded there. The property was on the edge of Pelsall North Common and in its former years was a well maintained house with lawns and flower beds. The property had been sold to a development company whose application to build four properties on the site had been turned down. Since then it had been targeted by vandals who had wrecked the building inside and out.

Councillor Perry said that he believed the site posed serious health risks as well as causing disturbance to neighbours both day and night from vandalism and anti-social behaviour. He said that he had spoken to Council officers about getting the property secured as a matter of urgency and issuing a notice to the developers to tidy and secure the site pending consideration of their planning application. He said that the state of the property made it a blight on the local community. He also referred to other properties and sites in the LNP area which were unoccupied and derelict and vandalised.

Following discussion, it was agreed that LNP members should work with local residents to compile a list of unoccupied blighted properties and sites in the LNP area with a view to working with partners in requesting the Council to take action against owners and developers who fail to secure and keep tidy their properties and land.

Mr. Keith Stone the assistant director for the built environment said that over the last 18 months the Council had served notice on 30-40 premises across the borough to secure and keep tidy their properties and land. He said that the Council was keen to tackle this problem and they had achieved good results from the owners concerned using the powers of the Town and Country Planning Act. He said that he supported Councillor Perry's request and said that he hoped that the list of unoccupied blighted properties and sites in the area would be passed to officers as the Council was right behind residents' efforts to tackle this problem.

Councillor Perry also raised the issue of funding for projects in LNP areas that were not considered by the Council to be deprived. He said that often a small amount of funding could make a great deal of difference but areas such as Pelsall and Rushall were turned down because they did not meet the deprivation criteria. He believed that local representatives should be able to have the support of officers in seeking approval for some of these projects separate from the process of applying for funds through the LNP funding allocation.

It was:-

Resolved

- (1) That LNP members work with local residents in compiling a list of unoccupied blighted properties and sites in the LNP area with a view to working with partners in requesting the Council to take action against owners and developers who failed to secure and keep tidy their properties/land;
- (2) That a progress report in respect of this matter be submitted to a future meeting;
- (3) That the request for funding for projects to be made available to LNP areas that are not considered by the Council to be deprived be supported and that this request be passed to relevant Council officers for comment.

Councillors Micklewright and Ault returned to the meeting.

105/06. **Increased kerbside recycling**

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

A presentation was given by Councillor Marco Longhi and Mr. Steve Chapman of Street Pride.

Councillor Longhi said that if the authority was to achieve its overall recycling target of 25% increase in this financial year then it would need to ensure that as many people as possible were participating in the scheme. If the Council failed to do so it could face heavy fines and this could well be one of the biggest funding issues to affect the Council for many years. He said that by 2010 residents would only be able to put 50% of what they presently put into their bins for landfill, if the Council were not to face heavy penalties.

Mr. Chapman referred to the survey showing average participation and rates of kerbside collection boxes in Walsall from June to August 2005. He said that the rates for Pelsall were very poor and needed to be vastly improved if the Council were not to have to face penalties. He referred to “environment champions” being appointed to consult with neighbours to see how recycling could be improved. He said that it was important to spread the message that everyone needed to recycle more to help Walsall control future budgets through its waste disposal techniques.

Following the presentation, Councillor Longhi and Mr. Chapman were questioned by members of the public and discussed options for increased recycling in the Pelsall and Rushall area.

Resolved

That the results of the kerbside collection box in Pelsall and options for increasing collections in the Pelsall and Rushall area be noted.

106/06. **Local area agreement**

A presentation was given by Mr. Brian Holland the director of Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership.

Mr. Holland spoke of the role of local neighbourhood partnerships in the local area agreement. He said the LNPs would be acknowledged as part of the group structure of the Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership (WBSP) and the WBSP pillar groups would be looking to the LNPs for service innovation involving the local community and other agencies. The overall aim of LNPs in Walsall’s local area agreement was to establish LNPs as multi-agency partnerships engaged with service providers at local level who would be able to facilitate service change for the wider community. He said that WBSP looked forward to working with the LNP and its task groups to deliver the local area agreement agenda.

Following the presentation, Mr. Holland, was questioned by members of the LNP and members of the public.

107/06. **Improving security in neighbourhoods**

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

It was noted that the community safety intervention group (formerly known as BRAG) would be co-ordinating resources across the Pelsall, Rushall and Shelfield LNP area from Monday 30 January 2006, for four weeks until Friday 24 February 2006.

A copy of the issues raised at the task group meeting with BRAG on 17 October 2005, was set out in the report.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted and that requests for further interventions continue to be submitted as part of the rolling programme next year;
- (2) That priority sites (based on crime and disorder reported to the LNP or other local representatives) be identified to take forward this financial year for funding by the LNP, subject to officer capacity and deliverability.

108/06. **Updating on petitions and issues raised a the last LNP meeting**

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

The Chairman informed the meeting that since the report had been circulated, he had received a letter from the Chief Executive regarding the request for voting facilities in Autumn Close be reinstated for High Heath residents. He said that copies of the letter would be made available to Rushall and Sheffield Councillors and local residents who had raised this issue.

Resolved

That the contents of the report be noted.

109/06. **Public forum**

Request for green bins

On behalf of local residents, Councillor Mrs Micklewright raised the matter of green bins being provided for new residents moving into WHG properties in Rushall and Sheffield. She said that it appeared that some of the residents moving out had taken the green bins with them and the new residents had been asked to fund the cost of a new green bin.

Mr. Robert Hughes of WHG said that he would investigate this matter.

Problems of parking in Daw End Lane, Rushall

Mr. Andrew Williams of Rushall Neighbourhood Watch raised the problem of parking in Daw End Lane, Rushall.

The Chairman said that this was a continuing problem which had been raised at previous meetings of the LNP. He asked that Mr. Williams bring his concerns to the meeting of the task group on 12 January 2006, at Rushall Community Centre where this matter could be discussed further.

Possible use of Sheffield Library site for purpose built pharmacy and well person clinic

Mr. Stephen Hartshorne of Spring Lane Pharmacy Sheffield referred to the Sheffield Library site and raised the possibility of it being used for a purpose-built pharmacy and well-person clinic. He believed that this would be of great benefit to Sheffield residents and would mean that they would not have to travel considerable distances for medical facilities. He referred to the possibility of there being consulting rooms for GPs and a well person clinic to improve the health of the local community.

It was agreed that the proposal be discussed further with local residents and Mr. Hartshorne through the task groups.

Redefining conservation areas in Pelsall

Mrs Maureen Payton of Wolverhampton Road, Pelsall said that she was the Chairman of the Friends of Pelsall Common. She believed that there was a need to redefine conservation areas in Pelsall and for specific buildings and sites to be listed to preserve Pelsall's heritage. She also believed that restrictions should be placed on some of the shops and businesses to prevent them altering historic shop fronts and signs. She asked that this issue be investigated to prevent Pelsall village from losing its character.

The Chairman asked that all the issues raised in public forum be investigated and that the results of these investigations be reported to the LNP.

Termination of meeting

The meeting terminated at 9.10 pm.

Chairman:.....

Date:.....