

STOURBRIDGE AREA COMMITTEE

Monday, 19th June 2006 at 7.00 pm
at Hob Green Primary School, Stourbridge

PRESENT:-

Councillors Attwood, Mrs Collins, Mrs Cowell, Kettle, Knowles, Mrs Martin, Rogers, Turner, Mrs Walker and C Wilson, together with, following their appointment, co-opted members Mr G Downing, Mr K Rodney and Miss R Hill

OFFICERS:-

Director of Law and Property (As Area Liaison Officer); Assistant Director Development and Environment Protection, Section Engineer, Regeneration Manager Town Centres, Regeneration Project Manager, Planning Policy Manager (Directorate of the Urban Environment) Assistant Director Early Years Youth and Education Services, Area Youth Team Leader (Directorate of Children's Services) Area Housing Manager (Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services) Group Accountant (Directorate of Finance, ICT and Procurement) and Mrs J Rees (Directorate of Law and Property)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

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

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That, in his absence, Councillor Adams be elected Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal year.

2 CHANGE OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13 (c) it was

RESOLVED

That, in the absence of the Chairman, agenda item no 5 be the next item of business so that a Vice Chairman may be appointed and take the Chair for the meeting.

3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor Mrs Cowell be appointed Vice Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal year.

(Councillor Mrs Cowell in the Chair)

4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Adams, Banks, Donegan and Jones and Mr I Green and Ms P Shepherd

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Attwood and Rogers declared a prejudicial interest in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct, in respect of Agenda Item No 16 (Grant Applications: Stevens Park and Recreation Ground Foundation Trust) in view of their being Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Friends of Mary Stevens Park respectively.

Councillor Rogers declared a prejudicial interest in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct, in respect of Agenda Item No 15 (Capital Allocations – Application by Friends of Norton Covert) in view of his being a member of the Friends of Norton Covert.

Mr Polychronakis declared a personal interest in Agenda Item No 15 (Capital Allocations – Application by Pedmore Cricket Club) in view of his being a member of Pedmore Cricket Club.

6 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13th March, 2006 be approved as a correct record and signed.

7 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND PROTOCOL FOR AREA COMMITTEES

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the Terms of Reference and Protocol for Area Committees.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and the Appendices to the report, submitted on the Terms of Reference and Protocol for Area Committees be noted.

8

CO-OPTED MEMBERS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the co-option of Members to serve on the Committee for the Municipal year 2006/07.

The Area Liaison Officer advised of correspondence received from the Stourbridge Township Council in respect of the manner in which co-opted members were appointed, stating that the Township Council had been unaware of any vacancies for co-opted members on the Committee. He advised that the Committee had always considered all nominations from local representative organisations such as the Stourbridge Chamber of Trade. The Chairman advised that the Committee were satisfied with the current procedure used for co-opting members to the Committee and therefore would continue with the same procedure as used in previous years.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the following persons be reappointed as co-opted Members of the Committee for the 2006/07 Municipal year representing the organisations indicated:-

Mr G Downing, Local Businesses
Ms P Shepherd, Local Tenants and Residents
Mr K Rodney (or in his absence, Mr P Singh) Ethnic Minorities
Miss R Hill, Young People

- (2) That Mr I Green be appointed as a co-opted member to represent the Voluntary Community Sector for the Municipal year 2006/07.
-

9

APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUPS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the re-appointment of Working Groups for the 2006/07 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Stourbridge Area Committee Consultative Group be re-appointed for the ensuing year, with its existing terms of reference and that the Consultative Group comprise the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Co-opted Members of the Committee, and representatives of the outside agencies with an interest in Stourbridge.
- (2) That the Stourbridge Town Centre Traffic Management Working Group be re-appointed for the ensuing municipal year, with its existing terms of reference and that the Working Group comprise the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Councillors Jones, Knowles and Lowe.
- (3) That the Stourbridge Area Committee Skate Park Working Group be re-appointed for the ensuing municipal year, with its existing terms of reference and that the Working Group comprise the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Councillor Mrs Collins and Miss Hill.
- (4) That the Stourbridge Town Hall Working Group be re-appointed for the ensuing year, with its existing terms of reference and that the Working Group comprise the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Councillors Mrs Collins, Knowles and A Turner.

10

APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted on the appointment of representatives of the Council to various outside organisations for the 2006/07 municipal year.

RESOLVED

That appointments to the organisations indicated be made as follows:-

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Representative</u>	<u>Period of Office</u>
<u>Social Inclusion</u>		
Mary Stevens Hospice	The three members of the Council for the Pedmore, and Stourbridge East Ward	Annual

Community
Associations

a) Bodybuilding Gym	Councillor Donegan and Mr Vickers	Annual
b) Lye	The three members of Council for the Lye and Wollescote Ward	Annual
c) Norton	Councillor Adams	Annual
d) Valley Road Youth and Community Centre	The three members of the Council for the Lye and Wollescote Ward and Councillor Attwood	Annual
e) Withymoor	Councillor Banks	Annual

11 CHANGE OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13 (c) it was

RESOLVED

That the order of business be varied to allow the report on the
Progress of Elected Members visiting Adult and Children Social
Care Establishments to be considered later on the agenda.

12 PETITIONS

A petition was submitted by Councillor Mrs Martin on behalf of local
residents expressing concerns regarding a well used significant footpath
route in the grounds of Corbett Hospital from Vicarage Road to High Street
Amblecote which had been closed to the public for the first time, and
requesting that the path be registered officially as a Public Right of Way.
The petition was referred to the Director of the Urban Environment for
consideration and attention.

13 YOUTH ISSUES

The Youth Team Leader of the Directorate of Children's Services advised on
the summer programme for the Stourbridge Youth and Community Team
which would be running from 24th July until 1st September 2006. Events
included visits from the mobile cyber bus. He also advised that he would be
happy to furnish people with more information regarding the summer
programme outside of the meeting.

PUBLIC FORUM

Before reading questions from the public, the Area Liaison Officer stated that any questions which were not addressed at the meeting would receive a written response from the appropriate officer.

Questions and answers were then given as follows:

- (1) In response to concerns regarding a request for the repair of the entrance gates at Mary Stevens Park Stourbridge, the Assistant Director Development and Environmental Protection advised that the repair of the gates had received consideration. The cost of repairs to the gates was considerable and funding for the project was currently being sought from the Heritage Lottery.
- (2) In response to a comment from a member of the public as to the legality of the Ernest Stevens Trust seeking funding from external sources, whilst allocating funding for local projects, and why the Trust's money could not be used for the repairs of the gates which came under their auspices, the Director of Law and Property advised that due to the high cost of the project, it would take an unacceptable amount of time to accumulate sufficient funds for the repairs to the gates from the Trust's own funding. He also advised that the maintenance costs of the park were covered by the mainstream budget of the Council.
- (3) In response to comments from a member of the public suggesting that repair work to the gates be carried out by local students, the Director of Law and Property advised that refurbishment of the wrought ironwork and Portland stone work was very specialised, which could only be carried out by specialist companies.
- (4) In response to concerns regarding the Stourbridge Town Clock column, the Assistant Director Development and Environmental Protection advised that this matter had been investigated recently. Although there was no funding from the routine maintenance budget, alternative funding was being sought for this work.
- (5) In response to a request that a long list of addresses be considered for appropriate Traffic Orders, the Senior Engineer undertook to investigate this matter and send a written response to the questioner.
- (6) Comments from two members of the public regarding the petition submitted earlier in the meeting were referred to the Director of the Urban Environment for consideration with the petition. A written response would be sent to the members of the public.

- (7) In response to comments regarding difficulties for disabled persons in certain areas of Stourbridge, the Senior Engineer Traffic undertook to send a written response to the questioner addressing all issues raised.
- (8) In response to comments from a member of the public regarding the Council's Pride of Place Initiative and other environmental issues in the Withymoor area, the Assistant Director Development and Environmental Protection undertook to investigate and send a written response to the questioner.
- (9) In response to a member of the public's comments regarding attendance of street cleansing teams in areas of Stourbridge, the Assistant Director Development and Environmental Protection undertook to investigate and send a written response to the questioner.
- (10) A member of the public expressed concern regarding proposals for a telecommunication mast in Wollescote Park and the need for consultation to take place over the siting of such masts. The Assistant Director Development and Environmental Protection undertook to pass the comments to the appropriate Planning Officer.
- (11) It was commented that a consultation event on improvements for the Wollescote Park, was scheduled for 1st July 2006, organised by the Friends of the Wollescote Park group.
- (12) A representative of the Friends of Wollescote Park commended the police for their work in combating anti social behaviour at the Park.

APPLICATIONS IN RESPECT OF LAND AND PROPERTY OWNED BY THE COUNCIL

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted on an application to purchase land at Junction Road Playing Fields, Stourbridge, as shown on the plan attached to the report submitted.

In response to a query from a member of the public as to whether the sale of land marked "A" on the plan would have any impact on the proposed Skatepark Facility at the site, the Director of Law and Property advised that the matter had been investigated and he had been assured that there would be no problem. He also advised that the problem of Japanese knotweed on the land referred to was difficult and very costly to eradicate.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture be advised to refuse the application to purchase the area marked (A) on the plan attached to the report submitted, for the reasons set out in the report.

- (2) That the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture be advised to approve the application to the purchase of area (B) on the plan attached to the report submitted, on terms and conditions to be negotiated and agreed by the Director of Law and Property.
-

CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

(Having previously declared a prejudicial interest in respect of the grant application made by the Friends of Norton Covert, Councillor Rogers withdrew from the meeting whilst the application was considered)

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on a number of applications for funding from the Committee's capital allocation budget and on two decisions taken by the Area Liaison Officer, under the delegated authority given to him, in consultation with the Chairman, at the meeting of the Committee held on 13th March, 2006.

The Area Liaison Officer also advised that he had received a late urgent application from the International Festival of Glass for £5,000 towards the cost of replacement glass bead making equipment for recreational classes for the public, during the summer of 2006. The remainder of the funding required for the project would be provided by the Ruskin Glass Centre.

A member of the public requested clarification on whether the application from Stourbridge in Bloom for funding towards the cost of automatic watering systems and planters was for new equipment or replacement equipment. The Stourbridge Regeneration Manager advised that the equipment was additional to that previously purchased. It was anticipated that in time there would be sufficient planters to place on the whole of the railings on the Ring Road.

Councillor Kettle asked whether the request for funding by the Hob Green Parent Teacher Association was an appropriate use of the Area Committee's Capital Allocations budget, or whether funds should be found from the budget of the Directorate of Children's Services. In response, a representative of the Parent Teacher Association advised that the equipment to be provided was for the new Extended Schools Project which would involve use by a wider community including out of school use. Councillor Mrs Walker advised that there would not be adequate funding within the existing school budget to provide the equipment referred to and considered that the project was very worthwhile.

RESOLVED

- (1) That, subject to the approval of its Capital Budget for 2006/07 by the Council in July, 2006, the sums referred to below be allocated to the following organisations for the purposes indicated:-

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Lye Cricket Club	Removal and repair of the existing artificial wicket at the Club	£5,000
Friends of Norton Covert	Replacement fencing	£500
Pedmore Cricket Club	Roller shutters for external doors and windows	£4,016.37
Hob Green Parent Teacher Association	Construction of an adventure playground on school site	£4,200
International Festival of Glass	Cost of replacement glass bead making equipment	£5,000

- (2) That the decision of the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Chairman, to approve (a) £5,000 for Stourbridge In Bloom, for the provision of automatic watering system planters and (b) £2,786 for the provision of a fence at the Friends Meeting House on the Stourbridge Ring Road, to the Stourbridge Quakers, be noted.

17

STEVENS PARK AND RECREATION GROUND FOUNDATION TRUST APPLICATION FOR GRANT

(Having previously declared a prejudicial interest in respect of this matter, Councillors Attwood and Rogers withdrew from the meeting whilst the application was considered).

A report of the Director of Finance was submitted on an application by the Friends of Mary Stevens Park for £1,500 towards the cost of erecting iron railings at Mary Stevens Park, Stourbridge.

RESOLVED

That approval be given to the application made by the Friends of Mary Stevens Park for £1,500 towards the cost of the erection of iron railings at Mary Stevens Park, Stourbridge.

18

STOURBRIDGE INFORMATION GATHERING EXERCISE

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on an information gathering exercise to support future development and regeneration of Stourbridge Town Centre.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted be noted and that the Director of the Urban Environment be requested to submit progress reports and the final conclusions of the information gathering exercise, to a future meeting of the Committee.

19

STOURBRIDGE TOWN HALL WORKING GROUP UPDATE

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on progress made by the Stourbridge Town Hall Working Group.

Councillor Mrs Walker commented on the need to remove weeds growing on the roof of the Town Hall, which the Assistant Director, Development and Environmental Protection undertook to investigate.

Councillor Knowles commented on the need for a new Union Flag. The Halls and Venues Manager undertook to investigate the possibility of a new flag. Members of the Working Group and the Halls and Venues Manager were thanked for the work undertaken to date.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report submitted be noted and that the Director of the Urban Environment be advised of the Committee's support for the work of officers and members of the working group.
 - (2) That the Director of the Urban Environment be requested to submit further update reports on work of the group to future meetings of the Committee.
-

20

PROGRESS OF ELECTED MEMBERS VISITS TO ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE ESTABLISHMENTS 2005/2006

A joint report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services and the Director of Children's Services was submitted on visits to Adult and Children's Social Care Establishments during the 2005/2006 municipal year and requesting further nominations for visits in the 2006/2007 municipal year.

The Area Liaison Officer, in introducing the report, suggested that any members wishing to take part in future member visits to Adult and Children's Social Care Establishments during 2006/2007, contact the Directors of Adult, Community and Housing Services and Children's Services direct.

Councillor Mrs Martin commented on how important and worthwhile the visits were and encouraged members to take part in the visits, if possible.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report now submitted be noted and that any Members wishing to undertake visits to Adult and Children's Social Care Establishments in 2006/2007 be requested to contact the Directors of Adult, Community and Housing Services and Children's Services direct.

ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

- (1) Councillor Mrs Martin commented on the welcome removal of chicanes on Kirkstone Way, Amblecote. However, following the removal of the chicanes there was now a need for enforcement in respect of lorries which travelled too fast down Kirkstone Way when visiting the Supermarket. She pointed out that Sandringham Way was the accepted access point for deliveries for the Supermarket, but that lorry drivers were ignoring this. A member of the public added that some of the lorries parked overnight and requested that weight restrictions be introduced in the area. The Senior Engineer Traffic advised that if vehicles were following the approved route to the Store, there was no breach in the law. He undertook to investigate the matter.
- (2) Councillor Attwood advised that on the night of Sunday 18th June 2006 the play equipment recently installed at Mary Stevens Park, including the skateboard facility had been vandalised. He urged anyone who had any information on this matter to contact the Police and/or Officers of the Council.
- (3) Councillor Rogers raised concerns regarding the need for the Poplar Trees bordering the rear car park at Mary Stevens Park to be pruned. The Senior Engineer Traffic undertook to investigate.
- (4) Councillor Mrs Walker expressed concerns at the lack of parking facilities at the Corbett Hospital site and the inconvenience caused to local residents when visitors to the hospital parked in side streets outside residents' homes. The Senior Engineer Traffic undertook to investigate and respond to Councillor Mrs Walker.
- (5) Councillor Lowe advised that the CCTV Cameras which had been installed in Lye High Street were proving successful. He also reported that there had been positive action in addressing the reported anti social behaviour problems in the area.

- (6) Councillor A Turner advised of the establishment of a Youth Forum in the Lye area, in partnership with the Police and Councillors, which it was hoped, would be as successful as one already in existence in Halesowen. He urged people interested to contact him.
- (7) Councillor A Turner requested that a letter be written to CENTRO requesting that when bus shelters in the area were vandalised, the resulting debris was cleared as a matter of urgency. He also requested that the grass verges in the Lye and Wollescote area be attended to.
- (8) Councillor Mrs Collins advised that residents living near Kent Road playing fields had expressed concerns that young people were causing damage to windows and property with golf balls. A suggestion was made that a higher fence might need to be installed. The Senior Engineer Traffic undertook to investigate.
- (9) Councillor Knowles advised of the results of a questionnaire carried out recently in the "Old Quarter" of Stourbridge, regarding the possible introduction of speed restrictions of 20 mph. The result of the survey was that of 992 forms sent out, 184 forms had been returned, of which 170 were in favour of reduced speed limits, whilst 14 were happy for the speed limit to remain the same. He requested that the matter be investigated and a written report be submitted on the findings to the next meeting of the Committee.

A member of the public disputed the results of the survey, which included the area in which he lived.

Councillors Lowe and A Turner welcomed the request for the introduction of lower speed limits for traffic, particularly in areas where schools were situated.

A member of the public advised that the area between Stamford Road and Peters Hill School was being troubled by boy racers.

- (10) Councillor Mrs Cowell raised the following issues:
 - (a) The Friends of Mary Stevens Park had requested permission from the Committee, as Trustees of the Ernest Stevens Trust, to enable the Directorate of the Urban Environment to apply to Heritage Lottery for funding based on the Master-Plan incorporating changes to the park.

RESOLVED

That the Director of the Urban Environment be advised of the approval of the Committee, as Trustees of the Ernest Stevens Trust, for funding to be applied for to the Heritage Lottery on behalf of the Friends of Mary Stevens Park for works based on the Master Plan for the park.

- (b) The Traffic Engineers should investigate a dangerous part of the road near Bowling Green Road and Mamble Road, Wollaston. The Senior Engineer Traffic undertook to investigate and respond to Councillor Mrs Cowell.
- (c) There was a need for the trees along the path at Park Street and Chapel Street to be pruned and the lighting to be checked out.
- (d) The current position regarding the disposal of land at the Dell, Wollaston should be investigated. The Area Liaison officer advised that a written response would be sent to the Ward Members.
- (e) Concerns were raised at recent proposals to change how the Post Office Branch at 61 High Street Stourbridge was managed and to move the existing Post Office from 61 High Street, Stourbridge to alternative premises at 45 High Street, Stourbridge, within a large retail store fully accessible for customers with flat level access and double doors.

The Area Liaison Officer read out the letter from the Post Office giving details of the proposals. He also advised that the closing date for sending comments to the Post Office Consultation Team was 4th July 2006.

During the ensuing discussion comments made by the Committee and members of the public included the need for the old building to be preserved; the need for reassurance that the Post Office would not be downgraded to a sub Post Office and that tax collection services would be continued.

22

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on written responses to questions sent since the meeting of this Committee in March, 2006.

RESOLVED

That the content of the report submitted be noted.

23

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Area Liaison Officer advised of a special meeting to be held on 3rd July 2006 at Stourbridge Town Hall, Crown Centre, Stourbridge to discuss initial proposals in respect of a possible Special Licensing Policy to control the number of new liquor licences granted for Stourbridge Town Centre.

Councillor A Turner requested that consideration be given to holding future meetings in appropriate venues in other areas of Stourbridge.

The dates and venues of future meetings of the Committee, were noted as follows:

3rd July 2006 Special Meeting at 7.00 pm at Stourbridge Town Hall

6th September 2006 at 7.00 pm at Redhill School, Junction Road,
Stourbridge

20th November 2006 at 7.00 pm *

22nd January 2007 at 7.00 pm *

12th March 2007 at 7.00 pm *

* Venues to be advised when determined.

The meeting ended at 9.15 p.m.

CHAIRMAN