



Committee and Date
 Oswestry Local Joint
 Committee

 27 May 2010

 7.00pm

Item/Paper

6

 Public

OSWESTRY LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEE

**NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 MARCH 2010 AT 7.00 PM
 AT HOLY TRINITY CE PRIMARY SCHOOL, MIDDLETON ROAD, OSWESTRY**

Responsible Officer Michelle Evans
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PRESENT:

Members of the Committee:

Mr Martin Bennett (Chairman)	Shropshire Council
Mr Bill Benyon	Shropshire Council
Mr Vince Hunt	Shropshire Council
Mrs Elaine Channon	Oswestry Town Council
Mr John Evans	Oswestry Town Council
Mr Gareth Jones	Oswestry Town Council

The following Shropshire Councillors were also present:

Mr Steve Charmley	Chairman, The Five Perry Parishes Local Joint Committee
Mr Steve Davenport	Local Member
Mr David Lloyd	Local Member
Mr David Roberts	Portfolio Holder for Economy and Waste
Mr Arthur Walpole	Chairman, St Oswald & Llanymynech Local Joint Committee

Officers:

George Candler	Assistant Director, Culture and Leisure, (Lead Officer)
Arren Roberts	Corporate Performance Improvement Officer (Support Officer)
Kate Garner	Team Leader, Community Regeneration (North)
Nicki Young	Community Regeneration Officer (North)
Alison Patrick	Tourism Officer
Inspector Jim Stafford	West Mercia Police
Michelle Evans	Committee Officer, Legal & Democratic Services (Notes)

There were approximately 50 members of the public at the meeting.

1. Welcome, Introduction and Chairman’s Statement

1.1 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Committee members and other members of Shropshire Council who had been invited to take part in discussions on agenda item 8 – developing the tourism offer in Oswestry.

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2. Apologies for Absence

- 2.1 Apologies were received from Mr Keith Barrow (Shropshire Council) and Miss Betty Gull (Oswestry Town Council).

3. Declarations of Interest

- 3.1 Mrs Elaine Channon declared a personal interest in Application S (Agenda Item 9) as she was involved with the local Girl Guides.
- 3.2 Mr John Evans declared a personal interest in Application O (Agenda Item 9) as he was a member of Oswestry Cricket Club and would abstain from taking part in any discussion or vote on this application.
- 3.3 Mr Gareth Jones declared a personal interest in Application AC (Agenda Item 9) as he was a member of the Oswestry Senior Citizens Club and would abstain from taking part in any discussion or vote on this application.

4. Notes of the previous meeting

- 4.1 **AGREED:** That the notes of the meeting held on 3 December 2009 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

5. Feedback from Local Joint Committee Meeting held on 3 December 2009

- 5.1 The Community Regeneration Officer gave verbal updates on the New Street enhancement scheme, Severn Trent Water mains renewal works and Oswald Road Car Park Recycling Centre.

6. Community Regeneration Officer – Update on Current work

- 6.1 The Community Regeneration Officer highlighted five main areas that she was currently involved in, as follows:
- Artists at Work project – a building in Coney Green had been located to house this project which would be launched in the summer.
 - Museum – a workshop had been held and a steering group set up to decide on a project for National Heritage Weekend (9-12 September 2010)
 - Under-age drinking in Oswestry – a multi-agency team meeting had been held and an Action Plan developed in order to respond to the problem.
 - Empty shop project – two exhibitions had been held in an empty shop in Smithfield Street and other empty properties were being sought. A panel had been set up to assess exhibition proposals. Footfalls would be hosting an event at the Marches School at 6pm on 29 March 2010.

Action

- Hate crime – a report was being prepared which highlighted the issue and the ways in which the problem could be addressed. Work was ongoing towards the provision of English conversational classes in Oswestry.

6.2 The Chairman informed the meeting that the Community Regeneration Officer was also working to re-launch the Chamber of Commerce.

6.3 The Chairman reported that at the recent Skill Smart presentation held at The Wynnstay Hotel, the town had been described as being very friendly with a lot of good practice evident in the independent retail sector.

7. Public Question Time and PACT Meeting (Partners and Communities Together)

7.1 Councillor Steve Charmley, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Leisure gave an update on the Oswald Park Leisure Centre. It was hoped that a new contractor would be signed up to start work in June 2010.

7.2 The Chairman gave an update on the Oswestry Primary Care Centre. It was hoped that construction of the new medical centre would be completed mid-December 2010.

7.3 The Chairman introduced Inspector Stafford, who reported that despite recent tragic events, Oswestry was still a low crime area. Statistics for the last 12 months compared to the previous 12 months had reduced considerably (Overall crime had reduced by 26.6%; burglary by 50.5%; theft from car by 26.3%; burglary from factories/sheds by 43.3% and criminal damage was down by 25.9%).

7.4 Inspector Stafford updated the meeting on issues raised at the previous meeting as follows:

- Dog fouling

Inspector Stafford reiterated the difficulties with enforcement and that prevention was the best course. He reported that free dog bags were available from Shropshire Council and a supply was available at the meeting if anyone wished to take any.

- Police Station opening times

Inspector Stafford reported that a 16 week project was currently being undertaken at the Police Station to improve the ground floor layout and the disabled access. These improvements would safeguard the future of the Police Station in Oswestry.

- Parking outside Woodside School

Inspector Stafford reported that work was ongoing to deal with this issue and it was felt that the message was starting to sink in.

- Underage drinking

Inspector Stafford reported that work was ongoing however it was difficult

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to stop the problem being moved on to other areas.

7.5 Inspector Stafford invited members of the public to raise any issues of concern. Issues raised included:

- Parking on pavements eg Prince Street

Inspector Stafford reported that Shropshire Council were looking into the issue of parking in Prince Street. He explained that responsibility for parking enforcement had been transferred to Shropshire Council however the Police could enforce obstructions.

- Children standing on the back of mobility scooters whilst on the road

Inspector Stafford reported that the Government were looking at introducing training and third party insurance for mobility scooters.

- Crime statistics

In response to a query Inspector Stafford reported that there had not been a national decline in crime. The downturn in Oswestry was attributable to specific campaigns and the targeting of specific offenders. In response to a query Inspector Stafford reported that the only category that had gone up was assaults which had increased by 1.8% and were mainly linked to the night time economy.

- Drug use

In response to a query Inspector Stafford confirmed that drugs were a common problem and GHB had been a problem in Oswestry. As part of a Crime Reduction initiative, the Police had been provided with kits to test for GHB, which was the same drug used in date rape.

7.6 Other issues raised included:

- Whether the bus service for residents in Victoria Road was going to be reinstated.
- An official bus stop for the No 402 bus was required in Smithfield Street.

It was confirmed that these issues would be followed up.

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8. Developing the tourism offer in Oswestry

8.1 The Chairman introduced this item and explained that the issue of tourism had been raised by members of the public at a previous meeting. A presentation would be given followed by group work to identify what the tourism opportunities were and how these could be developed.

- 8.2 A presentation was given by one of Shropshire Council's Tourism Officers – copy attached to the signed minutes. The Tourism Officer explained her role and the work that she and her colleagues undertook to support tourism in the area. She reported that the an updated Tourism Strategy was being prepared by Shropshire Council that would incorporate the valuable information contained in the Tourism Strategy prepared by Oswestry Borough Council in 2010.
- 8.3 The Tourism Officer informed the meeting that they wished to focus on four areas, namely Oswestry and North Shropshire; Shrewsbury; Shropshire Hills and Ludlow; and, Ironbridge & Severn Valley.
- 8.4 She then highlighted the tourism opportunities that were currently available in the area, including Pontcysyllte Aqueduct (World Heritage Site); Llanymynech (canal, wildlife, geology); Oswestry town (specialist shops, hillfort, events); Lion Quays (spa facilities, canal) and Offa's Dyke (walking). The Tourism Officer went on to described the development opportunities which included Montgomery Canal restoration; Cambrian Railway restoration; collier's trail (industrial heritage eg Chirk, St Martins) and circular walking routes along the Shropshire Way.
- 8.5 The Tourism Officer reported that £6K had been received from the Northern Area Partnership which would be used for a Spring marketing and PR campaign. It was hoped to link up to other sites and appeal to different sections of the population in order to bring people into the area.
- 8.6 Other areas that it was felt could be promoted include Whittington Castle and Park Hall Camp, Watts Dyke, Old Oswestry and the old Racecourse, Wilfred Owen and Walford Davies, 600th Anniversary of Oswestry School, Oswestry Archives, Chirk and Powys Castles and the North Wales Coast.
- 8.7 A member of the public commented that there was much to attract visitors to Oswestry but the town was good at concealing these attractions and Oswestry needed to raise its profile. It was felt that walking, the canals and railways would be major tourist attractions for the town.
- 8.8 Concern was raised that interpretation boards had not yet been sited at the hillfort and Councillor Hunt agreed to look into this.
- 8.9 Members of the public broke into groups and were joined by Councillors and/or officers. Each group were asked to identify tourism opportunities, how these could be achieved and who needed to be involved. The Lead Officer explained that these ideas and suggestions would be collated verbatim, grouped into key areas and would be put on the Oswestry Local Joint Committee website. Members of the Committee would have an opportunity to consider how best to take these forward and would report back at the next meeting.

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9. Oswestry Community Chest

9.1 The Committee received the report of the Lead Officer – copy attached to the signed minutes – which considered the applications received by the deadline of 5 February 2010 and provided an update on the devolved budget.

9.2 **It was AGREED that the Oswestry Local Joint Committee:**

A - allocate funding for the following amounts to the following organisations and their projects:

£1,200 to Oswestry Church Bowling Club for the purchase of a powered aerator.

£500 to Oswestry and District Community First Responder for training and equipment

£1010 to Girlguiding UK, Oswestry District for Transport to centenary year activities

£1,925 to Cambrian Studios Project for initial set up costs and promotion

£500 to Oswestry and District Stroke Club for transport costs

£1,800 to Friends of the Victoria Centre for respite for carers of disabled children and adults

£300 to Viscount Bridgeman Court Social Club for purchase of a Wii.

£1,000 to Oswestry and Border History and Archaeology Group for community history and archaeology activities

£1,000 to Shropshire Cruse Bereavement Care for training new volunteers

£800 to Oswestry and District Agricultural Society for internal refurbishment and external security improvement to Park Hall Show Pavilion and Ground

£1,000 to Oswestry Fencing Club for new fencing equipment

£1,700 to Oswestry Senior Citizens Club for replacement of timber structure of club building

B - allocate £2,000 to Oswestry Town Cricket Club towards the installation of Indoor Cricket Nets at the Marches School subject to confirmation of availability to the club and for wider community use over the lifetime of the nets.

Action

C - does not allocate funding to the following projects:

Cambrian Heritage Railways Limited - Oswestry Station Platform

Oswestry Education Centre – Walford and North Shropshire College – Educational Garden at Tuition, Medical and Behaviour Support Service – Shropshire Council Pupil Referral Unit

D - commit an additional £4,106.14 to the Community Chest budget to meet the funding requirements of these recommendations.

E - allocate £10,000 from its funds in order to improve the Tourism Offer in Oswestry.

10. Date of Next Meeting

- 10.1 The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and informed them that the next meeting would be held at 7pm on 27 May 2010 in The Meadows Primary School, Harlech Road, Oswestry.

The meeting ended at 9.15pm.

Chairman: _____

Date: _____