

ALDRIDGE SOUTH AND STREETLY LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP

Monday 11 December 2006 at 7.00pm

at Aldridge School – A Science College, Tynings Lane, Aldridge

Present

Councillor John Rochelle (Chairman)
Mr Peter Roberts (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Tom Ansell
Sergeant Andy Hill (West Midlands Police)
Councillor Gary Clarke
Mr Andrew Dickson (West Midlands Fire Service)
Councillor Brian Douglas-Maul
Mr Robert Gilham
Mr Tony Harrison
Mrs Lesley Hughes
Mrs Jenny Henney
Mrs Pauline Heydon
Councillor Eddie Hughes
Mr Ron Perks

In attendance

Karen Adderley
Parveen Sangha
Paul Wilde
Chief Superintendent Bruce Gilbert (West Midlands Police)

167/06 Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance at the Partnership meeting were submitted on behalf of Johanne Newens and J. O'Hare.

168/06 Introductions

Each member of the partnership and the officers present introduced themselves and explained in brief the organisation they represented.

169/06 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

170/06 **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Local Neighbourhood Partnership held on 23 October 2006 a copy having been previously circulated to each member of the Partnership, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

171/06 **Petitions**

A Petition containing 1131 signatures expressing concern at the condition of the shops and flats at Boundary Court, Boundary Road, Streetly and requesting the Council to consider the use of compulsory Purchase Order powers to obtain improvement of the premises was handed to the Chairman.

Resolved

That the Petition be received.

172/06 **Update On Items From Last Meeting**

A copy of the decision list was submitted:-
(see annexed)

Resolved

That the decision list be noted.

173/06 **Public Forum**

Paul Underwood – Aldridge Neighbourhood Watch

Mr Underwood stated that he was pleased with the police activity in the Aldridge area. He stated that he had attended the last meeting of the Partnership held at the Streetly Association and had left the meeting because he felt intimidated by the reaction of Streetly residents there. He asked if Aldridge could have its own LNP separate from Streetly.

Councillor Ansell referred to the setting up of the Local Neighbourhood Partnerships. He felt that Aldridge South and Streetly were compatible and that Brownhills and Aldridge North were acceptable too. He agreed with the speaker at Streetly discussions tended to be dominated by police matters and anti-social behaviour. Most LNP's went through a much wider variety of topics at their meetings.

Parveen Sangha referred to the recent review of ward boundaries carried out by the boundary commission which had meant that wards had been adjusted to contain approximately 10 000 voters.

Aldridge Manor House

An Aldridge residence asked whether Aldridge Manor House would be discussed. He was advised there was an item regarding Aldridge Manor House later on the agenda. The resident asked why the Coppy Hall Estate was included in the Brownhills LNP area rather than this LNP. Councillor Rochelle referred him to the recent boundary review by the Boundary Commission.

174/06

Welcome To Streetly Sign - Proposed New Location

Glen Buglass reported that the welcome to Streetly sign had been erected in the wrong place outside the Church in Foley Road East. He added that it had also been masked by a recently erected bus stop. As a result a revised location had been found on Chester Road in the vicinity of the Pacific Nursery site. The sign would be moved after Christmas.

Councillor Douglas-Maul expressed concern that the proposed location for the sign was well inside the Streetly boundary and he would like to see it nearer the boundary.

After further discussion it was.

Resolved

(Councillor Douglas-Maul voting against)

That approval be given to the relocation of the welcome to Streetly sign to Chester Road, in the vicinity of the Pacific Nurseries.

175/06

Communication

Etelka Kollar made a PowerPoint presentation regarding improvements in communication.

She reported that as a Streetly resident she was concerned that decisions were being taken at Local Neighbourhood Partnerships, and other meetings, without the public being fully involved. She added that she had joined the Safer and Stronger Communities CAG and had looked at communication as an issue. The CAG had set up a working party to look at communication. She stated that present information was received through the Neighbourhood Watch and the "Scan" magazine but not everyone received that publication. She added that the CAG's were not well attended because they were not well publicised and Walsall Pride suffered from poor distribution in the Streetly area.

Information about meetings of the LNP and the CAG could be found in the libraries but not everyone visited them. She indicated that if information could be enhanced then attendance at LNPs and CAG's

could be improved and community spirit would be developed through this involvement.

Consideration had been given to the provision of suggestion boxes to encourage participation and it was suggested that notice boards should be erected in Aldridge and Streetly centres so that information about LNP and CAG meetings could be better advertised. LNP funding had been earmarked for the provision of notice boards.

It was suggested that if notice boards were provided then information about Councillors' surgeries should also be included. This would supplement information already available in the borough's public libraries. A question was asked about the forward distribution of the Walsall Observer in Streetly. Councillor Clarke replied that he had raised this matter with the editor of the paper but it was not possible to increase its circulation at the present time. Reference was made to the fact that Streetly received Sutton Coldfield free papers rather than Walsall ones. It was reported that the Express and Star was available in Streetly but it appeared that most people preferred the Evening Mail. It was suggested that a website would be more successful than notice boards. Councillor Rochelle stated that a website was already in existence for the area.

Chief Superintendent Bruce Gilbert reported that the communications sub group of the Walsall Borough Borough Strategic Partnership was looking at the provision of electronic notice boards across the whole of the borough.

Resolved

That the presentation be noted.

176/06

LNP Funding

A report was submitted:-
(see annexed)

A supplementary report was handed to members present at the Partnership meeting:-
(see annexed)

With regard to the Lindorsa Road railway line hot stop it was reported that lockable bollards would be provided rather than a gate and keys would be provided for the emergency services, railway employees etc.

With reference to the supplementary report, it was suggested that the provision of two community notice boards should be deferred pending the provision of electronic notice boards across the borough.

Resolved

That the Local Neighbourhood Partnership:-

1. Notes progress on projects;
2. Approves the provision of benches in Aldridge parade;
3. Defers the provision of two community notice boards pending the discussion on provision of electronic notice boards across the borough by the Local Strategic Partnership.

177/06 **Aldridge War Memorial Enhancement Scheme.**

Cherry Shine made a PowerPoint presentation regarding the proposals to improve the Aldridge War Memorial by rebuilding existing planter walls which were bowing, replacing missing coping stones and providing hand rails to the steps adjoining the memorial. It was also proposed to replace the existing benches and lower the grass cross to the level of the surrounding area to eliminate a potential trip hazard. Two new benches would be sited on either side of the grass cross.

Mr Partridge (Royal British Legion) stated that the War Memorial had been well maintained by the Local Authority. Approximately three years ago the Memorial had been cleaned and the lettering renewed. He indicated that he did not support the provision of benches adjacent to the grass cross and requested further information on the proposed lighting before making a decision on it. Cherry Shine reported that the proposals would be on display at Aldridge library from 14th to 18th December 2006 for consultation.

It was asked whether a wheelchair ramp had been considered. Cherry stated that this had been investigated but it would be difficult to achieve. It was felt that if the grass cross was made flush with surrounding paving and its prominence would be diminished. It was suggested that an alternative form of edging should be tried to overcome the trip hazard.

Resolved

- (1) That the presentation be received;
- (2) That the proposals be endorsed by the Local Neighbourhood Partnership subject to the deletion of the benches near the grass cross; the prominence of the grass cross being maintained and that further information be provided to the British Legion on the proposed lighting for the memorial.

178/06 **Boundary Court Update**

Councillor Hughes informed the Partnership that he had met with officers from Legal Services and Estates about what could be done about Boundary Court. Now that Legal Services were aware of the problems, clarification of ownerships lease holdings etc could be carried out. Then the Council could look at serving a compulsory purchase order to get improvements underway. A report was to be submitted to cabinet with options for the improvement of the site. He thanked the Partnership for its support in moving things on.

Councillor Ansell reminded the meeting that Boundary Court was privately owned and the Council did not have the financial resources to purchase it and develop it themselves. Therefore if a CPO was to be made then a same day transfer would need to be in place so that the site could be obtained by a third party as the Council did not have the resources to develop the site themselves.

Resolved

That the verbal update be noted.

179/06 **Community Action Group Update**

A report was submitted:-
(see annexed)

Resolved

- (1) That LNP members continue to attend Community Action Group meetings;
- (2) That the Local Neighbourhood Partnership notes the progress made by Community Action Group.

180/06 **Neighbourhood Policing**

Chief Superintendent Bruce Gilbert explained the situation leading up to the current neighbourhood policing policy. He indicated that Walsall had its action plan in place and Local Neighbourhood Partnerships were already operating so good progress was being maintained. He added that he wanted Local Neighbourhood Partnerships to succeed in Walsall. He advised the meeting that West Midlands Police were the best performing Police unit in the country and Walsall and Aldridge were the best performing units in the West Midlands. Demand had been raised because of this success. Response policing had overshadowed neighbourhood policing as a result.

Chief Superintendent Gilbert reported that neighbourhood policing did not have to be brought in until 2008 but Walsall had already introduced it in 15 areas and put officers in place.

The system had gone on line in April 2006 and was reviewed after one month when shift patterns were changed to make it work better. After three months a further review was carried out but the demand for policing had not reduced. The latest information involving police community support officers had been launched in November 2006 and seemed to be working well. He referred to independent surveys carried out by Mori in the satisfaction with of policing and reported a satisfaction rate of 90%. However there was still room for improvement.

Tony Harrison referred to the work of Community officers in schools 20 years ago which had been very pro-active. He asked if they could be re-introduced.

Chief Superintendent Gilbert stated that police officers were often not the best people to visit schools. He also referred to the difficulty in getting into schools because of the demands of the national curriculum. He added that the schools liaison officers had lost out to the pressures of dealing with the volume of calls made to the police which had to be answered and indicated that there were neighbourhood police officers who did visit schools as part of their activities. Chief Superintendent Gilbert stated that the style of policing in Walsall town centre had been changed to improve the situation. Officers had been taken out of vehicles and put on foot patrols and an immediate improvement had been noticed. He ended by stating that working in partnership the police could have a far greater impact than working alone.

Councillor Douglas-Maul stated that he had been concerned about the effect of Policing in the Streetly area but following recent meetings he felt that Partnership Working was succeeding

Councillor Rochelle thanked Chief Superintendent Gilbert for his input and it was

Resolved

That the presentation be noted.

181/06 **Appointment of Two Representatives from the Local Neighbourhood Partnership to the Foundation Trust Stakeholder Reference Group**

Councillor Rochelle stated that the first meeting of the Stakeholder Reference Group had been held on 6 December 2006. In order that the LNP could be represented there he had asked Johanne Newens and the manager of the Aldridge Health Centre to attend.

Councillor Ansell felt that the LNP should have been asked to make the nominations and it was.

Resolved

That this matter be referred to the next meeting of the Partnership for a full report.

182/06 **Aldridge Manor House – Update**

Councillor Rochelle informed the meeting that the Trustees of Aldridge Manor House had indicated that they would be resigning and services for the elderly at the Manor House would cease. He indicated that he would be holding a meeting with Trustees and Andy Driver of Leisure and Culture on 12 December 2006 to discuss the way forward. He stated that elder groups could have the use of the premises for £10 per hour. He felt this would be a good deal for the elderly as it could remove any maintenance liability from them. He added that the art classes and scrabble for the over 55's had already moved to the Anchor Meadow Community Centre.

Councillor Rochelle stated that children had requested an internet café and he felt that Aldridge Manor House would be the ideal location.

Jenny Henney reported that Andy Driver had appointed a full time youth worker which meant that the centre could be opened for longer. She was concerned that an internet café could affect the fitness of young people and lead to obesity problems.

Councillor Rochelle commented that the government changes in funding in youth services had hit hard. In the past Aldridge Manor House had been a youth club with some community involvement but over time this balance had been changed. He referred to the fact that Aldridge Community Association offered an alternative venue for older people's activities.

Pauline Heydon referred to the fact that Red House youth club had moved to Aldridge Manor House following the closure of Red House School. However, the facilities offered had been inadequate and the children no longer attended. Councillor Ansell indicated that the Red House area had always been disadvantaged. He added the funds from the sale of Red House School would be used to assist the youths of that area.

It was requested that the sports hall at Aldridge Manor House be used for line dancing and bowls for the elderly. Councillor Rochelle indicated that this would be considered.

Resolved

That the verbal update be noted.

183/06 **Date of next meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Partnership would be held on Tuesday 6 February 2007 at the Streetly Association, Foley Road East, Streetly, commencing at 7.00 pm.

Termination of meeting

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 9.25 pm

Chairman

Date