

# MINUTES OF THE AREA FORUM SOUTH

22 October 2009

The Area Forum South met at 7.00pm at The Coleshill School

**Present:** Councillor Sherratt in the Chair

Borough & County Councillors: Fowler, Gordon, Fox; Zgraja

**In attendance:** A Rigby, C Fossey, J Rhodes (WCC), R Beggs, J Douglas, S Maxey, (NWBC) Sgt Drake, PC Hopkins, PC Vaughton, PCSO Staten, PCSO Waller CI Belcher, Insp Davies (Warwickshire Police), J Andrews (Over Whitacre PC); B Coton E H, J Poole (Shustoke PC); B Martin (Ansley PC) S Wallace, J Upton (Coleshill TC); J Macdonald (Corley PC); D Key, R Parker (NWCAVA);, L Davies, B Stuart & J Stuart, P Rafferty; G Twigge, P Twigge, D Jones, C McAleenan, B McAleenan, E Mortiboys, I Rees (Members of the Public)

## 1. Apologies for Absence.

Cllr Hayfield, Fillongley Parish Council

## 2. Minutes of the meeting held of the Forum held on 14 July 2009

To include Bob Trahern, NWBC as present. The minutes were agreed as a true record.

## 3. Matters Arising

Local Development Framework update from NWBC: Following the first round of consultation which finished on 6 August it is proposed that a further round of consultation takes place around March 2010 when the draft Core Strategy is due out.

## 4. Safer Neighbourhoods

Glen Belcher is Acting Chief Inspector for North Warwickshire over the next 6 months.

Sgt Drake presented an update on police activity over the last 3 months and recorded crime statistics. The key message is that crime, including incidences of anti-social behaviour is falling across the borough.

Sgt Drake also gave a summary of the progress and actions that had been undertaken on the Area Forum priorities chosen at the last meeting:

**Parking – Coleshill Town Centre around Tesco (crossing, zig-zags and disable bay)**

**Anti-social behaviour – Coleshill Town Centre, Birmingham Rd, High Street**

A copy of the summary detailing these actions can be viewed on the Council's website [www.northwarks.gov.uk](http://www.northwarks.gov.uk) via the link for meetings and minutes.

In response to questions Sgt Drake replied that 2009 figures for Anti-social behaviour (ASB) were not yet available to the public. Latest figures used were from September 2008. It was pointed out these figures do not provide an up to date picture of police activity.

The accurate reporting of violent crime is a key priority for Warwickshire Police

In response to recent incidences of ASB in Ansley Common the public are encouraged to report each incident. One Acceptable Behavioural Contract (ABC) has been issued and two incidences of fly tipping have also been reported recently.

In response to observations that 'Active Traffic Management' vehicles are parking inappropriately in Coleshill town centre, local PCSO will liaise with company to find out what they are doing and ask them to park more responsibly.

PCSO responsibilities were discussed particularly around issuing parking tickets. Representation from local councils has been made to the Chief Constable in the past to increase powers to PCSOs in Warwickshire. Further representation will be made by Safer Communities portfolio group, NWBC in due course.

It was agreed a letter should be sent from this Forum to the Chief Constable in support of greater powers for PCSOs.

The need for a crossing point on the Coventry Road near The Coleshill School was raised.

The following Area Forum priorities were agreed:

Anti-social behaviour - Ansley Common around allotments

Anti-social behaviour (4x4 vehicles) – Ansley Common around Footpath AE 197

Anti-social behaviour – Coleshill Town Centre around Birmingham Rd / High Street

R Beggs advised on the increase in thefts of car number plates. Free anti-vandal screws are available through local Neighbourhood Watch Teams. An event is planned for 3 November in Coleshill Town Centre to raise awareness of the issue and give out free anti-vandal screws.

M Rowland, WCC Trading Standards Service, gave a presentation on 'Tackling Underage Sales of Alcohol'. The presentation outlined the proactive role played by Trading Standards in preventing the illegal sales of alcohol to under 18s. It included their enforcement duties under the Licensing Act; initiatives to educate traders about their legal obligations; offences and penalties for underage sales of alcohol; and partnership working with the Police, to monitor compliance with the law, using young volunteers in targeted, intelligence-led test-purchasing campaigns.

The public are encouraged to report incidents of underage sales to Trading Standards by contacting: [www.consumerdirect.gov.uk](http://www.consumerdirect.gov.uk) Tel. 08454 04 05 06

## **5. Public Questions/Parish Issues**

Written question submitted by Clerk, Ansley Parish Council:

There was, until recently, a picnic area owned by the Borough Council on the old railway cutting site up Oldbury Road in the vicinity of Slacks Farm. This area has now been sold by the Borough Council to the owner of Slacks Farm who has bulldozed the lot and flattened the site. The Parish Council feel that it is such a shame that this area of local amenity has been lost, and over 100 saplings have been destroyed which the Borough Council planted themselves some years ago. Why was this done without any consultation with local residents and is it a new policy of the Borough Council to sell off public land to private individuals.?

Reply provided by Warwickshire County Council's Rural Services Team and Asset Management Team:

The land was acquired by WCC in 1960 / 70's as a potential site for tipping waste. Part of the land at Oldbury Cutting was formerly a picnic site managed within the Country Parks portfolio, WCC. However, constant vandalism, burnt out cars and other antisocial behaviour / police involvement resulted in it being decommissioned in 1994.

The site lay dormant whilst alternative uses were sought without success such as: a chipping store for County Highways; a green waste station; a site managed by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust.

In 2007/8, WCC Rangers contacted the owner of Slacks Farm when dealing with the public footpath (part of the Centenary Way long distance trail). The owner then expressed an interest in purchasing the Cutting.

The Oldbury Cutting Picnic Area, Hartshill was sold in April 2009 by Warwickshire County Council (WCC) to the owners of Slack's Farm, subject to the existing public footpath. The owner purchased the Cutting to help improve security to the property. WCC retained the adjacent chipping store.

Further land sales:

There are no plans to dispose of any Country Parks or Greenways in North Warwickshire.

WCC has a new 'Procedure for Declaring Property Surplus', which requires it to consult with partner agencies, and also Warwickshire CAVA, on behalf of the third sector when we have surplus land or buildings, to see whether they have any interest in purchasing them. This procedure was not in place when the Oldbury Cutting disposal took place.

In response to a question by Coleshill Town Council and Coleshill Civic Society about the planning application made by a supermarket to build in the town the following reply was given. The Planning Board, NWBC supported the application giving outline planning permission. The application will go before Full Council, NWBC for a decision.

In response to a question from Over Whitacre Parish Council, concerned with increased traffic speeds through the parish the following response was given. Road Safety Unit, WCC to contact Parish Council and add site(s) to SpeedAware campaign.

In response to a question from Shustoke Parish Council about parking on double yellow lines (Wilkinson Way) outside the school the following reply was given. PCSO Boulter to assist.

## **6. Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service Consultation – Joanna Rhodes (WCC)**

J Rhodes, (WCC) reported on the County Council's Fire and Rescue Service consultation process currently taking place and encouraged people to attend the public consultation meetings to be held on 27 October 2009 at The Coleshill School and 19 November 2009 at Polesworth.

Copies of the consultation document were available at the meeting. Alternatively full details can be viewed on-line at [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/fireandrescue](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/fireandrescue). The closing date for submissions is 8 December 2009.

## **7. Future of Indoor Leisure Provision in Coleshill – Jaki Douglas (NWBC)**

J Douglas fed back on the two public consultations held on 1<sup>st</sup> July and 26<sup>th</sup> September. 366 questionnaires have been received from groups and individuals.

All those who have responded agreed that there was a need for leisure provision in the town. 17% thought it should remain at the present site; 35% preferred the Memorial Park; 39% at The Coleshill School.

As part of the consultation all parish councils have been contacted. It is looking unlikely that a swimming pool would be included in the final plan.

A progress report will be discussed by NWBC councillors in due course.

In response to a question about the future of Kingsbury swimming pool, a report will be going to Warwickshire County Council's North Warwickshire Area Committee in either November 2009 or January 2010.

## **8. Speed Limit Review – Chris Fossey (WCC)**

C Fossey gave a presentation on the Speed Limit Review undertaken on all A & B roads in the County by the Road Safety Unit, Warwickshire County Council.

When reviewing a speed limit for a particular road the following issues were considered: speed of vehicles, number of injuries, the road environment, types of vehicles using the road.

Phase 1 of the Review involved 105Km of A & B road network being assessed in North Warwickshire

Phase 2 involved an informal public consultation process

Phase 3 involved a statutory consultation with partners (police, local councils)

Final decision on the Speed Limit Review in North Warwickshire was agreed by Warwickshire County Council's North Warwickshire Area Committee

C Fossey gave a local example: B4114 from Birmingham boundary to Nuneaton

The road was divided into 8 sections.

Two sections had a reduction in speed limit from 60mph to 50mph and one section from 60 mph to 40mph at a cost of approx. £50,000. Two sections required engineering measures - Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) to assist motorists to comply with the new speed limit.

In response to questions. It is too early to say whether the review has had a positive impact on driver behaviour. An evaluation will be undertaken in due course.

No speed limits were increased as part of the review.

C Fossey will follow up the installation of VAS on the section between Furnace End to Ansley Common.

## **9. Funding in North Warwickshire**

J Douglas, NWBC informed of two applications for funding and it was

**Resolved:**

**That the following grants be awarded**

- **5<sup>th</sup> Coleshill Brownies - £760;**
- **The Old Barn Centre, Old Arley - £2840**

A Rigby, WCC informed on three funding schemes from Warwickshire County Council:

- Community Computers - 25 recycled computers available to community groups in North Warwickshire. This scheme will be launched shortly by North Warwickshire CAVA
- Community Development Fund - £36,000 available to local voluntary and community groups in North Warwickshire to benefit local communities. Closing date for applications 4 December 2009. Applications to be considered by North Warwickshire Area Committee in January 2010
- Small Grants Fund – up to £500 available to new community groups and projects in North Warwickshire

**10. Area Pledge update – Joanna Rhodes**

J Rhodes shared the draft Pledge with the Forum, which is supported by North Warwickshire Borough Council and Warwickshire County Council. The Forum was asked to comment on the draft Pledge to 'Addressing local transport issues'.

Any one wanting to highlight a need or issue around local transport can fill out and return the appropriate section on the draft Pledge or alternatively send an e-mail to:

[alistairrigby@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:alistairrigby@warwickshire.gov.uk)

The Community Development Fund, WCC can be used by community groups to help deliver the Pledge and tackle local transport issues.

**11. Future agenda items**

None

**12. Any other business**

None

**13. Next Meeting**

Thursday, 28 January 2010