

PELSALL AND RUSHALL LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP

Monday 10 January 2005 at 7.00 pm

at Education Development Centre, Pelsall Lane, Rushall, Walsall

Present

Councillor Al Griffiths (Chairman)
Inspector Jack Ashley
Mrs Liz Attfield
Councillor Ault
Mr. Ron Carpenter
Mrs Margaret Hayes
Mr. Robert Hughes
Mr. Neil Jones
Councillor Longhi
Mrs Isabel Mason
Councillor Mrs Catherine Micklewright
Councillor Garry Perry
Mr. Brett Quinton
Mrs Ann Rice
Mr. James Thomas
Councillor Rachel Walker

25/05. **Introductions**

Each member of the Partnership introduced themselves to the meeting.

26/05. **Apologies**

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Mr. Bernard Dickenson, Mr. Colin Payton, Mr. Keith Stone (Support Team Officer) and Mr. Gary Bird (Manor Farm Community Association).

27/05. **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Pelsall and Rushall Local Neighbourhood Partnership held on 13 October 2004, a copy having previously being circulated to each member of the Partnership, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendment:-

Page 5 – Last paragraph "Mrs Rice" should read "Mrs Hayes".

28/05. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest at this meeting.

29/05. **Petitions**

There were no petitions submitted to this meeting.

30/05. **Public Forum**

31/05. **Mr. Brian Sheasby, 35 Green Lane, Pelsall, Walsall**

Mr. Sheasby said that he wished to speak on the following environmental issues. These were the misuse of Pelsall Common by cars, motorised scooters, horse riders and dog owners, parking problems on North Common and speeding traffic in Pelsall.

Mr. Sheasby referred to speeding traffic from Green Lane to High Street in Pelsall. He said that speeding cars also made it very dangerous for pedestrians walking from the High Street to the Finger Post on Wolverhampton Road.

Mr. Sheasby referred to parking on Pelsall Common. He said there were signs prohibiting parking on the middle and lower common but not on North Common. Motorists repeatedly parked there and were causing damage to the grass verges surrounding the roadways. These people were spoiling the common which was there to be enjoyed by Pelsall people and visitors. He said that the problem was particularly bad during the summer carnival time and the Victorian Christmas Fayre.

Mr. Sheasby said that he would like to see notices limiting speed on the road crossing the common. This was an unclassified, unlit road and was being used by people driving at speed. He was also concerned about danger from horse riders galloping at speed across the common and causing damage to the grass. Motorised scooters were also doing a lot of damage to the common.

Mr. Sheasby said that a further concern was that a minority of dog owners were not observing the rules and were letting their dogs foul the common. He believed that there were insufficient warning notices and there needed to be more disposal facilities. He was aware that Councillor Longhi had publicised a pooper scooper bus in Walsall but said that he would like to see it used in other areas like Pelsall Common to highlight the problem.

Finally, Mr. Sheasby referred to his concerns regarding North Common. He said the roadway at North Common was only wide enough for one vehicle but the road was being misused by people parking there and blocking the road. Other users had no choice but to reverse or to go across the grass on the common. Mr. Sheasby had brought photographs with him as evidence of this which he circulated to the LNP members. He said that he would be willing to give evidence to sort these problems out. He believed that these were serious environmental issues which must be addressed for the sake of Pelsall people.

Mr. Thomas said that there were two bins on the common, one near the pool and one positioned half way up Pelsall Common. He personally had offered disposal bags to dog owners. He acknowledged that there was no bin at North Common. He believed that to get the message across there should perhaps be high profile prosecutions of two or three offenders. Just taking a bus around would not do this.

Mrs Hayes said that a meeting of the Friends of Pelsall Common was held on the third Thursday of each month. The Chairman, Maureen Payton, was investigating this problem. She said that the Friends of Pelsall Common worked hard to preserve the Common and she hoped that Mr. Sheasby would be able to attend the next meeting.

The Chairman said that he understood that the issue of dog fouling was being addressed by the Council. He asked Inspector Ashley to comment on Mr. Sheasby's concerns.

Inspector Ashley referred to speeding in Green Lane. He said that if this was a problem then road safety measures such as humps and give way signs needed to be considered.

With reference to off-road car users on the Common, Inspector Ashley said that a Police covert operation had been carried out there and people using Land Rovers and motorbikes videoed and issued with notices prohibiting them from returning to the Common within a certain period of time. If they did not comply with the notice, the Police could take action to confiscate the vehicles involved.

Inspector Ashley said that many parents had bought their children motorised scooters and quad bikes at Christmas which were being used on the Common and canal towpaths. This was illegal and he hoped that members of the press who were present would publicise this. He stressed that the scooters were unlicensed and uninsured and people would be prosecuted.

With reference to dog fouling, Inspector Ashley said that the Police would support any action that the Council took with regard to this. To reassure members of the public, he said that two Police Community Support Officers had been appointed to work in the area. If people did have concerns about off-road parking and other problems that had been highlighted by Mr. Sheasby, he hoped that they would take these concerns to the Community Support Officers.

In answer to points raised about the appointment of Community Support Officers, Inspector Ashley said that they would be based in Brownhills. One had begun work before Christmas and the other was presently receiving training. They would be used where they were most needed in the Brownhills and Pelsall area. As a point of clarification he said that Pelsall and Rushall came within different Police areas. Pelsall came under Police area H2 (left side of Lichfield Road) and Rushall was covered by Police area H1. If Rushall residents had concerns, Inspector Storr of Aldridge Police would be able to give advice. He hoped that the Police Community Support Officers would become the public's point of liaison with him and would be able to attend meeting such as Neighbourhood Watch, to act on his behalf and to report back to him about the concerns of residents.

The Chairman said that he had invited the local beat bobby in Rushall to attend LNP meetings, but unfortunately he was unable to attend this meeting.

Councillor Ault suggested that an invitation be sent to the Council's Dog Warden inviting the officer to spend time on a Saturday and Sunday on Pelsall Common. The Chairman supported this suggestion.

32/05.

Mrs Sheila Sheasby, 35 Green Lane, Pelsall, Walsall

Mrs Sheasby said that she was concerned about the lack of advertising for LNP meetings. She had not been told about tonight's meeting and only one copy of the notice had been sent to the local library which she had been unable to take away. At the last meeting the public had been assured that they would receive information about LNP meetings and that they would be widely advertised. She said that there had been a suggestion of a leaflet drop in Pelsall and Rushall.

The Chairman said that advertising for the meeting had appeared in the local press, including the free newspapers and the Express and Star. With reference to leaflet drops, he said that Ron Carpenter had been appointed at the last meeting as publicity officer to help publicise LNP meetings and he hoped that something could be organised for the next meeting in April.

Mrs Attfield said that her school published a weekly newsletter and she could include details of LNP meetings in this. She would also be happy to approach other schools in the area to ask if they would be willing to do the same.

Mr. Thomas said that in addition to local newspapers, local radio stations could be used to advertise the meetings.

Councillor Ault said that the Council would be publishing a newspaper in the near future which would contain information on LNPs.

In summing up the discussions, the Chairman said that all these ideas for publicising LNP meetings would be looked at and hopefully the next meeting of the LNP on 4 April 2005, would be better advertised.

33/05

**Pelsall and Rushall Local Neighbourhood Partnership:
Local Neighbourhood Plan**

The report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

The report was introduced by the Chairman who asked the Neighbourhood Partnerships Officer (Ms. Parveen Sangha) to speak to the report.

Ms. Sangha said that this was a working document which set out the proposed action for Pelsall and Rushall and the initial priorities which had been identified as follows:-

- Young people;
- Housing;
- Environment;
- Crime;
- Health;
- Education

She said that included within the report were suggestions for grouping of themes into task groups:-

- Young People;
- Crime;
- Education;
- Environment;

It was intended that the Task Groups would include members of the LNP and members of the general public who wished to become involved. The Task Group would feedback into the main LNP meetings. She referred to the workshops which had already taken place relating to crime issues and training and development opportunities.

Ms. Sangha referred to the draft partnership plan enclosed with the report. She said that this was the first draft and that the plan would be added to as consultations and proposals were progressed.

Section 1 of the report set out the Council's vision for Walsall and Section 2 the profile of the LNP area. Section 3 detailed areas for action and Section 4 the calendar of planned consultation events including Task Groups and consultation activities arranged by the LNP.

Ms. Sangha said that it would be helpful if the Task Groups were established at this meeting. If the LNP was able to identify who were to be appointed to the Task Groups at this meeting, they could begin their work without undue delay. The Task Groups could include members of the general public if they wished to become involved.

Mrs Hayes was concerned that High Heath and Shelfield should be named and be included in the detail of the plan. She said that it was important to make sure that these areas were taken into consideration and not ignored.

Mr. Hughes said that the first draft of the plan referred to breaking down the Pelsall and Rushall area into districts and these included High Heath and Shelfield.

It was **MOVED** by the Chairman and duly **SECONDED**:-

- (1) That the Partnership plan be approved and that acceptance of the plan be recommended to Council following submission to Cabinet;
- (2) That details of the work shops held to date be used as part of the first neighbourhood plan.

On being put to the vote the motion was declared **CARRIED**

The Chairman said that he would welcome the input of members of the public in the Task Groups.

Ms. Sangha confirmed that Task Group meetings would be arranged as often as members wished and that the Neighbourhood Partnership Officers would facilitate all these events.

Following further discussion it was **MOVED** by Mr. Thomas and duly **SECONDED**:-

That the following Task Groups be established:-

- Environment, Health and Housing;
- Young People;
- Elderly;
- Crime;
- Education

Upon being put to the vote the motion was declared **CARRIED**.

Resolved

- (1) That the Partnership plan be approved and that acceptance of the plan be recommended to Council following submission to Cabinet;
- (2) That details of the work shops held to date be used as part of the first neighbourhood plan;
- (3) That the following Task Groups be established by Pelsall and Rushall LNP to progress the detail of the first neighbourhood plan:-

- Environment, Health and Housing;
- Young people;
- Elderly;
- Crime;
- Education

Lists of the Task Groups were then circulated to LNP members and members of the public asking them to indicate which Task Groups they wished to join.

34/05. **Physical access audits**

The report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

In answer to points raised, Mr. Williams of the Support Team said that the report set out the first schedule of priorities that had been identified in respect of buildings in the Pelsall and Rushall LNP area to improve access for people with disabilities. This was not a finite list as further improvements would be required but this was a rolling programme and other priorities would be identified during the 2005/06 financial year.

Resolved

That the contents of the report be noted.

35/05. **Training and development plan**

The report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Ms. Sangha said that this was a report of Carol Brown the Head of Organisational Development, and detailed the induction sessions held at various locations within the Borough during November 2004. The report highlighted the strengths for the respective LNP together with a summary of skills and knowledge identified by members of the LNP and should be seen as a basis for further discussion. The report asked the LNP to consider what further training and development issues were required and also whether training and development should become a standing item on each LNP agenda.

Following discussion it was:-

Resolved

- (1) That training and development be a standing item on the quarterly agenda of the Pelsall and Rushall LNP;
- (2) That a training session on drugs awareness be arranged for Pelsall and Rushall LNP members.

36/05 **Presentations**

37/05. **Crime and Disorder Strategy**

A presentation was made by Inspector Gwyn Bevan, the Police Local Authority Liaison Officer for Walsall and Mr. Keith Newell of Crime Concern.

Mr. Bevan said that he represented the Police Commanders within the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership which combined all of the activities of the Police Crime and Reduction Partnership and the Drug and Alcohol Action Team. The Partnership was one of the themes of the Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership. He said that he and Mr. Newell would provide a consistent contact and briefing on the latest triannual crime and disorder audit, the restructuring of the Partnership and its sub-groups and the recent Best Value review. Mr. Bevan confirmed that Inspector Jack Ashley was the local Police representative on the Pelsall and Rushall LNP.

Mr. Bevan said that at the last meeting the LNP had received information on the crime and disorder audit for Walsall. Statistics had been broken down for each LNP area. Pelsall and Rushall had the second lowest crime and disorder figures in Walsall with an average of 14% as opposed to a borough average of 21%. He said that Walsall town centre was the worst area with a 32% average rate. This sounded very alarming but was below the national average.

Mr. Bevan said that a 16% reduction in crime and disorder figures had been achieved in Walsall. The Safer Walsall Borough Partnership was a broad structure which had been set up to deliver a new strategy for tackling crime and disorder. He said that Mr. Newell would be able to provide an outline of the Safer Walsall Partnership proposals. Mr. Bevan said that he was presently collating an information pack about community safety for each LNP area to help develop the next crime and disorder reduction strategy and to assist with the development of the partnership plans. He hoped to circulate this to all LNP members within the next few weeks following further consultation.

Mr. Newell said that the crime and disorder audit was a three year strategy covering the years 2005-2008. The audit had been completed following extensive data collection and consultation with many agencies, including LNPs, the Community Empowerment Network (CEN) and the Disability Forum. Following this borough wide consultation and feedback, the draft strategy had been compiled. The Partnership would be meeting on 25 January 2005, to make formal decisions on its strategic priorities in relation to crime and disorder reduction requirements. He said that the proposed strategic priorities were:-

- (1) Acquisitive Crime:
Including domestic burglary, vehicle crime and robbery;
- (2) Anti-Social Behaviour:
including violent crime, criminal damage, street disorder and prostitution (victims);
- (3) Youth Crime - reducing offending levels;
- (4) Fear of Crime:
Focus on vulnerable people including young people as victims, domestic violence and race/hate crimes;
- (5) Drugs and Alcohol;
- (6) Road Safety.

Mrs Hayes requested that crime and disorder figures for the Pelsall and Rushall LNP area be submitted to each meeting.

Mr. Newell replied that this would be done and that the figures would be broken down into the various categories.

Resolved

That statistics on crime and disorder in the Pelsall and Rushall LNP area be submitted to each meeting of the LNP.

38/05.

Place check

A presentation was made by Mr. Steve Lewis, the Head of Environmental Regeneration – Urban Regeneration. He said that placecheck was a community engagement technique for assessing the qualities of a place, showing what improvements were needed and focusing people on working to achieve them. The objectives of placecheck were to drive forward the implementation of actions identified in the initial LNP action plans, to widen local engagement and ownership in the LNP process and to empower partners and communities to identified solutions with other partners.

Mr. Lewis said that officers were very keen to see local people involved in the action groups. The aim was for placecheck to build on the existing work of LNPs and the technique could be used in a range of locations. LNPs could decide and appraise not only “grot spots” but also “areas of issues” that needed to be addressed.

Mr. Lewis said that the placecheck team would give support to LNPs to go out and ask questions and engage communities in identifying local issues. The team would help LNP members gain the skills to do this and would be working with them to help in any respect that they could.

Mr. Lewis referred to the LNP placecheck implementation calendar. He said that training workshops would be held during February 2005, and there would be phased implementation placechecks during March and April 2005. In May and June 2005, there would be seminars for collating data to take back to the LNP meetings. In June and July 2005, it was planned to commence the implementation of actions developed with placecheck.

In conclusion, Mr. Lewis said that he was requesting the support of the LNP to introduce placecheck and to agree the implementation of the technique to engage the wider community in the LNP process.

In answer to points raised as to how placecheck was to be funded, Mr. Lewis said that training provision costs for placecheck would be funded by the Council. He stressed that the aim of placecheck was to transfer community engagement technique skills to each LNP so that the LNP members could use these skills for themselves.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Ault and duly **SECONDED:-**

That Pelsall and Rushall LNP note the contents of the presentation that introduces placecheck and that the implementation of the technique to engage the wider community in the LNP process be agreed.

On being put to the vote the motion was declared **CARRIED**.

Resolved

That Pelsall and Rushall LNP note the contents of the presentation that introduces placecheck and that the implementation of the technique to engage the wider community in the LNP process be agreed.

39/05.

Survey in Pelsall on the provision of activities and facilities for young people

A presentation was made by Inspector Jack Ashley and members of the 1444 (Brownhills Squadron) Air Cadets.

Inspector Ashley said that the Air Cadets had carried out a canvass of members of the public in Pelsall and Brownhills, together with the Police, as part of their services for the Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award and he hoped that the LNP members would find the results of the survey interesting. He introduced the following air cadets to the meeting:-

Sarah Pugh, Simon Hudson, Corporal Steven Dolman,
Corporal Adam Hurst and Gemma Wearing.

Inspector Ashley said that as part of the canvass process members of the general public had been asked to answer questions on what facilities or activities they thought should be provided for young people in the Pelsall and Brownhills area. The air cadets had compiled a questionnaire and on Saturday 4 December 2004, four cadets had questioned people in Pelsall and four cadets in Brownhills. They had questioned people of different age groups: under 15s, age 15-25, age 25-50 and over 50 years.

Inspector Ashley said that the same questions had been asked of everyone. He then handed over to the five air cadets who took members through the results of their questionnaire.

In summing up the conclusions of the questionnaire, the air cadets said that they believed that there should be a review of local facilities in Pelsall and Brownhills and that early intervention was needed with young people. They referred to possible methods of improvement that could be introduced, including opening up schools for sports and IT facilities and more social functions. They also believed that there should be a review of Police powers and more options for volunteers. Business and school involvement in the Pelsall and Brownhills area should also be improved.

In answer to points raised, Sarah Pugh said that 60 people in total had been asked their views in Pelsall and Brownhills.

Mr. Thomas said that the questionnaire was something that members had asked to be done and the air cadets had come up with interesting results which would come in useful when members were working on the partnership plan. He congratulated the air cadets on their work and the presentation.

Mrs Attfield said that this was a small sample but nevertheless she had been impressed with the work carried out by the air cadets and how they had collected the information. From that they had hypothesised why they had got the results they had and she believed that they should be commended for this.

Councillor Perry congratulated the air cadets on their questionnaire which he believed offered a fair snap shot of the LNP area. He said that Walsall Youth Services had just received an Ofsted inspection report. Councillor Perry referred to Lorraine Randell, the District Youth Co-ordinator who was present at the meeting, and said that an analysis of the report indicated what was happening in the area in respect of youth involvement in Pelsall, Rushall, High Heath and Shelfield and the types of work and money that needed to be spent. The air cadets' results gave a fair assessment of how far the LNP needed to work to bring about improvements. At the end of the day the issue was young people and he was determined that any money identified for youth services be spent on young people. Their views were valued and must be represented on the LNP as this was the only way that youth services could be developed and improved wherever young people lived in the borough.

Several members again raised the issue of the importance of filling the vacancy on the LNP with a young person. Mr. Thomas said that the views of young people must be respected and it was important to have someone on the partnership who could speak for them and voice their concerns.

Resolved

That the contents of the presentation be noted and that 144 (Brownhills Squadron) Air Cadets be commended for undertaking their canvass of the general public in Pelsall and Brownhills and for the high quality of their presentation to the Partnership.

40/05. Anti-social behaviour public meeting 14 October 2004

Mr. Carpenter said that at the last meeting Mrs Harrison of Avon Crescent, Pelsall had asked for information about a public meeting which had been arranged to address residents' concerns about anti social behaviour. He asked if there was anything further to report from this meeting.

Councillor Perry said that a meeting had been held on 14 October 2004, with local residents and representatives from the Walsall Housing Group and the Police. As a result of this an action plan had been drawn up with the Police and the Housing Group that had been followed. To his knowledge improvements had begun to be made from both housing and the Police's perspectives. The Police were carrying out highly visible patrols and there had been improvements made to signage in the area. His only involvement had been to liaise with partners and officers in Street Pride to try to get the area tidied up. A special co-ordinator was looking at the action plan and progress was well underway. He was able to report that one of the problem families in the area had now been dealt with.

Inspector Ashley said that he hoped to report further on positive results at the next meeting.

41/05. **Reselection process for locally appointed partners**

Mr. Carpenter sought confirmation that locally appointed partners would be required to be reselected in May.

Mr. Williams of the support team said that the LNPs would need to be reconstituted at the beginning of the new municipal year. The process for appointing Locally Appointed Partners would be agreed in due course.

42/05. **Community empowerment network**

Mr. Carpenter asked for information about the £5000 funding which had been referred to at the community empowerment network meeting he had attended. He queried whether this could be used by the Pelsall and Rushall LNP.

In response, Ms. Sangha said that the community empowerment network was setting up community forums which would feed into the LNPs. The £5000 referred to at the meeting was to help the CEN with administration costs, for example, to establish community forums, publicise the meetings and engage with local people. She confirmed that the LNPs would not have access to this £5000 funding.

Mr. Jones asked if a formal invitation could be sent to the community empowerment network inviting them to send a representative to the next meeting to explain the background to their role. There was general agreement to this suggestion.

It was therefore:-

Resolved

That a representative of the community empowerment network be invited to attend the next meeting of the Pelsall and Rushall LNP to explain the background to their role.

43/05. **Start time for Pelsall and Rushall LNP meetings**

Mr. Thomas said that the last LNP meeting had begun at 6.00 pm but this meeting had not started until 7.00 pm. He queried the reason for this.

The Chairman said that the meeting had been put back to 7.00 pm because several members of the LNP had expressed concern that they were unable to attend meetings beginning at 6.00 pm due to work commitments.

Following discussion on this issue it was **MOVED** by Councillor Ault and duly **SECONDED**:-

That future meetings of Pelsall and Rushall LNP begin at 6.00 pm.

On being put to the vote the motion was declared **CARRIED** 7 members voting in favour and 4 against.

Resolved

That future meetings of Pelsall and Rushall LNP begin at 6.00 p.m.

The Chairman said that the next meeting of the Pelsall and Rushall LNP would be held at Shelfield Sports and Community College at 6.00 pm on Monday 4 April 2005.

Termination of meeting

There being no other business the meeting terminated at 9.00 pm.

Chairman:.....

Date:.....