

STOURBRIDGE AREA COMMITTEE

Monday, 13th February, 2006 at 7.00 pm
at Hob Green Primary School, Stourbridge

PRESENT:-

Councillor Adams (Chairman)
Councillors Attwood, Banks, Mrs Collins, Donegan, Jones, Knowles, Mrs Martin, Musk, Rogers, A Turner, Vickers and C Wilson and Mr G Downing

Officers:-

Director of Law and Property (as Area Liaison Officer); Assistant Director Development and Environmental Protection, Bereavement Services Manager, Bereavement Services Principal Officer; Senior Engineer – Traffic, Senior Conservation Officer, Green Space Team Leader, (Directorate of the Urban Environment) and Mrs. J. Rees (Directorate of Law and Property).

IN ATTENDANCE:

Messrs. A. Jukes and D. Stinton, representing CENTRO; Mr J Davies, Chairman of the Stourbridge Cycling Club, together with approximately 60 members of the public, were in attendance at the meeting.

52

MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 14th November, 2005, be approved as a correct record and signed.

53

APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs Cowell.

54

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs. Collins declared a prejudicial and personal interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of Agenda Item No 10 (Capital Allocations - Stourbridge Radio Group) and Agenda Item No 15 (Lye and Wollescote Cemetery Chapel), in view of her son being Chairman of the Stourbridge Radio Group and a Director of the West Midlands Historic Buildings Trust, respectively.

Councillors Adams, Attwood and Rogers declared a prejudicial interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of Agenda Item No. 11 (Friends of Mary Stevens Park - Application to hold a Family Fun Day and cycle races) in view of their membership of the Friends of Mary Stevens Park.

Councillor Jones declared a prejudicial interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of Agenda Item No. 8 b) Land adjacent to 23 Rye Croft, Wollescote, in view of his governorship of Hob Green Primary School.

55 PETITIONS

A Petition was submitted on behalf of Dudley residents expressing their concern at the proposed increase in hire charges for the hire of Dudley Concert Hall, Stourbridge Town Hall, Brierley Hill Civic Hall and the Cornbow Hall, Halesowen. The petition had been submitted to all other Area Committees and was forwarded to the Director of the Urban Environment for consideration.

56 YOUTH ISSUES

There were no youth issues to be discussed at this meeting.

57 CHANGE OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13 (3) it was

RESOLVED

That the order of business be varied in order to enable Agenda No. 9 (Remodelling of Stourbridge Bus Station), to be considered as the next item of business.

58 REMODELLING OF STOURBRIDGE BUS STATION

Mr. A. Jukes, on behalf of CENTRO, gave a visual presentation on CENTRO's initial proposals for the possible remodelling of Stourbridge Bus Station. The site was a restrictive site. Two possible options for the bus station were outlined, which would take into account safety issues. The first option was for a Drive in Drive Out system. The second was for a Drive in Reverse Out system. In response to comments regarding the needs of people with visual and hearing impairments to be able to access information at the new station, Mr Jukes advised that appropriate audio push buttons would be introduced.

A question and answer session then followed.

Following the ensuing discussion on both of the options, a show of hands indicated that Members of the Committee and members of the public preferred Option A.

RESOLVED

That Mr. Jukes be thanked for the presentation, the contents of which were noted.

59

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) A member of the public commented on the proposed location of the crossing on the Ring Road, and asked whether a public consultation on the exact location would be undertaken. The Senior Engineer, Traffic advised that, following a recent Safety Audit, the proposed location was deemed the most appropriate, as a site on the straight section of the Ring Road would be dangerous due to vehicles changing lanes. It was therefore not considered appropriate for a public consultation on the exact location of the crossing. He undertook to accompany the questioner around the Ring Road so that further information on the proposed location could be given.
- (2) In response to a query as to the feasibility of including "Stourbridge In Bloom" on sponsored signs in Stourbridge, the Senior Engineer, Traffic, undertook to investigate the matter further.
- (3) In response to concerns at the lack of response from the Hospital Trust to a request to plant a replacement tree for the Centenary Oak Tree, originally planted in 1922, and relocated when the new hospital was built at the Corbett Hospital site, the Assistant Director, Development and Environmental Protection and Councillor Donegan undertook to speak with the questioner, outside of the meeting to obtain further information. The Assistant Director, Development and Environmental Protection agreed to contact the Summit Healthcare Company and the Hospital Trust to clarify the situation and reach an amicable solution. The Chairman also undertook to write to the Summit Healthcare Company and the Hospital Trust, seeking their co-operation in this matter.

- (4) A member of the public commented on issues, previously expressed, relating to the Seven Dwellings Bridge at Withymoor and discussions with British Waterways. He commented on the lack of a written response from an officer to his letter of 16th January 2006 and the general unkempt state of pockets of land in and around the Withymoor area, particularly outside a Tesco Store. The Senior Engineer, Traffic advised that when he had visited the Withymoor area with the questioner recently, he had found the area to be quite tidy and clean. He also advised that he was not aware of the letter referred to, but that if provided with a copy, he would follow up the queries contained therein. In respect of the matter of litter outside the Tesco store, he undertook to contact Tesco and request that they clear the area immediately outside the store.
- (5) A member of the public expressed concerns regarding a recent planning application for a mobile phone mast at Wollescote Road near Wollescote Hall and the possibility that the application could be approved by default, due to the absence of the relevant Planning Officer. The Assistant Director Development and Environmental Protection, undertook to investigate the situation as matter of urgency and respond to the questioner.
- (6) A member of the public expressed concerns regarding an application to locate a phone mast at the top of Redlake Road on the Foley roundabout. Councillors Jones and Wilson advised that they were aware that the application referred to had been refused.
- (7) In response to a query by a member of the public as to whether the small advertising signs on traffic islands were to be a temporary or permanent feature and whether the signs would remain the size of those already installed, the Senior Engineer, Traffic advised that the small advertising signs were to be a permanent feature in future, that they were the correct size and not considered to be a distraction to motorists. He advised that the revenue raised from the installation of the signs would be used towards maintenance costs of the traffic islands.
- (8) A member of the public requested information regarding byelaws concerning fly tipping. The Area Liaison Officer advised that if incidents of fly tipping were reported, the Directorate of the Urban Environment would investigate and that appropriate legal action would be considered.
- (9) In response to queries regarding the continuation of green waste collections and the possibility of recycling plastic, which had been raised at a previous meeting of the Committee, the Assistant Director Development and Environmental Protection, advised that recycling of green waste would continue. As regards recycling of plastics, she was aware that a Working Group of the Select Committee on the Environment, comprising Members and Officers of the Council, had been established to investigate the feasibility of recycling plastics.

- (10) A member of the public raised the issue of an area of land at the entrance to the Crown Centre, by the library, which continued to be an eyesore. The Area Liaison Officer advised that this matter would be referred to the Town Centre Manager for Stourbridge for investigation.

60

APPLICATIONS IN RESPECT OF LAND AND PROPERTY OWNED BY THE COUNCIL

(Councillor Jones having previously declared a prejudicial interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of Appendix b) of the report submitted, withdrew for the meeting whilst this was discussed.)

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted in respect of land and property owned by the Council.

During consideration of this matter, some members of the Committee advised that they believed that the land off Stourbridge Road, Lye should be sold to the applicant, despite the proposals to refuse the application contained in the report submitted.

On consideration of the report submitted and comments made thereon, it was

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Cabinet Member for Transportation be advised to approve the application for the purchase of the land off Stourbridge Road, Lye, Stourbridge, as shown hatched black on the plan attached to the report submitted, on terms and conditions to be negotiated and agreed by the Director of Law and Property.
- (2) That the Cabinet Member for Lifelong Learning be advised to refuse the application to purchase land adjacent to 23 Rye Croft, Wollescote, as shown hatched on the plan attached to the report submitted, for the reasons set out in the report.

61

CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

(Having previously declared a prejudicial interest in this agenda item, Councillor Mrs Collins withdrew from the meeting whilst the applications for capital allocations were considered)

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on various matters regarding capital funding from the Committee's Capital Allocations budget.

In response to queries from Members of the Committee, the Area Liaison Officer gave a verbal breakdown of the cost of items contained within the application by the Neighbourhood Manager of Enville Street and

Steppingstones.

Upon consideration of the report and comments made thereon, it was

RESOLVED

- (1) That approval be given to the applications submitted by the Stourbridge Radio Group and the St Thomas's Parochial Church Council for an extension of the period for claiming grant allocations made to those bodies to 31st March 2006.
- (2) That the following amounts be awarded to the organisations stated:-

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Age Concern, Stourbridge	Flotex flooring	Up to £5,000
Neighbourhood Manager for Enville Street and Steppingstones	Supply and fitting of 15 additional double sockets in the Community Room at Beauty Bank Primary School	£5,000

62

FRIENDS OF MARY STEVENS PARK – APPLICATION TO HOLD FAMILY FUN DAY AND CYCLE RACES

(Having previously declared a prejudicial interest in this agenda item Councillors Adams, Attwood and Rogers withdrew from the meeting whilst it was considered)

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted seeking approval and support from the Committee, as the Trustees of Mary Stevens Park, for a Family Fun Day and cycle races at Mary Stevens Park on 1st May, 2006.

The Area Liaison Officer advised that a revised letter of application dated the 7th December 2005 had been circulated as Appendix 1 to the report submitted and that the applicant was no longer proposing an amendment to the Parks By-Laws regarding cycling.

The Chairman of the Stourbridge Cycling Club and the Green Space Team Leader from the Directorate of the Urban Environment, then gave a visual presentation on detailed events to be organised on the day of 1st May from 10.00 am until 9.30 pm.

Following the presentation, Members of the Committee and members of the public made comments thereon, including a request for clarification as to whether the car parking charge would include entrance to the park on the Family Fun Day, and if this was in accordance with the terms of the Trust. Support was also expressed for the cycle races and other events on the day. The Area Liaison Officer advised that these and other events to take place at Mary Stevens Park would require a licence in accordance with the Licensing Act 2003.

RESOLVED

That the proposal for a Family Fun Day and cycle races at Mary Stevens Park on Monday 1st May 2006 be approved, subject to the Friends of Mary Stevens Park obtaining a licence for the event, in accordance with the Licensing Act, 2003.

63

STOURBRIDGE CEMETERY/CREMATORIUM – TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the results of the requested consultation with Funeral Directors regarding the traffic management system at the Cemetery/Crematorium.

The Chairman read out a statement on behalf of the Vice Chairman, expressing her views and requesting that consideration be given to the re-opening of the original main entrance and to the use of a one way system around the cemetery. Some Members of the Committee supported the views expressed in the statement. Members of the Committee then commented on the sensitivity of the issue and the need for an acceptable solution to the problem.

Following consideration of the report and the comments made thereon it was

RESOLVED

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (2) That the Director of the Urban Environment be requested to conduct an in-depth feasibility study, in conjunction with officers from his Traffic Section, into the viability of a new one way system, entering from the previous main entrance.

64

MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT

A report of the Director of Law and Property was submitted so as to heighten public awareness of the existence of the Code.

In response to queries from Members of the Committee, the Director of Law and Property advised that the Code of Conduct for Officers of the Council was currently being updated.

RESOLVED

That the content of the report, and Appendix 1 to the report, submitted, be noted.

65 A458 BIRMINGHAM STREET, STOURBRIDGE – WAITING PROHIBITIONS

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the results of the investigation into introducing waiting prohibitions in Birmingham Street and Stamford Road, Stourbridge.

A member of the Committee requested that, prior to the introduction of the Traffic Regulation Order, consideration be given to the effect the Order could have on residents in Parkfield Road, Stourbridge, as a result of motorists parking there, rather than on Birmingham Street.

RESOLVED

That the content of the report be noted and supported.

66 LYE AND WOLLESCOTE CEMETERY CHAPEL

(Having previously declared a prejudicial interest in this agenda item, Councillor Mrs Collins withdrew from the meeting during its consideration)

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on progress in relation to the future of the Chapel, as a result of the outcome of the discussions between the Council and West Midlands Historic Buildings Trust, and the Architectural Heritage Fund.

A member of the Committee advised that a number of musical groups had visited the building and had found the acoustics to be very conducive to the staging of musical events within the building. The groups had therefore expressed an interest in using the building as a possible musical venue, should there be an opportunity for this to happen in the future. In response to concerns expressed by some Members of the Committee regarding problems relating to pigeons in the building, the Assistant Director, Development & Environmental Protection undertook to investigate.

The Area Liaison Officer advised that a full consultation would be undertaken on any future proposals for the building, which would need to be in keeping with it being situated within the boundaries of the cemetery.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the content of the report be noted.
- (2) That a further progress report on the above matters be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

67

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

A report of the Area Liaison Officer was submitted on written responses made to questions asked at a previous meeting.

RESOLVED

That the content of the report be noted.

68

ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Withymoor Colts Football Club

Councillor Mrs Martin advised on the recent success of the Withymoor Colts Football Club. The Club had recently been awarded the Football Association's Community Charter Standard Award. Congratulations on their success were expressed to the Club by Members of the Committee.

No. 9 Bus Service from Birmingham to Stourbridge

Councillor Vickers raised the issue of the late night No. 9 bus service from Birmingham to Stourbridge, returning to Birmingham empty, when visitors to Stourbridge needed to be provided with transport home late at night. The Chairman advised that, as a member of the West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority, he was currently involved in investigations into this provision and the viability of the provision of a late night circular bus service covering the Lye, Pedmore, Norton, Wollaston and Amblecote areas.

Copper Beech Tree Brook Street at Bowling Green Road Stourbridge

Councillor Mrs Collins queried the ownership of a piece of land at the junction of Brook Street and Bowling Green Road Stourbridge, and the need for the owner to be requested to tidy up the overgrown area. She also raised the issue of a Copper Beech Tree at the same location being in need of attention. The Assistant Director, Development and Environmental Protection undertook to investigate these issues.

69

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date and venue of the next meeting was reported as follows:-

20th March 2006 at 7.00 pm at Hob Green Primary School, Hob Green Road, Stourbridge.

The meeting ended at 9.15 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

SAC/39