



<u>Committee and Date</u> Bridgnorth, Worfield, Alveley and Claverley Local Joint Committee
2 December 2009
7:00 p.m.

<u>Item/Paper</u>
3
Public

NOTES OF ACTIONS AND DECISIONS FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2009 AT WORFIELD RECREATION ROOM, WORFIELD

7:00 – 9.00 p.m.

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Committee Members Present:

Shropshire Council

John Hurst-Knight
Christian Lea (Chairman)
William Parr
Les Winwood
Michael Wood
Tina Woodward (Vice Chairman)

Town/Parish Councils

*Sue Humphreys, Alveley and Romsley Parish Council
David Tooth, Beckbury Parish Council
Geoff Bodenham, Bridgnorth Town Council
Richard Cotham, Claverley Parish Council
Ian Amos, Kemberton Parish Council
Isabelle Faithful, Quatt Malvern Parish Council
Malcolm Duff-Walker, Ryton and Grindle Parish Council
Len Ball, Worfield and Rudge Parish Council

* = substitute

Shropshire Council Officers present:

Michael Hyatt, Lead Officer
Helen Powell, Support Officer
John Hodgkinson, Community Working Manager – Southern Area
Vicky Turner, Community Regeneration Officer (CRO)
Anne Cousins, Committee Officer
Ron Buzzacott, Head of Technical Services (agenda item 7)

West Mercia Police:

Sgt Bob Matthews
PC Matt Picken (Bridgnorth Rural East)
CSO Sue Eden (Bridgnorth Rural East)

There were approx 50-60 members of the public present.

ACTION

1. Apologies and Substitutions

Apologies were received from:

Mr Allan Chatham, Sutton Maddock Parish Council
Mr Simon Elcock, Astley Abbots Parish Council
Mr Terry Lipscombe, Badger Parish Council
Mr John Owen, Stockton Parish Council.
Mr David Voysey, Alveley and Romsley Parish Council

Mrs Sue Humphreys substituted for Mr David Voysey.

2. Declarations of Interest

The following Members declared personal and prejudicial interests in relation to funding applications (agenda item 9):

Mr Len Ball, Member of Worfield Cricket Club - Bowls Section (application 3).

Mr Geoff Bodenham, Member of Worfield Cricket Club (application 3).

Mr Richard Cotham, family member belonged to Worfield Cricket Club (application 3).

Mr John Hurst-Knight, Co-Chair, Friends of Bridgnorth Library (application 1)

Mrs I Faithful, Member of Quatt Cricket Club (application 4).

They left the room during consideration of these applications.

3. Notes

RESOLVED: That the notes of the previous meeting, held on 2 July 2009, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. Key Current Policing Issues – PACT (Partners and Communities Together)

4.1 Sgt Bob Matthews, local police sergeant for the district, introduced himself and his team and invited questions from the public.

4.2 There was a short discussion about CCTV cameras in the area and who was responsible for them. Sgt Matthews explained the police had access to them for traffic monitoring. Concerns were raised about the information gathered – how long it was kept and what it was used for. Sgt Matthews assured those present that all data protection issues were fully covered.

4.3 A member of the public asked for advice as she had seen a van driver using a mobile phone and reading a piece of paper while

driving round a corner. Police advice was that any such incident should be reported via the standard police telephone number. If possible, the registration number of the vehicle should be provided. If there was evidence, a formal complaint could be pursued, but even if not, incidents could still be logged.

ACTION

4.4 The issue of A-boards in Low Town was raised. Ron Buzzacott, Head of Technical Services, Shropshire Council, explained that the Council had an application process for A-boards, but there was no enforcement policy. In order to resolve this, it had now been agreed to have a trial in Ludlow next month using informal assessment via parking attendants. Any infringements of the regulations would be taken up with shop-keepers, with the aim of settling any issues informally. He suggested it may be possible to try the same scheme in the Bridgnorth area. Any particular areas of concern needed to be reported to the Council.

All

4.5 A member of the public said he had recently been the victim of theft of valuable farm equipment. Sgt Matthews explained there had been two incidents of large amounts of heavy plant being stolen by specialist thieves. He outlined the police response, which was to pool all intelligence with neighbouring forces. He added it was very difficult to catch such teams unless there was a breakthrough of some kind, as they tended to move on quickly after committing these crimes.

4.6 There was discussion about people in rural communities feeling vulnerable and Sgt Matthews agreed it was important for the police to maintain contact with victims and build up confidence. He recognised that the police were sometimes criticised for not communicating enough with victims. A member of the public said her teenage son had been the victim of a crime in March and the police had been excellent in providing support to the family.

5. West Mercia Police Finances

5.1 Mr Michael Wood, Member of the Committee and Member of West Mercia Police Authority, provided a response to a question raised by a member of the public at a previous meeting. The questioner had asked the reason for yearly increases in council tax for West Mercia Police and how this money was spent.

5.2 Mr Wood explained he was aware the 4.9% increase in council tax for the police had been an election issue. He informed those present that this money was match-funded by police reserves in order to maintain the current level of service. Without the reserves and the council tax increase, there would have been a reduction in service. West Mercia Police compared favourably to other forces and was acknowledged as being a well-organised and well-managed force, with the vast majority of its expenditure being used for frontline services. He was acutely aware that

budgets for all public bodies were under severe pressure this year and the Audit Committee of West Mercia Police were currently looking at the way the whole organisation was run. Mr Wood described how major crimes, such as complex murder investigations, could bankrupt a police force, as had happened with Cambridgeshire Police following the Soham murders a few years ago. There was also a need to fund specialist support units for serious and organised crime across the region, which was not recognised in grant aid to individual forces. He explained a 1% reduction in the police budget would result in the loss of 28 police constables or 46.9 support staff. He concluded by saying it was a serious financial situation and he hoped this explained the need for the 4.9% increase in council tax bills.

ACTION

- 5.3 A member of the public asked about staff costs and suggested the numbers of support staff could be reduced. Mr Wood informed him that the basic cost to the authority of a police constable was £42,000 and for support staff it was £25,600. He described the role of support staff as crucial.
- 5.4 Mr Edward Marshall, who had asked the original question, commented that pensioners only had a 2-3% increase each year, yet the police were expecting 4.9%.
- 5.5 In response to a question, Mr Wood confirmed the budget included the costs of community support officers. Sgt Matthews expanded on the importance of community support officers because of the way they forged links with the community and used intelligence to help secure convictions.

6. Public Question Time and Identification of Future Agenda Items

- 6.1 Firstly, the Chairman invited Michael Hyatt, Lead Officer, to explain the purpose of the Local Joint Committee. The Lead Officer thanked everyone for coming and explained the Local Joint Committee was a partnership between Shropshire Council, the Town and Parish Councils and other organisations and it gave the public an opportunity to raise any issues of concern within the community. He then invited questions from the public.
- 6.2 Mrs Jayne Madeley, Clerk to Astley Abbots Parish Council, asked for support in lobbying BT about including Bridgnorth addresses in the Shropshire telephone directory. Currently, some Bridgnorth addresses were in West Midlands telephone directories, and it was difficult to obtain contact details of individuals and businesses in the rest of Shropshire. This was an issue the Parish Council were already pursuing but she would welcome support from the Local Joint Committee. The Chairman suggested, and it was agreed, that this was a worthwhile cause and a letter should be sent to BT from the Local Joint Committee.

**Chair/
Lead
Officer**

- 6.3 Mr Cotham, Claverley Parish Council, suggested there was a similar problem with postcodes in his area, which could be West Midlands, Dudley or Bridgnorth and the Parish Council had not been able to resolve this.
- 6.4 A member of the public raised the issue of the anti-social and dangerous behaviour of bikers gathering at Quatford at the Food Stop Café and the petrol station. The behaviour included smoking on the petrol station forecourt and verbal abuse of disabled people and was particularly noticeable at weekends. He suggested this would be suitable item for discussion at a future meeting. The Chairman agreed to discuss the matter with the police and fire authorities and report back.
- 6.5 Mr Peter Dent, of Tasley Parish Council, asked about speed limits along the Wenlock Road in Tasley. There was a 30 mph limit, but there was inadequate signage and therefore people ignored the limit. The Chairman suggested this matter could be taken up by the Shropshire Councillors for the area, Mr John Hurst-Knight and Mr Les Winwood.
- 6.6 A member of the public suggested a future agenda item on recreation and environment.

7. Event Management – Traffic Management Arrangements

- 7.1 Mr Les Winwood introduced this item and explained that it had come to his attention that Shropshire Council was proposing to charge voluntary organisations for traffic management arrangements for events, e.g. use of cones, barriers, and signage. He cited several events which took place each year in Bridgnorth and were very successful, but which were now under threat due to these additional costs.
- 7.2 Mr Ron Buzzacott, Head of Technical Services, Shropshire Council, explained there were five events in Bridgnorth each year and 100 across the county. The five events in Bridgnorth were the only ones where Shropshire Council was currently paying the traffic management costs. All other events were funded by the organisations themselves. No organisations were charged for the legal costs of closing roads. The Head of Technical Services went on to say that the traffic management costs for the five Bridgnorth events would be met by Shropshire Council this year, but the proposal was to meet with the organisers to discuss a way forward for future years.
- 7.3 Mr Brian Davies, of the Bridgnorth Town Centre Management Partnership, commented that his organisation ran two events and they had had no communication with the Council on this matter. He had only become aware of it after being contacted by the local

ACTION

**Chair/
Lead
Officer**

**J. Hurst-
Knight/L.
Winwood**

newspaper and he suggested consultation by the Council with interested parties beforehand would have been helpful. He welcomed the opportunity of a meeting.

ACTION

- 7.4 The Head of Technical Services explained the Council had contacted those whose names were on the road closure applications and he apologised if any organisations had been omitted. The Chairman requested that any organisers of events present at the meeting should leave their contact details with the Head of Technical Services in order to progress this matter.

8. Local Joint Committee Funding Arrangements

- 8.1 Michael Hyatt, Lead Officer, introduced this report, which set out details and proposed uses of the Local Joint Committee budget for the 2009/10 financial year.

8.2 RESOLVED:

- A To set up a Community Chest with a budget of £10,000 providing small grants up to £500 subject to the criteria as outlined in the report.
- B To allocate a sum of £45,000 for a larger grant scheme for projects over £500 to be established with grant applications not normally exceeding £7,000.
- C The remaining £16,000 to be retained to be spent on local priorities as decided in the forthcoming months by the Local Joint Committee.
- D Applications for grant funding will be considered by Members of this Committee subject to the criteria as set out in this report following an initial assessment by officers and in accordance with the Financial Procedure Notes governing Local Joint Committees.

9. Consideration of Funding Applications

- 9.1 The Lead Officer introduced this report, which provided information on the eight applications for funding received.
- 9.2 A Member commented that the application from the Bridgnorth and District Arts Society did not provide sufficient information about how the money requested was to be spent. Vicky Turner, Community Regeneration Officer, confirmed that the application had included a breakdown of costs for the previous year and she was satisfied with the information provided.
- 9.3 With regard to the applications from Bylet Bowling Club, Worfield Cricket Club – Bowls Section, and Quatt Cricket Club, the officer recommendation was for 75% of the amount requested to be granted, as the match funding criteria had not been fully met. The Community Regeneration Officer would discuss alternative sources of funds with applicants.

ACTION

9.4 **RESOLVED:**

A The Committee considered the applications received in the light of the Community Regeneration and Support Officers assessment and considered the recommendations for Community Chest and main funding areas.

B The following grant applications were approved:
Community Chest:

C1	Bridgnorth and District Camera Club (purchase of exhibition boards)	£428
C2	Bridgnorth & District Arts Society (contribution towards annual programme)	£500
C3	Bridgnorth & District Twinning Association (assistance with costs of forthcoming events)	£492

Larger Grants:

1	Friends of Bridgnorth Library (purchase of projector) £600 had been requested. It was agreed to move this project to the Community Chest and award £500.	£500
2	Bylet Bowling Club (purchase of staging, dance floor and indoor bowling equipment - £5,000 requested)	£4,275
3	Worfield Cricket Club – Bowls Section (purchase of mower - £4,420 requested)	£3,315
4	Quatt Cricket Club (Electricity generator and extension of junior programme - £1,384 requested)	£1,297.50
5	Bridgnorth Musical Theatre Company (assistance with costs of production)	£4,200

**Lead
Officer**

9.5 The Lead Officer explained the Committee was keen to hear about how these grants had helped organisations and would be asking for feedback at future meetings.

9.6 Mr Brian Davies suggested that any equipment purchased by organisations using money from the Local Joint Committee should be kept on a register to enable other groups to hire the equipment. The Lead Officer thanked him for this very helpful and practical suggestion.

CRO

10. Bridgnorth, Worfield, Alveley and Claverley area

10.1 The Lead Officer invited all present to take part in an interactive session, using large maps of the Local Joint Committee area. He asked groups to identify Opportunities (places and facilities valued by the community) and Problems (areas of concern).

10.2 At the conclusion of the exercise, the Chairman thanked everyone for contributing and explained that the results of the exercise would be reported at a future meeting.

11. Dates and Venues of Meetings in 2009/10

Dates of the next meetings were confirmed as Wednesday 2 December 2009 and Wednesday 3 March 2010, at 7.00 p.m. It was agreed the venue for the December meeting would be Alveley Village Hall.

ACTION

**Lead
Officer**

Signed.....Chairman

Date.....