



Committee and Date  
South West Shropshire Local  
Joint Committee

9 October 2014

7.00 pm

Item

1

Public

**BISHOP'S CASTLE, CHIRBURY & WORTHEN AND CLUN  
LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEE**

**NOTE OF DECISIONS AND ACTIONS STEMMING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 24<sup>TH</sup>  
JULY 2014  
7.00 PM – 9.30 PM  
AT  
CHIRBURY HALL, CHIRBURY**

**Responsible Officer** Mathew Mead  
e-mail: [mathew.mead@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:mathew.mead@shropshire.gov.uk) Tel: 01743 252534

**Committee Members Present:**

**Shropshire Council**

Heather Kidd Chirbury & Worthen (Chair)  
Charlotte Barnes Bishop's Castle

**Town/Parish Councils**

Jonathan Roberts	Clungunford Parish Council (Vice Chair)
John Croxton	Clunbury Parish Council
Godfrey May	Lydbury North Parish Council
Steve Burge	Newcastle Parish Council
Andrew Beavan	Llanfairwaterdine Parish Council
Jane Carroll	Bishops Castle Town Council
Andrew Craig	Chirbury Parish Council
Tony Wilkinson	Worthen with Shelve Parish Council

**Officers Present:**

Mathew Mead, Community Enablement Officer, Shropshire Council  
Kate Garner, Locality Commissioning Manager, Shropshire Council  
Pete Banford, Shropshire Hills AONB

**1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2014-15**

Mathew Mead welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated that as this was the first meeting of the financial year the Committee needed to elect a Chair for the coming meeting. A nomination for Councillor Heather Kidd was received, and seconded and the Committee unanimously voted in support. Councillor Kidd chaired the remainder of the meeting.

A nomination for Jonathan Roberts to act as vice chair was received and seconded and also voted for unanimously by the Committee.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

Nigel Hartin (Shropshire Councillor, Clun); Ian Owen (Bedstone and Bucknell PC); Gordon Lewis (Mainstone); James McVicar (Clun Town Council); Jonathan Roberts (Clungunford PC); Andrew Semple (Myndtown PC)

### **3. 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.

No declarations were made.

### **4. Notes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes were agreed as a correct record of the previous LJC on which was held on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> March at Bishop's Castle.

### **5. Police Update**

A written report of was presented by the Safer Neighbourhood Team outlining crime figures in the area; contact details for the team and dates of public PACT meetings where police issues could be discussed in confidence. While crime was very low in the area residents were reminded to take care to secure and lock outbuildings as thefts of tools and equipment from these buildings was an issue across Shropshire, and "opportunistic" thefts had also taken place of purses, small electrical items and cash when properties were left open in sunny weather.

The Police are always keen for members of the public to phone them if they see suspicious behaviour in their area, using the 101 number.

### **6. Pete Banford, Shropshire Hills AONB officer. Presentation on the new LEADER project in South West Shropshire.**

Pete thanked the Committee for inviting him to speak, and gave a back ground to LEADER funding.

LEADER is a European funding programme, which normally runs for a period of 4-5 years at a time, followed by a transitional phase where the programme reviews its priorities. In South West Shropshire the previous LEADER programme ran from 2008 to 2013 and was run by the Shropshire Hills AONB, with Pete being the lead officer.

A new LEADER programme is being developed across Europe, with a total budget of £9.2 billion, and individual areas are being asked to prepare bids and project plans on how they would allocate the funding at a local level, these are called Local Action Groups (LAGS). There are currently three LAGs in Shropshire, the Southern Shropshire LAG which the AONB are developing; a North Shropshire LAG run by the Shropshire Wildlife Trust and a third in Southern and Eastern Shropshire run by a social enterprise. It is thought it likely that when the project plans are considered there will be just two LAG's in Shropshire.

The new LEADER funding has a clear economic focus, and all projects delivered through it will have to have clear economic outcomes focused on jobs and economic growth. This will be based on an integrated approach looking at a wide range of

activities that support the rural economy, and focus will be given to how the services and activities in these areas can be maintained on a sustainable basis.

LEADER receives its funding through Pillar 2 of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) stream of European Funding, and Pete acknowledged that it could be seen the programme was taking funding away from agriculture and farming projects which receive funding through Pillar 1 of the programme. However the agricultural community could still bid for funding from the LEADER programme. The programme did though need to look at the wider economy in rural areas and some of the funding may focus on none agricultural activity.

The LAG being developed in South Shropshire through the AONB was looking to develop a programme of planned activity, which will then be developed in a strategy to be submitted on 5<sup>th</sup> September. The LAG will be notified if they are successful in November and spend would start in January 2015 and run for 5 years up to 2020. Pete was really keen to hear from local businesses, groups and communities who could deliver projects through LEADER. The main areas of funding would be as follows:

- Support for increasing farm productivity
- Support for micro and small enterprises and farm diversification
- Support for rural tourism
- Provision of rural services
- Support for cultural and heritage activities
- Support for increasing forestry productivity

#### Questions and comments from the Committee

Members highlighted the very different challenges that farmers faced in this area, where opportunities to diversify farming activities were limited due to the landscape. Reduced funding to farmers also had a wider knock on effect to the rural economy as suppliers of feed, tools and machinery also see their incomes reduced. Pete acknowledged this and said he was keen to meet and discuss with farming groups such as the NUF and local farmers to make sure these issues were covered by the programme.

Broadband was highlighted as a major issue in the area, and a barrier to economic growth. There were also difficulties for farmers around CAPD payments if they didn't have fast broadband. Could the project help provide superfast broadband in areas where the Connecting Shropshire project was not able to?

Pete replied that LEADER funding couldn't be used to provide infrastructure such as new network cables and links to exchanges, but could look at making existing infrastructure, such as school based High Speed Networks, available to the wider community, through extended opening times

Committee members felt there was a perception that LEADER and European funding was difficult to apply for and had complex reporting mechanisms

The programme does have to have an accountable body, which would probably be Shropshire Council, who agree to take the financial risk of the programme. However the decision making process was delegated down to local LAG groups, and they try to make applying for funding as straight forward as possible. Grants could range from a few thousand pounds, up to larger grants of over £100,000. However grants couldn't be paid in advance, so projects applying needed a system to allow them to bank roll a project. This is why a partnership approach was encouraged so that larger

organisations could administer funding and allow smaller groups and businesses to access the funding.

Councillor Kidd thanked Pete for attending the meeting and encouraged Committee members to spread the word about funding in their communities and to contact Pete with ideas, thoughts and questions about LEADER funding. In a time of reduced funding through the Council and Central Government the programme was a really important one for this area, and it was vital we make the best use of the funding available.

Pete Banford can be contacted via the detailed listed below.

Pete Banford, Shropshire Hills LEADER Coordinator

Tel: 01588 674089

Email: [pete.banford@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:pete.banford@shropshire.gov.uk)

[www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk](http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk)

Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership

The Old Post Office - Shrewsbury Road - Craven Arms - Shropshire - SY7 9NZ

## **7. Update on future of LJC's and locality working – Kate Garner Commissioning Manager Shropshire Council**

Councillor Gwilym Butler had been due to speak but had been delayed on returning from holiday, so Kate Garner gave a presentation in his place.

Commissioning is a county wide initiative involving Council departments in a process of reviewing services to see if they can be delivered more efficiently through a better use of resources and staff; through improved partnership working and involving community and volunteer groups in the process.

Pilot schemes had taken place elsewhere in the county looking at issues such as supporting unemployed people back into work; youth services reviews; ground maintenance contracts and adaptations to properties through adult social services. There was now a need to look at how this style of working can be delivered across the range of services the Council runs.

The Local Joint Committee structures are seen as being a basis through which discussions on local priorities can be made. Work is progressing to allow the LJC's to be run less formally, and give them more opportunities to work with partners on locally identified projects.

Work is also ongoing with colleagues in Planning to review the area Place Plan documents to make them more user friendly. LJC's can provide a forum for reviewing these annually through a joint conversation between the Parishes in an area and the community. In some areas of the county some reviews of the boundaries of LJC's might be needed to aid this process.

Commissioning was not an exact model, and work was still progressing on how it can be developed across Council departments and involve the community, and there was certainly an acknowledgement that rural issues were very different to those identified in the pilot projects run so far.

Committee members expressed concern that while the Commissioning process was taking place, rural issues were not really being tackled, yet services were declining. Councillor Kidd gave an example of problems with Adult Social Services in her area; while Councillor Carroll felt that Town and Parish Councils were unwilling to increase their precepts to run services that had previously been run by Shropshire Council or other partners. Councillor Barnes felt that looking at an area as a whole was important, rather than just a particular service area, as there could be wider savings made through a more integrated review of a range of services in an area.

Committee members also felt there needed to be better information given to Parish and Town Councils about the important role the Place Plans would have in the future, and to try and give them support to make sure their priorities were up to date and an accurate reflection of their communities needs. There was also wide spread concern that the funds anticipated from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) would be greatly reduced due to changes in government policy, which would leave rural areas with new development and no significant funding to tackle the infrastructure needs created by this development.

Shropshire Councillors also felt they needed to be much more involved in the process and develop a community orientated approach to working together. This approach had worked well in other parts of the Country such as Eastleigh.

It was acknowledged that the issue of commissioning and the LJC's still needed a significant amount of work to make it meaningful in a rural area. It was suggested that some specific areas of work relevant to the LJC area could be looked at these might include Adults Social area issues; issues around road repairs and maintenance and also the support needed for Shropshire Hill Farmers (which could link to the LEADER programme work). Kate offered to start coordinating this work and arrange meetings with relevant staff in the Council to support it.

The September planning meeting of the LJC would also look at the priorities identified in existing and developing Community Led Plans (Parish Plans) which could feed into the Place Plan reviews in the autumn.

## **8. Committee discussions on specific future of the Bishop's Castle, Worthen & Chirbury and Clun Local Joint Committee.**

Through the planning meetings of the LJC discussions had been taking place on how this LJC can move forward, and three proposals were discussed by the Committee.

**8.1 - A proposal was made to simplify the name of the LJC to the "South West Shropshire Local Joint Committee" This proposal was unanimously supported by the Committee**

**8.2 – It was proposed that a letter should be sent to parish councils outlining the change in name of the LJC and a request to support the establishment of a locally funded small grants scheme to support the work of the LJC.**

Action: The Committee suggested some amendments to the letter, and requested this was circulated to members by email ahead of it being sent to Parish and Town Councils

8.3 – A draft leaflet promoting the development of a small grants scheme for South West Shropshire was circulated to Committee members.

**Action: Committee members requested some amendments to the leaflet and clarification on the payment process. These will be circulated to committee members by email**

## **9. Public Question Time**

Members of the public raised issues of local pubs no longer being available to the local community to use, and asked what could be done to address this issue.

There were two elements to this problem. The first is where pubs close and are no longer viable businesses so close and the pub is lost to the community. The second is where a pub is taken over and altered more to a restaurant or accommodation provider, and its role as a public house is reduced to a few hours a week and as such the facility is also lost to the public. A number of examples of pubs where this had happened were given to the meeting.

Mathew Mead commented that with the first issue there were some opportunities for the community to list these as assets, and support was available to bring them back into community use through schemes such as "The Pub is the Hub"

The issue of change of use was more tricky as this was a planning issue and licencing and planning laws didn't seem to offer a solution.

The Committee recognised this as an important issue and requested that speakers on the subject be invited to a future meeting.

## **10. Issues from around the LJC area**

Committee members commented that while the Connecting Shropshire project was bringing some high speed broadband to the area, there were still very large areas of South west Shropshire that wouldn't receive the uplift in speed, and matched funding needed to improve these areas was not looking like emerging. This is a very significant issue for the area and needs addressing.

Committee members also commented that mobile reception in the area seemed, if anything, to be declining and there seemed few opportunities to see 3G and 4G coverage in the area which might have offered some solutions to the broadband issue.

## **11. Future agenda items**

### **Planning meeting**

Review of Parish Plan and Community Led Plans for the area.

Full Public meeting

Presentation on the role of rural pubs in the community and discussion of issues around change of use

Update on broadband and mobile reception in the LJC area.

**12. Date of next meeting**

Public meetings were confirmed for

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> October at 7pm

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March at 7pm

Venues for these meetings to be confirmed, but suggestion to hold the 9<sup>th</sup> October meeting at Newcastle.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: