

PELSALL AND RUSHALL LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP

Thursday 7 July 2005 at 6.00 pm

at Rushall Community Centre, Springfields, Rushall, Walsall

Present

Councillor Al Griffiths (Chairman)
Mr. Ron Carpenter
Mrs Margaret Hayes
Mr. Neil Jones
Councillor Marco Longhi
Mrs Isabel Mason
Councillor Catherine Micklewright
Mr. Colin Payton
Councillor Garry Perry
Mrs. Ann Rice
Acting Inspector Sue Spencer
Ms. Margaret Wilcox

64/05

Minute's Silence

Before the meeting began, a minute's silence was observed for the victims of the London underground and bus bombings which had taken place earlier that day.

65/05

Appointment of Chairman for the Municipal Year 2005/06 and use of presider

Resolved

That Councillor Griffiths be elected Chairman of the Pelsall and Rushall Local Partnership for the Municipal year 2005/06.

66/05 **Introductions**

The Chairman said that much had been achieved by the Local Neighbourhood Partnership over the past 12 months. The Partners had set out the Partnership Plan for the LNP area and would be building on this during the coming months. The LNP had been given a wonderful opportunity by Walsall Council to do things for the people of the area and improvements would only be brought about by the Partners and the community working together.

Each Member of the Partnership then introduced themselves to the meeting.

67/05 **Apologies**

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Mr. Robert Hughes, Mr. James Thomas and Councillor Rachel Walker.

68/05 **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Pelsall and Rushall Local Neighbourhood Partnership held on 4 April 2005, a copy having previously been circulated to each member of the Partnership, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

69/05 **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest at this meeting.

70/05 **Petitions**

The Partnership noted that a petition in respect of planning application no. 05/1198/PT/E3 – objections to erection of mast at All Equestrian, Green Lane, Shelfield, had been received by full Council on 4 July 2005, and referred to the appropriate Executive Directors.

71/05 **Update on Petitions – Construction of pathway from Windsor Grove across High Heath Park to Spring Lane, High Heath, Pelsall**

The report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Resolved

That the proposal for the construction of a pathway from Windsor Grove across High Heath Park to Spring Lane, High Heath, Pelsall, be referred to the newly established Friends of High Heath Park as part of their development plan for seeking external funding for projects at High Heath Park.

72/05

Community Safety Update Bulletin

The Pelsall and Rushall Shelfield LNP crime figures and rates 2002-05, together with the bi-annual community safety bulletin (June 2005) of the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership were submitted:-

(see annexed)

A briefing was given by Inspector Gwyn Bevan of the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership.

Inspector Bevan advised the meeting that the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership would be updating crime figures for each LNP area on a six monthly basis. A new Director had been appointed and all the staff were now in place to deliver the community safety agenda across the whole Borough and to offer support within each LNP area. The Partnership would be working closely with Julie Ball and the LNP team and there would be a dedicated person for each LNP area who could be contacted about community safety issues. He said that it was important for Partners and Members of the local community to contact the Partnership to let them know their concerns so that these could be addressed as soon as possible. The Partnership would also like to receive feed-back on the contents of the bulletin.

Inspector Bevan said that there would be a community safety conference at Bescot Stadium on 13th October 2005, which LNP Members were invited to attend. The programme was presently being developed and details would be made available in due course.

Inspector Bevan then took the Members through the various sections of the bulletin.

Referring to the crime statistics, Inspector Bevan said that there had been a 4.4% reduction in the crime figures between 2002 and 2005. Figures for some type of crime had risen but others were down. He confirmed that the 214.3% rise in sexual offences was due to changes in the type of offence the police were now required to report and that many of the figures related to indecent assault.

Inspector Bevan said that the picture for the whole Borough showed a 9% reduction and the crime figures for Pelsall and Rushall showed a significant reduction. The Borough Fire statistics included in the bulletin needed to be adjusted for Pelsall and Rushall, but gave a good idea about what was happening in the LNP area.

The following issues were raised by Members of the public:-

- There had been drug and alcohol related problems in the Friary Crescent area of Rushall since November 2005. This area seemed to have been used as a place to re-house problem tenants from Shelfield. This had resulted in many of the older residents in Friary Crescent being frightened to leave their homes. The houses these tenants had left in Shelfield had been boarded up. What was the point of moving problem people from one area to another as it now appeared that all these people had been moved into one place.

Inspector Bevan said that local officers would be aware of the situation in Rushall. This was a difficult issue as these people had to be housed somewhere, but there were often continual problems and tensions arising from this. Representatives of Walsall Housing Group sat on the Partnership Board and WHG had a management strategy for tackling this problem. He stressed that people were not moved just for the sake of it and Walsall Housing Group was trying to deal with this issue. He said that the local beat officer who was present at the meeting would be asked to investigate this particular problem with local residents. He said that it was important for the police to be kept fully informed about problems such as this.

- The outdoor arson figures for the area were dreadful.

Inspector Bevan said that there were a lot of green spaces, footpaths and canal paths in the area which appeared to attract arsonists. A strategy had been developed to reduce these incidents and a crime procedure set in place to deal with offenders

- There was concern about cross boundary police divisions in respect of Aldridge/Brownhills and the fact that Rushall came under Brownhills rather than Aldridge. Many people were unaware that they had to report any crime incidents to Brownhills which meant that the figures that had been produced might not necessarily relate to what was actually happening in the Rushall area.

Inspector Bevan said that the administration of the Council was based on wards, but the police and fire divisions did not necessarily correspond with these. A standard mapping process was used by the Partnership for tracking crime statistics and it would be possible to produce ward information as well as figures for the whole LNP area. The local beat officer should be able to provide residents with information for a specific area.

Inspector Spencer asked local residents who were concerned to ring her at Brownhills Police Station and she would be able to give them the information they required. She said that she would speak to the residents following the meeting.

In thanking Inspector Bevan, the Chairman said that the crime figures for Pelsall and Rushall were encouraging, as overall they were slightly down. There was still a lot of work to be done to bring about further reductions and Members looked forward to receiving an update on crime statistics at the January 2006 meeting.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the Pelsall and Rushall/Shelfield LNP crime figures and rates 2002-05 and the bi-annual community safety bulletin for June 2005 be received and noted;
- (2) That a representative of the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership be invited to attend the January 2006 meeting of the LNP to brief Members on the bi-annual December 2005 community safety bulletin.

73/05

Partnership Plan, feedback from Task Group meetings (including training and development)

The report, together with the action plan, was submitted:-

(see annexed)

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

Ms. Sangha said that two health task workshops had been held in May which had been facilitated by tPCT. A Crime and Young People Task Group had also been held in May. The meetings had been very positive and well attended.

Referring to the Partnership Plan, Ms. Sangha said that the LNP was asked to endorse the changes and additions that had been made, to continue to attend workshop meetings and to encourage wider participation from community members within the task groups.

Mr. Colin Payton, the Crime and Young People Task Group "Champion" then gave a briefing on the work of the task group.

Mr. Payton said that the task group meeting had been an excellent opportunity for local people to become involved in these important issues. He did not like the association of the words 'young people' with 'crime' in the task group name, but the task group had been able to take a look at what

local people had told them they wished to see in the area. The task group had discussed what it could do practically to help and had adopted the motto to 'ensure that all people feel safe and secure' to describe what it hoped to achieve. They had discussed, at great lengths, how they could involve themselves with young people not from a punishment but from a prevention point of view.

Mr. Payton said that, from his experience as a teacher, he knew the importance of helping young people so that they were not tempted into crime and the task group wanted to work with parents and young people to guide them away from this. This work needed to start early with young people. The task group had looked at the provision of facilities where it would be possible for parents and children to participate in activities together as a family. The possibility of approaching leisure facility providers to negotiate subsidies for families and young people to use their facilities had been discussed.

Mr. Payton said that he had been very interested in what Inspector Bevan had said and hoped that the task group could look at ways of raising the police profile in the area and working closer together, for example, by improving communications so that local people knew exactly how to contact the police if necessary. He said that the task group was also very interested in carrying out crime initiatives in the LNP area, for example, arranging the distribution of shed and personal alarms and door check warning alarms. The task group wanted to look at practical ways of developing these initiatives into the work of the LNP.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Payton for his briefing.

Resolved

- (1) That the changes and additions to the Partnership Plan be endorsed;
- (2) That LNP Members continue to attend workshop meetings;
- (3) That individual LNP Members encourage wider participation from community members within the task groups.

74/05

Involving Young People

The report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

In introducing the report, the Chairman invited Lorraine Randall of the Youth Service to comment on the report.

Lorraine Randall said that she had been involved with Youth Opinions Unite (Y.O.U.). At ground level, she said that the detached youth team had been very successful in its work in Pelsall, Shelfield and High Heath and had 60 young people on their data base with whom they were working. She said that more needed to be done in Rushall, however, as there were many young people hanging about there with nothing to do.

Councillor Perry considered that it would be more worthwhile to go through the detached youth team rather than Y.O.U. to appoint a “young peoples champion” as they had more day to day involvement with young people in the LNP area. There was general agreement with this suggestion.

Following further discussion it was:-

Resolved

- (1) That the work carried out to date on involving young people in the LNP area be noted;
- (2) That young people be invited to observe the LNP meeting in October 2005 or January 2006;
- (3) That the work of the Pelsall, Shelfield and High Heath Detached Youth Team in engaging with young people in these areas be noted;
- (4) That the LNP work through the Detached Youth Team rather than Youth Opinions Unite (Y.O.U.) to involve young people in the LNP and that the Detached Youth Team be invited to put forward a nominee to become a Locally Appointed Partner on the LNP with view to their taking on the role of “young peoples champion” in due course.

75/05

Funding priorities for action

The report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

The report was introduced by the Chairman who said that the purpose of the report was to inform LNP Members of the funding priorities workshop that had taken place in June. The workshop had prioritised project ideas which could be funded using the £22,000 that had been allocated by the Council to the Pelsall and Rushall LNP area. He then handed over to Parveen Sangha, the LNP Neighbourhood Officer, who took Members through the various sections of the report and the priorities identified by the task group.

Following discussion it was:-

Resolved

- (1) That it be noted that each project identified in the report will be formally assessed by the LNP Project Team to ensure they meet all of the agreed criteria;
- (2) That it be noted that each project will be passed to the relevant Council Officer who will liaise with the project champion when required;
- (3) That feedback from the project champions on progress be received at the next meeting in October 2005.

76/05

Gateways Project

A presentation was made by Mr. Bruno Edwards of the Community Arts Section of Leisure Services.

Members were advised that the gateways project was part of Walsall's strategic corridors and gateways regeneration initiative and its aims were:-

- to improve the visual quality of the main gateway entry points to the Borough
- to develop a distinctive "brand" for Walsall which promotes the Borough's major assets
- the creation of quality environments in key locations that support existing businesses and residential communities and attract people into the Borough of Walsall
- the development of local district themes which help to strengthen local identity and have strong local support

Referring to the Borough boundary gateway features, Mr. Edwards said that the aim of these was to relate to the LNP areas in which they were located. They would have text, for example, "Welcome to Pelsall in the Borough of Walsall". Each sign would have its own bespoke section (within the sign) dedicated to images, for example, local landmarks, symbols of heritage and culture and local aspirations relevant to each individual area. Signs would be 3 metres high; the top and bottom parts would be made of enamel and the second part of the sign which featured local images would be sunk into aluminium to make the signs very durable.

Following the presentation, LNP Members and members of the public present at the meeting were invited to suggest what signage they would like to see relating to the Pelsall and Rushall LNP area.

Following discussion it was:-

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the gateways project presentation be noted;
- (2) That signage relating to Pelsall the Rose Village, Pelsall Common, mining, Rushall Manor and the reference to Rushall in the Domesday Book be considered for possible inclusion in gateway signage;
- (3) That individual LNP Members and members of the public be invited to put forward further suggestions for signage relating to the Pelsall and Rushall LNP following the meeting;
- (4) That projects for raising the profile of Rushall's identity be discussed further by the task groups.

77/05

Dates, times and venues for future LNP meetings

The report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Resolved

- (1) That agreement be given to alternating meetings of the LNP between Pelsall and Rushall, as identified in the report;
- (2) That a start time for meetings of 6.00 p.m. be agreed.

78/05

Public Forum

Mrs. Isabel Mason, an LNP Member, raised the following issues on behalf of local residents at the meeting.

Vehicular access to houses in Daw End Lane

Mrs. Mason said that there was no access whatsoever for emergency services and delivery vehicles to certain houses in Daw End Lane. Houses numbered 72-92 were on a bank. There was a wide path by the church at the top of the bank. Bollards had been installed and there was no way for vehicles to gain access to the houses.

These views were supported by Mrs. Betty Oakley of Daw End Lane who said that she was Vice-Chairman of Rushall Residents' Association. Mrs. Oakley said that people moving into the lane had their furniture dumped on the footpath as vehicles could not get access to the houses. One of the residents had died recently and the funeral director's vehicle had been unable to park outside his home to take the body away. This had been very upsetting for his family and neighbours, as the funeral director's vehicle had had to park on a bend on the main road holding up the traffic. Nearly all of the residents had cars and they wanted to know why action could not be taken that would enable them to park their cars in front of the houses.

Mrs. Hayes offered to raise these matters at the next meeting of the Walsall Housing Group Management Panel of which she was a member.

Councillor Mrs. Micklewright said that she had investigated this matter last year. There was a problem in that some of the houses were owned by the Housing Group and others were privately owned. She had attempted to speak to the Housing Trust about this matter over the past few months without success.

The Chairman said that Ward Councillors had lobbied hard to try to get these matters resolved. They would arrange a meeting with the various parties to try to sort this matter out and they would then report back to local residents and the LNP.

Traffic calming measures in Daw End Land

Mrs. Mason said that residents of Daw End Lane were very concerned about speeding traffic using the lane, in particular, heavy lorries travelling to Aldridge Industrial Estate. They would like the LNP to consider whether traffic calming measures could be introduced there.

Parks in Rushall

Mrs. Mason said that local residents wished to see the three parks in the Rushall area upgraded and properly maintained. They would like to see an area on the playing fields for the youth of the village, perhaps with skateboarding and basketball facilities. They would also like to see more signs and litter bins provided for the use of dog owners. She said that these were priority issues for Rushall residents.

Voting facilities in Rushall

Mrs. Mason said that people used to be able to vote at Rushall Community Centre, but were now obliged to go to New Street. This was more difficult for many local people to get to, particularly the elderly, which meant that they were less likely to vote. Local residents had thought that the polling station

at the community centre had only been closed temporarily for redecoration and had turned up to vote there, as usual, on election day. She said that many local people felt very strongly about this issue.

Derelict tennis courts in Rushall

Mrs. Mason said that local residents had met with the District Parks Manager, Nigel Illsley, in May to discuss the derelict tennis courts in Springfields, Rushall. Thirty residents had attended and all 3 Ward Councillors. The consensus had been that local residents would like to see grass, flowers and shrubs planted close to where the elderly people lived and fencing to stop people on skateboards and bikes going across the bowling green. She said that she and her fellow Locally Appointed Partner, Mrs. Ann Rice, had been working hard to try to get improvements there.

As a point of information, Mr. Illsley said that further to the May meeting he had spoken to the Chairman and an order had been placed for fencing to secure the bowling green. Seeding on the tennis court area would be carried out, probably in September onwards to allow it to germinate.

Mrs. Mason thanked Mr. Illsley for this.

The Chairman commented that many of these projects had already been raised for inclusion in the Partnership Plan. Those that had not would be brought to the task groups for possible action.

Mr. Kimberley, 3 Rowley Place, Rushall

Mr. Kimberley referred to access for emergency vehicles to the bungalows in Rowley Place. He said that when people were using the facilities in the park, their cars were parked all down the road. He had been told by the Council that there was no money available to help local residents by creating a car park for residents.

The Chairman said that a ward walk by local Councillors was due to take place shortly. He urged local residents to put forward their ideas to their Council representatives when this took place, including the problem of parking and access for emergency vehicles to the bungalows in Rowley Place.

Mr. Kimberley also referred to a meeting he had attended at the Community Centre where he had been told of proposals for a Pelsall football team to play matches in Rushall Park. He believed this was wrong as there were more football pitches in Pelsall than in Rushall and they should use these rather than preventing young people in Rushall using their own.

As a point of information, the Chairman said that this was an on-going issue. A meeting had been arranged within the next few days to sort this matter out and he and fellow Ward Councillors would be attending, together with representatives of the management team and the chairman of Pelsall Bush Football Club. He stressed that nothing would happen that affected the young people of Rushall without him knowing about it and he would be reporting back to local residents.

Mrs. Betty Oakley, Daw End Lane, Rushall

Mrs. Oakley raised the problem of young people skateboarding between cars in Friary Crescent and Springfields in Rushall. She wondered about the possibility of providing them with skateboarding facilities in Rushall.

The Chairman said that this project had been raised at the task group meeting and had been included in the Partnership Plan.

Mr. Phillip Baker, 70 Station Road, Rushall

Mr. Baker asked what was happening about the grassed area at the rear of Eileen Mason Photographic Studios in Station Road.

The Chairman said that he understood that the Council had some development plans that affected part of this land. Everyone should be pleased with what Eileen Mason had done in the centre of Rushall and he understood that, if she had been allowed to purchase the land, she would have given the Council an assurance that she would not permit any building there as she wished to make it as attractive as possible for the people who lived in the vicinity. The Council, however, had its own plans for this particular piece of land.

Mr. Baker also asked when residents of Station Road would be provided with brown bins as it appeared that everyone else in Rushall had them except Station Road.

Councillor Longhi said that the provision of brown bins was an on-going issue. Unfortunately, Mr. Baker was not alone in his request and the priority list for providing brown bins had had to be put back. He referred to the Government's targets for Councils in respect of the composting of green waste.

With regard to the provision of more brown bins, Councillor Longhi said that a decision would have to be taken by Cabinet and ratified by Council if the provision of brown bins were to be expanded because of the running costs of the scheme. If it were decided to expand, the scheme, this would involve the purchase of more vehicles and the employment of more staff. He very much hoped that this would happen but, in the meantime, the council was piloting a

scheme to offer residents the opportunity to compost green waste at home by providing free home composters for garden waste. Anyone who wished to have a free home composter should contact the Council as soon as possible.

As a point of information, Councillor Longhi said that the Council was facing restrictions in future on how much waste it would be allowed to landfill. If it exceeded its permitted allocation, it would face severe penalties. The disposal of waste would be a massive problem over the next few years and the Council needed to recycle much more of its waste than it did so at present if it were to avoid heavy fines.

In answer to points raised about the recycling of plastic, Councillor Longhi said that this was a matter that was currently being investigated. There were facilities for disposal at Civic Amenity sites but it was not cost effective at the present time to include plastic in kerbside collections because of its low residual costs when compared with the money the Council could earn for recycling glass and paper. The possibility of a separate collection scheme for plastic needed to be investigated.

Mrs. S. Sheasby, 35 Green Lane, Pelsall

Mrs. Sheasby asked whether more temporary litter bins could be provided around Pelsall on special days such as Carnival Day and the Victorian Christmas Fayre.

The Chairman said that this request would be noted and reported to the relevant Council Officers.

Mr. Phil Hall, Pelsall Lane, Rushall

Mr. Hall raised the problem of under-age drinking at evenings and weekends in the area adjacent to the Education Development Centre in Pelsall Lane. He said that gangs of young people regularly drank there and left their empty bottles and cans behind. Local residents were concerned about shop owners selling alcohol to under-age drinkers.

Councillor Longhi said that the Council's Trading Standards Officers would investigate any sale of alcohol to under-age drinkers if local residents contacted them.

The Chairman said that the police would be asked to investigate these matters.

Termination of Meeting

The meeting terminated at 9.10 p.m.

Chairman:

Date: