

STOURBRIDGE AREA COMMITTEE

Monday 25th June, 2012 at 7.00 p.m.
at Wollaston Community Village Hall,
Bridgnorth Road, Wollaston, Stourbridge

PRESENT-

Councillors Attwood, Elcock, Hale, Hanif, Herbert, L. Jones, Kettle, Knowles, Lowe, Marrey, Mrs. Martin, Perks, Mrs. Rogers, Mrs. Walker and C. Wilson and, following his co-option to the Committee, Mr. Downing.

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL NOT MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, WHOM HAVE EXERCISED THEIR ENTITLEMENT TO VOTE AT MEETINGS OF THE STOURBRIDGE AREA COMMITTEE

Councillors Body, Crumpton and Partridge.

OFFICERS:-

Acting Director of Children's Services (as Lead Officer to the Committee), Assistant Director Planning and Environmental Health and Group Engineer – Traffic and Road Safety (both Directorate of the Urban Environment), Youth and Community Worker, Early Years Youth and Education Services (Mr. Nasser), Principal Tax Accountant (Mrs. Robbins), Mr. T. Holder - Solicitor and Assistant Principal Officer - Democratic Services (Mr. Sanders) - all Directorate of Corporate Resources

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Inspector Lambert (West Midlands Police), Mr Wood and Ms. Winpenny (both West Midlands Fire Service), Councillors Tyler and Mrs. Shakespeare (the latter, on behalf of Margot James, MP) and 25 members of the public.

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIR**

RESOLVED

That Councillor Attwood be elected Chair of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

2. **INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY CHAIR**

In welcoming new Members, further to the local elections in May, 2012, Chair paid tribute to the service given by former members of the Committee, with particular reference to the late Councillor Adams.

In his address, the Chair asked members of the public who wished to ask questions under Agenda Item No. 12 (Public Forum), to do so by way of completion and submission of the question slips circulated prior to the meeting.

The Chair also indicated his intention that, where a question had been submitted in relation to an issue for which there was a substantive item on the Agenda, the question would be referred for consideration under the substantive item.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of a Personal Interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, were made at this juncture by the Members below in relation to the issues indicated:-

Councillors L. Jones and Kettle in Agenda Item No. 13 (Ernest Stevens Trust - Mary Stevens Hospice: Consent for Alterations and to Sub-Let to Lymphcare Ltd.) in view of their Directorships of Mary Stevens Hospice.

Councillors Mrs. Martin and C. Wilson in Agenda Item No. 13 in view of their Trusteeships of Mary Stevens Hospice.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20th February, 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to an amendment to the final paragraph of Minute 48(5) to reflect the specific decision of the Committee that a meeting between the member of the Bowls Club who raised the issue, Councillor Mrs. Martin and relevant officers in the Directorate of the Urban Environment, be arranged.

5. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED

That Councillor C. Wilson be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

6. 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 2012/13 Municipal Year. The Area Liaison Officer advised that Mr. G. Downing, Miss Hathway and Mr. Owen had indicated their willingness to stand for re-appointment but that the intentions of Mrs. P. Shepherd were currently unknown.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the following persons be re-appointed as co-opted Members to the Committee for 2012/13 Municipal Year, representing the groups or organisations indicated:-

Mr. G. Downing - Local Businesses
Mr. Ryan Owen and Miss Nadia Hathway - Young People

- (2) That further enquiries be made to establish the wishes of Mrs Shepherd regarding the continuation of her service as a co-opted member and that the outcome be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

- (3) That consideration be given to the appointment of further co-opted Members in accordance with the Protocol for Area Committees.

7. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on the appointment of representatives to various outside organisations for the 2012/13 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED

That appointments to the organisations indicated be made as follows:

- (1) Social Inclusion

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Representative(s)</u>	<u>Period of Office</u>
Mary Stevens Hospice	The 3 members of the Council for the Pedmore and Stourbridge East Ward	Annual

Community Associations

Lye Body Building Gym	Councillors Hanif and Herbert	Annual
Lye	The 3 members of the Council for the Lye and Stourbridge North Ward	Annual
Norton	Councillor Elcock	Annual
Withymoor	Councillors Mrs. Martin and Perks	Annual

- (2) That the appointment of both Mrs. Martin and Perks to the Withymoor Community Association be subject to its being ascertained from the Association that they will accept the appointment of two Council representatives, rather than one.

8. RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

The receipt of the following petitions since the previous meeting of the Committee and the action being taken was reported, as follows:-

- (a) a petition from local residents requesting the resurfacing of roads and pavements in Pedmore Court Road, in respect of which it had been indicated that the work would be undertaken early in 2013.
- (b) a petition from local residents, complaining of noise and traffic nuisance emanating from a public house in Stourbridge, both issues in respect of which were under consideration by the Directorate of the Urban Environment.
- (c) a petition opposing proposed tree felling at Stevens Road, Pedmore, which was under consideration by the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

9. YOUTH ISSUES

The Youth and Community Worker, Mr. Nasser, reported orally on activities carried out by the Stourbridge Area Team over the Whitsun holiday, with particular reference to a project which addressed participation in, and promotion of, the Youth Council.

Mr Nasser also reported on activities proposed for four weeks over the school summer holidays, which included a week to be devoted to young people with disabilities. Other activities would involve open sessions, to which young people could register in July. Further details were to be distributed to local schools and through partner agencies. Mr Nasser also indicated that, through 2012, the Area Team would be engaging in a number of Borough-wide activities for young people, and which were aimed at building positive relationships and community cohesion.

In the discussion, Councillor Mrs. Walker referred to activities provided by voluntary organisations in the provision of youth activities, particularly for young people with disabilities, and which she considered extremely useful in the promotion of opportunities for socialisation, rather than being targeted for academic purposes.

RESOLVED

That the report now made by the Area Youth Worker and the comments made in the discussion, as indicated above, be noted.

10. POLICE ISSUES

The new Community Police Inspector for Stourbridge, Inspector Dez Lambert, introduced himself to the Committee and was welcomed by the Chair.

Inspector Lambert then reported orally on issues pertinent to the Stourbridge Area, providing statistical information on crime by category in terms of the numbers and percentages of crimes recorded in comparison with the same 3 month period in the preceding year. For all types of crime, except vehicle crime, which had increased by 10%, the figures had shown a significant decrease, with overall victims of crime having reduced by 26% over the period. In relation to anti-social behaviour, Inspector Lambert invited the Committee and the public to contact the Police should they witness any incidents.

In relation to the issue of vehicular parking at Junction Road, as referred to in Minute No. 45 of the meeting of the Committee held on 20th February, 2012, Inspector Lambert confirmed that the position was being monitored and that a visit had been made as recently as 24th June. The Inspector confirmed that no recent problems of vehicular obstruction had been noted or reported but acknowledged that this might be to be expected since the football season was not in progress. He confirmed that Junction Road would continue to be monitored.

In relation to the suggested opening of a small area of the Junction Road playing fields for vehicular parking, as referred to in minute number 45 of the meeting of the Committee held on 20th February, 2012, a member of the public indicated that a lesser scheme than that referred to in paragraph 6 of the report at Agenda Item No. 20 for this meeting might be feasible and advocated the arrangement of a meeting between residents, the Police and the Council on the issue. The matter was referred to the Group Engineer - Traffic and Road Safety for a written response.

In response to a question, Inspector Lambert reported on the deployment of the local Police during the Olympic Games.

A member of the Halesowen Area Committee, who had transferred her voting rights to the Stourbridge Area Committee, asked for the crime figures for the Cradley and Wollescote Ward to be provided, in response to which Inspector Lambert provided overall figures for Cradley and Foxcote. He indicated that detailed figures could be provided to the Member following the meeting.

In relation to another question by a different Member, Inspector Lambert indicated that the highest numbers of recorded vehicle crime in the area of the Committee had been perpetrated in the Lye and Wollescote Ward. The Inspector also emphasised the role the public could play in reducing vehicle crime if they were to contact the Police if they viewed a situation where they suspected that a crime was to be committed.

In welcoming the installation of CCTV in a particular area, a Member advocated that Ward Councillors should be apprised of when and where these were to be installed. He also suggested that Ward Councillors be contacted by the Police when PACT meetings were to be held in their Wards.

RESOLVED

That the information above be noted and that the Group Engineer - Traffic and Transportation be asked to respond in writing to the person who raised the issue of the opening of the section of the Junction Road Playing fields referred to for parking provision.

11.

FIRE SERVICE MATTERS

Mr. Wood gave an oral report on fire matters, giving statistical information in relation to different types of incidents handled by the Fire Service, numbers having remained virtually unchanged since the previous meeting. The figures for accidental fires, both in the home and elsewhere, had reduced. False alarm call-outs had also reduced. Mr Wood indicated that, owing to a more challenging approach from the telephone operators to the caller in determining more exactly the nature of the incident the subject of the call, it had been possible to reduce the level of attendance to incidents.

Mr. Wood reported on current on-going projects involving interface with young people, indicating that Key Stage 2 pupils had been visited in ten schools to provide advice in the areas of fire and road safety and healthy eating. Mr. Wood referred particularly to the work undertaken by the Fire Service in communicating with children on obesity and healthy living issues.

A question was asked by a member of the Committee on the areas most affected by arson, in response to which Mr. Wood agreed to respond direct to the Member. Mr. Wood also responded to a different member on a question regarding a particular incident.

RESOLVED

That the information given by Mr. Wood on behalf of the Fire Service be noted.

12. PUBLIC FORUM

- (a) A resident of Studley Gate referred to a donation of £2,000 that had been made to the Friends of Swan Pool Park and enquired about what had happened to the monies. The same resident also asked about the provision of benches at Swan Pool Park.

RESOLVED

That these matters be referred to the Assistant Director Planning and Environmental Health for investigation and for a response to be sent to the questioner.

- (b) Two local residents raised concerns about safety arising from the excessive speed of some vehicles using Studley Gate. One of the residents lived close to the brow of the hill and he spoke on the particular dangers caused by speeding vehicles at this section of the road. They were also concerned regarding noise nuisance emanating from speeding vehicles. Other resident living in the locality referred to anti-social behaviour perpetrated by young people at Swan Pool Park, with particular reference to the car park.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Assistant Director Planning and Environmental Health investigate the complaints about the speeding vehicles at Studley Gate with the Police and arrange for the Directorate of the Urban Environment to re-assess the need for a road safety scheme in the area.

- (2) That the Assistant Director Planning and Environmental Health confer with the Police on the issues of anti-social behaviour now reported.
 - (3) That the issue of the gap by the barrier, as referred to in the discussion, be referred to the Directorate of the Urban Environment for consideration and report back.
- (c) A local resident referred to the poor condition of grass verges in Norton and Wollaston in response to which it was

RESOLVED

That the Assistant Director Planning and Environmental Health look into this matter with Green Care and that she arrange for a detailed response to be sent to the questioner.

- (d) The same resident drew attention to pot holes in the driveway to Wollaston Community Village Centre.

RESOLVED

That this issue be referred to the Directorate of the Urban Environment for a response.

- (e) A member of the public complained of a lack of publicity given to the attendance of Councillors Body, Crumpton and Partridge at this meeting of the Committee and another member of the public questioned their eligibility regarding attendance. The Assistant Principal Officer (Democratic Services) reported on the terms of the resolution of the Annual Council Meeting on 17th May, 2012, which permitted Members of other Area Committees to transfer their voting entitlement to a different Area Committee. A revised agenda, in which the names of Councillors Body, Crumpton and Partridge had been added had been circulated to Members and published on the Committee Management Information System in advance of the meeting.
- (f) Councillor Mrs. Martin presented a letter on behalf of the member of the public who had raised the issue of the bowls clubs at Wollescote Hall at the previous meeting of the Committee, as referred to in Minute 48(5), in which he had complained that no action had yet been taken regarding the meeting on the issue the Committee had resolved to be arranged.

In apologising for the delay in the response, the Assistant Director Planning and Environmental Health referred to the complexity of some issues that had had to be resolved before a round table meeting could be arranged, but confirmed that the Council was now in a position to proceed with the meeting.

RESOLVED

That the Assistant Director for Culture and Leisure arrange for the meeting to be held without delay.

- (f) A question by member of the public asking how the figure of £193,000 for the construction of a footpath at Racecourse Lane had been arrived at was referred for consideration with the report on the matter at agenda Item No. 17.

13. ERNEST STEVENS TRUST - MARY STEVENS HOSPICE: CONSENT FOR ALTERATIONS AND TO SUB-LET TO LYMPHCARE UK

A report of the Director of Corporate Resources was submitted seeking confirmation of the consent granted for alterations to Mary Stevens Hospice and the sub-let of office space at the Lodge at the Hospice to Lymphcare UK. Consent had been granted further to correspondence with the members of the Stourbridge Area Committee for 2011/12, as the then Trustees of the Hospice, in response to which no objections had been received.

RESOLVED

That the consent of the Committee, as Trustees to Mary Stevens Hospice, in permitting alterations and an extension to the Lodge at the Hospice, subject to planning consent, and to its sub-letting to Lymphcare UK, be confirmed.

14. CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

(During consideration of this item, Councillor Mrs. Walker declared a personal interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of paragraph 12 of the report, in view of her membership of the Amblecote Parochial Church Council).

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on applications received for funding from the Capital and Revenue budget of the Committee.

RESOLVED

- (1) That grants be made to the organisations below for the purposes indicated:-

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Purpose of Grant</u>	<u>Amount of Grant</u>
Amblecote Church Hall Committee	Contribution towards the refurbishing and improvement of the stage area, including a new ceiling, stage curtains and installation of a staircase	£2,195.48
Stourbridge Quakers	Contribution towards the cost of rectifying structural defects identified at the premises of the organisation in Scotts Road, Stourbridge	£5,000
Youth 4em	Replacement of a pool table	£750
Saturday Special - Amblecote Christian Centre	Contribution towards the purchase of flags, hats, prizes, medals, t-shirts and picnic lunches in relation to a Saturday Special Olympics Event to be organised by the body	£200
Gigmill Methodist Church	Replacement of old chairs with new chairs, tables and storage trolleys and vertical blinds in connection with the refurbishment of the hall	£5,000

(2) That the action taken by the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the then Chair and Vice-Chair, Ward Members and other Members of the Committee in approving grants as set out below under the approved urgency provisions, for the reasons indicated in the report now submitted, be confirmed:-

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Purpose of Grant</u>	<u>Amount of Grant</u>
4 th Stourbridge Wollaston Scouts Group	Contribution towards a project for the replacement and repair of tents and the provision of a marquee for joint activities and briefings	£1,740

Wollescote Replacement of gas boiler £1,440
and St.
Andrew's
Scout Group

- (3) That the application now submitted on behalf of the Ruskin Mill Trust for a grant towards the purchase of four gazebos for the Glasshouse College be deferred in order that alternative options for the supply of the gazebos may be explored and that the matter be referred to the Assistant Director Planning and Environmental Health for the appropriate action to be arranged; and that, should it not be possible to obtain four gazebos from other sources, the matter be referred to the Capital and Revenue Allocations Working Group referred to in Minute (5) below for further consideration.
- (4) That the application by DIYYA for funding towards the provision of toys and laptops be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee to enable investigations to be made into whether or not it might be feasible for assets from the liquidated Humara Project, to which the Committee made a financial contribution, to be transferred to DIYYA.
- (5) That a Capital and Revenue Allocations Working Group of the Committee, comprising the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee and one member of each ward, be appointed for the 2012/13 municipal year with the membership indicated below and that, should any ward representative be unable to attend, the Member be permitted to nominate a substitute from the ward to attend:-

Amblecote Ward - Councillor Mrs. Martin

Cradley and Wollescote Ward - Councillor Crumpton

Lye and Stourbridge North Ward - Councillor Lowe

Norton Ward - Councillor Mrs. Rogers

Pedmore and Stourbridge East Ward - Councillor Kettle

Wollaston and Stourbridge Town Ward - Councillor
Marrey

A report of the Treasurer was submitted seeking consideration for a request to change the purpose of a grant from the Stevens Park and Recreation Ground Foundation Trust approved previously.

RESOLVED

That the change in the use of the grant previously awarded to Lye Cricket Club from the purpose of provision of a mobile training cage to the purpose of a slip-catch cricket cradle or other cricket equipment to the same value, be approved.

16. HIGHWAYS MINOR WORKS CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR 2012/13

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted seeking support for the proposed programmes of work for local safety schemes, safer routes to school and pedestrian crossings within the area of the Stourbridge Area Committee for the 2012/13 financial year. The schemes proposed for the area were set out in the appendix to the report.

In the discussion, Councillor Mrs. Walker expressed the hope that the Penfields Road and Stamford Road Local Safety Scheme would address road safety issues for children arising from parking around Amblecote Primary School. She also expressed reservations about the impact the schemes proposed might have on traffic in Stourbridge generally and asked to be advised of the length of time envisaged the schemes would take to complete.

In response, the Group Engineer - Traffic and Road Safety indicated that detailed schemes had not yet been drafted but confirmed that consultation with Members would be accommodated at the appropriate time.

Councillor Crumpton indicated his view that there were areas in Stourbridge other than those specified in the report where road safety issues were in equal need of addressing, referring in particular to the area around Pedmore School of Technology. In response, the Group Engineer - Traffic and Transportation indicated that the proposals for all Area Committees had been drawn up in cognisance of the priorities which had emerged from the Council's accident reduction data. Councillor L. Jones and other members had doubts about the impact the proposal to reduce the speed limit in Grange Lane from 40 mph to 30 mph would have, since the proposed reduced speed limit was to apply from the uphill section and drivers tended to accelerate downhill. They did not, therefore, support this proposal.

RESOLVED

That the proposals be noted and the comments above referred to the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

17. RACECOURSE LANE, STOURBRIDGE - TRAFFIC MOVEMENTS

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted seeking consideration of traffic movements in Racecourse Lane, Stourbridge, further to Minute 48(4) of the meeting of the Committee held on the 20th February, 2012.

A local resident, Dr. Kumar, drew attention to a number of issues in the report which he considered to be erroneous. Consideration was also given at this juncture to the question submitted by Dr. Kumar which asked how the cost of £93,000 referred to in paragraph 8 of the report now submitted for the construction of a standard new 2-metre wide footway and ancillary work had been arrived at. He contended that a reduced scheme could be provided at a cost of some £30 to £35,000 and indicated the manner in which this could be achieved.

On consideration of this item, Councillor Mrs. Rogers suggested an alternative route from Racecourse Lane to Worcester Lane that might be feasible with lesser work necessary to the infrastructure than that referred to in the report.

While accepting the need for road safety along Racecourse Lane to be improved, the Chair also considered that, in the current financial circumstances, a business case for the Council to provide a footpath could not be made at the current time.

RESOLVED

That the Group Engineer - Traffic and Transportation be asked to refer this matter to the Cabinet Member for Transportation with a view to referring the issue of the safety of Racecourse Lane to the Department of Transport with a request for the introduction of a safety scheme, e.g. the widening of the road.

18. LYE AND WOLLESCOTE CEMETERY CHAPEL - UPDATE ON PROGRESS ON FINDING A SUITABLE NEW USE AND SECURING EXTERNAL FUNDING FROM THE HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment updating the Committee on the work of the West Midlands Historic Building Preservation Trust undertaken in partnership with the Council to find a new use for Lye and Wollescote Cemetery Chapel which was financially viable and sympathetic to its setting. The report also gave an update on the progress made in securing external funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the building, in order to facilitate the necessary repairs and to enable conversion to a new use.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the on-going work undertaken to date by the West Midlands Historic Building Preservation Trust (WMHBPT) in partnership with the Council in order to progress the project further be noted.
- (2) That the Cabinet Member for Environment and Culture be recommended that the existing "Heads of Terms" agreement between the WMHBPT and the Council be renewed and that a grant of £25,000 from the Council be made as partnership funding, if the HLF application is successful.
- (3) That an application be submitted to the HLF in June, 2012 by the WMHBPT (in partnership with the Council) for a Stage 1 bid and that the outcome of the application to the HLF be reported back to the Committee at a later date.

19. DESIGNATION OF PLAYING-FIELDS IN COMMEMORATION OF QUEEN ELIZABETH'S II FOR THE DIAMOND JUBILEE

This item was withdrawn.

20. RESPONSES TO ISSUES

A report of the Area Liaison Officer advising the Committee of written responses made to questions asked at the previous meeting held on 20th February, 2012 was submitted.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

21. ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

(During consideration of these issues, in respect of items (b) and (c) below, Councillor Crumpton declared a Personal Interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in view of the fact that he had taken his mother to a meeting of residents in relation to trees at Stevens Road).

- (a) At the request of Councillor Mrs. Walker, it was agreed that the Group Engineer - Traffic and Transportation would look at the issue of speeding vehicles in the vicinity of Cobden Street, particularly at its junctions with other roads. The Group Engineer was also asked to consider road safety issues in the general area of Studley Gate.

- (b) With reference to the petition referred to earlier in the meeting, Councillor Kettle expressed his support for the retention of the trees proposed for felling in Stevens Road. He also asked for a protocol to be drawn up and put in place which would include a provision for local residents and Ward Members to be notified where it was proposed that large trees would be removed. The matter of the protocol was referred to the Assistant Director Planning and Environmental Health for consideration.
- (c) Councillor Crumpton referred to a meeting that would be taking place with residents, Council Officers and the Cabinet Member for Transportation and Community Safety on the issue of the trees at Stevens Road.

22. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PUBLICITY

Forthcoming meetings of Scrutiny Committees were received and noted.

23. FUTURE AREA COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The dates and venues of future meetings of this Committee were received and noted.

The meeting ended at 9.30 p.m.

CHAIR