

**Committee and date**

Whitchurch & Prees
Local Joint Committee

24th February 2016

Item

Public

Responsible Officer: Nicki Young, Community Enablement Officer, Shropshire Council
Email: nicki.young@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 07990 085187

WHITCHURCH & PREES LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEE**NOTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24th FEBRUARY 2016
IN WHITCHURCH CIVIC CENTRE AT 7PM****Committee Members Present:**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Council</u>
Mr Paul Gill	Prees Parish Council (Chair)
Mr Tony Neville	Whitchurch Town Council
Mr Gerald Dakin	Shropshire Council
Mr Tom Biggins	Shropshire Council
Mrs Peggy Mullock	Shropshire Council
Mrs Jean Betteridge	Ightfield & Calverhall Parish Council
Mr Will Allen	Whitchurch Rural Parish Council (standing in for Will Allen)

Officers present:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Role</u>
Clive Wright	Chief Executive, Shropshire Council
Kerry Williams	Shropshire Youth Association
Nicki Young	Community Enablement Officer, Shropshire Council
PC Deb Wheeler	Safer Neighbourhood Team, West Mercia Police
CSO Graeme Baines	Whitchurch Safer Neighbourhood Team
Ian Johnson	Shropshire Fire & Rescue

There were approximately 40 members of the public at the meeting.

ACTION**54. Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed everyone, each member of the Committee introduced themselves and the Chair explained the nature and remit of the Local Joint Committees (LJCs).

55. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Shropshire Councillor Paul Wynn and Shaun Sutton, Public Protection Officer, Shropshire Council.

56. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Members were reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on any matter in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.

57. Notes

It was RESOLVED that the notes of the previous meeting held on 7th October 2015 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record. Proposed: Peggy Mullock: Seconded: Tom Biggins – the meeting notes were duly signed by the Chair.

58. Partners & Communities Together (PACT)

- a. Ian Johnson, Shropshire Fire & Rescue:
 - Community Fire Safety – everyone is entitled to a free home safety fire assessment. Free smoke alarms are available to eligible people, the Fire Service website gives more details on the criteria for eligibility. The Community Fire Safety officer is targeting those people who are 65 years and older.
 - It was reported that there is an on-going safety issue with tumble driers, especially Indesit & Hotpoint – people were urged to clean the filters and do regular maintenance.
 - Whitchurch and Prees Retained Fire Station had been called to many chimney fires in villages and the Fire Officer reiterated the need to regularly sweep chimneys.
 - b. PC Deb Wheeler, Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT), West Mercia Police:
 - Gave statistical information on the number of incidents that the Police had attended since the previous meeting, a total of 217 incidents in the area, which included 66 crimes.
 - Visible patrols had increased in the town and speed reassurance has taken place.
 - Wildlife crimes had taken place at Hill Valley
 - The Immigration Department had visited Whitchurch
 - Rural Action Day will be taking place on Saturday 19th March from 10am until 2pm in Civic Centre market hall
 - A Crime Prevention Day will be taking place at Tesco
 - The SNT had completed a road safety task with the Beavers
 - Whitchurch SNT can now also be contacted through Facebook ‘Shropshire Cops’
- Jean Betteridge, Ightfield & Calverhall PC – Bletchley @Road has a speed reassurance Vehicle Activated Sign – this sign is assessing the average speed. It was reported to the Police at the meeting that the area at the back of the shops in Bredwood Arcade, accessed by the road to Haycock’s Wood Yard is becoming a ‘problem area’ where young people congregate.

59. Reporting and Scrutiny (Hot Topics)

- a. Youth Commissioning
 - Kerry Williams, Shropshire Youth Association (SYA), gave a presentation on youth work at Centre NE since October 2015, when the newly commissioned service took over running the youth sessions. Kerry Williams stated that SYA had kept the same structure for youth sessions, juniors on Tuesday and seniors on Thursday evenings.
 - SYA were also commissioned by Shropshire Council to be the infrastructure provider and gave support to all organisations who wanted to start up volunteer led youth groups.

- As part of the Youth Commissioned services, SYA were working in partnership with Energize, and were able to provide activities and extra opportunities to young people to try something new.
- **Q.** Simon Tooth from Big Reds Housed asked what was in place regarding mental health.
- **A.** Kerry explained that all activities run within a youth group setting always included positive mental health messages, all youth workers are trained to recognise mental health issues and safeguarding procedures are followed.
- **Q.** Simon Tooth, Big Reds House, went on to state that “Big Reds House CIC predominantly helps males with suicide issues, but it was currently being bombarded with 15 year olds who were self-harming. Big Reds House would like to work with youth workers and involve the Pastoral Team at SJT.”
- **A.** Community Enablement Officer suggested that a proactive way to understand the problem in more detail would be to get the correct professionals around a table to discuss the matter and agreed to organise this.
- Beechtree Community Centre also runs youth groups, picking up difficult issues too in Whitchurch. Shropshire Council are involved with early help.
- It was noted that retaining Centre NE, Bridgwater Street, Whitchurch was important as young people had familiarity with the building
- Young people have been returning to the sessions, but numbers from Year 9 were still low.
- Stonham Foyer would be closing at the end of March 2016 and the town wanted reassurance.

Action:

- **Community Enablement Officer** to organise a young persons mental health meeting.
- b. Update on Merger of Doctor’s Surgeries in Whitchurch – a written report from Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group was received from Paul Tulley, Deputy Accountable Officer dated 22 February 2016:
- “ I am writing to provide an update as requested regarding the development of plans to relocate Richmond House Surgery and Bridgwater Surgery Medical Practice.

Work is continuing on the development of a business case for the scheme. Design plans are nearing completion and planning permission to increase the car park capacity on the hospital site has already been secured. It is anticipated that the business case will be completed in June. It will require approval from the CCG, Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust and NHS England as capital funding for the scheme is being sought from the Primary Care Transformation fund. Subject to these approvals, it is hoped that the construction work on site could start by the late summer. Richmond House Surgery will need to move from its current premises before the end of the year and an interim solution will need to be found until the new facility at Whitchurch Hospital is completed. Options to address this are being developed by the project group and will be discussed with the patient group and partners.”

60. Shropshire Council Update –

- a. Big Conversation Update – Clive Wright, Chief Executive, Shropshire Council, gave a quick overview of Shropshire Council's consultation on how it will deliver £200m services with a £28m budget. The Big Conversation is one way in which Shropshire Council are engaging with the public over the next 5 years – going forward this consultation will be set up in-house.

Shropshire Council recognise that not everyone uses on-line surveys, therefore the consultation team will be carrying out face-to-face surveys, especially seeking out those who do not use the internet.

Priorities for funding that have been shown from Big Conversation are:

- (1) Education
- (2) Safeguarding – children & vulnerable adults
- (3) Vulnerable adults – offering services

Funding within Shropshire Council has to be ring-fenced for specific departments. The Big Conversation have run a focus group with Town & Parish Clerks. The Government cuts mean Shropshire Council have no choice to cut services.

The new Shropshire Council Leader, Malcolm Pate, has invited Greg Clark, DCLG Minister, to visit Shropshire to see how rural counties are different to urban areas.

Clive Wright went on to ask the question, what can Town & Parish Councils do?

Shropshire Council has produced a list of things that Town & Parish Councils could run instead of Shropshire Council paying for and delivering and there are a few options which would enable this to happen:

- Raise precept through Town/Parish Councils and pay Shropshire Council to deliver
- Town/Parish Council raise precept and deliver themselves.
- Town/Parish Council services delivered by third party agencies.
- Volunteer run services

50% of the population of Shropshire think that Council Taxes should be raised.

Shropshire Council have produced a Financial Plan which will be updated yearly for the next 5 years.

Q. Malcolm Rigley, Whitchurch Town Councillor – “Central Government funding has been taken from Town Council/Parish Councils – did senior (Shropshire Council) officers advise the Council to raise Council Taxes?

A. Yes

Q. David Torrens, Whitchurch Waterway Trust – “The Outdoor Recreation budget is £0 from April 2017, who will own and/or maintain the nature reserve and canal arm in the future? The ownership of the land needs to be preserved as no building should be allowed on the site.

A. Better to be run well and properly by the community. Cutbacks happen & Shropshire Council may not have people in place to manage.

Q. Tony Neville, Whitchurch Town Councillor – As new developments take place and more housing is built there will be extra income.

A. Projections have been made as planning applications are submitted – as the population demographic changes? People are coming into the system younger with more complex needs and this needs to be factored into planning for services.

Q. Graham Stockton, Whitchurch Town Councillor – are you cutting wages and pensions?

A. Currently Shropshire Council has the lowest paid Chief Executive officer and Directors in the country.

Q. Julia Gallaher – Officers had advised Councillors to raise Council Tax and

Councillors refused. People would pay a few more pounds to keep services open. Why did Shropshire Councillors refuse the increase?

A. This time officers have told Council that Council Tax has to be raised – Council Tax will be raised by 3.49% in the new financial year.

Shropshire Councillors Gerald Dakin & Peggy Mullock informed the meeting that 6 years ago the former Leader of the Council made a recommendation to get rid of “waste” within the Council and Shropshire Council have saved £100m over 4 years. Shropshire Council can only raise Council Tax by 2%, maximum of 1% pa – if higher then the Council would lose central Government funding. Shropshire Council are now facing £77m more cuts and therefore have to raise Council Tax.

Q. Simon Lyon, Chamber of Trade - How are efficiencies in Ringway contract managed?

A. Shropshire Council pay Ringway to carry out ‘hedge to hedge’ work, doing all the jobs across the highway. For capital work recurrent jobs, central Government pay. Shropshire Council works with the contractors on how the work is carried out and changes have been made – from 3 potholes per day to 20 potholes per day! The contractor is paid rately, therefore if the contractor chooses to work in an inefficient way they get paid the same.

Q. Liza Willis – there are many potholes along Chemistry. As cars always park on one side of the road and this is a bus route, the road is liable to potholes. These holes could be prevented by parking on both sides of the road.

Chair of the meeting, Prees Parish Councillor Paul Gill, thanked Clive Wright for attending Whitchurch area LJC meeting.

- b. Parking in Town Centre – unfortunately Shaun Sutton, Public Protection Officer (Enforcement) had been taken ill and was unable to attend the meeting. A few issues were raised, namely:
- Simon Lyon, Whitchurch Chamber of Trade, had submitted a question – the High Street is now very busy, especially with deliveries, which is brilliant for the town as it is thriving, but the layout of the town centre is now not fit for purpose.
 - Other street parking issues were raised with Wrexham Road, Smallbrook Road and Yardington.
 - Malcolm Rigley, Whitchurch Town Councillor, said that the Town Council had met a brick wall when putting road safety issues forward. The meeting was informed that all Town & Parish Councils are requested to submit their road safety concerns using the Road Safety Policy, which Town & Parish Councils had input into. Once the road safety concerns had been submitted through this route a Board priorities issues.
 - Bridgwater Street – parking will become an issue as there is not enough parking allocated for the new housing development. Highways are consulted in the planning process and the parking allocation is one space per house. Shropshire Council were requested to consider a residents parking scheme for Bridgwater Street.

Action: **Community Enablement Officer** to organise a Task & Finish group with relevant Highways officers.

61. Question Time

- Liza Willis – at the top of **Westbrook Avenue parking** is becoming a real issue.
- **Action: PC Deb Wheeler** agreed to stick a letter in the window of the relevant household/vehicle.
- Whitchurch Alport Football Club – now have 250 young people playing football and 50 volunteers helping, but there is not enough pitch space in the town. Alport Juniors current use pitches all across the town and believe it will be a long wait for the pitches from the Tilstock Road development to come about.
- **Action:** Chair of Whitchurch Town Council Parks Committee, Terry O'Neill, has said that he will meet with Alport Juniors Team and look at alternative venues where the club could play football. Currently Deermoss Park has sink holes, but the Town Council are working with contractors to sort out the problem.

62. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Whitchurch area Local Joint Committee meeting will take place on Wednesday 6th July 2016 in Prees Village Hall.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending, saying that the success of the meeting was public involvement.

The meeting closed at 21:00

Signature (Chair) Date: