

## **North Chichester County Local Committee**

13 January 2015 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 7pm at Compton and Upmarden Primary School.

Present: Mr Michael Brown (Chairman), Mrs Janet Duncton, Ms Sandra James and Mr Gordon McAra.

In attendance: Fiona Baker (Principal Community Officer) and Helena Cox (Democratic Services Officer).

### **Welcome and Introductions**

38. The Chairman welcomed the public to the meeting and introduced the members of the Committee and officers present.

### **Declarations of Interest**

39. There were no declarations of interest.

### **Minutes**

40. Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7 October 2014 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

### **Urgent Matters**

41. There were no urgent matters.

### **Progress Statement**

42. The Committee considered a report which provided updates on matters arising from previous meetings of the Committee (copy appended to the signed minutes). The Principal Community Officer (PCO) introduced the report.

- **Raising awareness of flood management measures** – The PCO confirmed that a cheque had been received by Midhurst Town Council from Operation Watershed to fund the event. Work would begin between Sussex Wildlife Trust, the Rivers Trust and Midhurst Town Council to confirm a date for the event.
- **West Sussex Fire and Rescue Services Review** – The Chairman highlighted that as at the last meeting interest was raised about the new 4x4 vehicles that would be used by the Fire and Rescue Service in the area, they would be available for members of the public to view with an officer from the Fire and Rescue Service to answer any questions prior to the next meeting at Lodsworth Village Hall and encouraged all to attend.

### **Public Rights of Way & Volunteer Development Team**

43. The Chairman, following discussion at the last meeting, invited Jon Perks, Principal Rights of Way (PROW) Officer and Darren Rolfe, Senior Community

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Solutions Officer responsible for supporting volunteers on PROW maintenance and bigger projects such as the installation of village gateways, to give a presentation on the current PROW maintenance schedule and potential opportunities available for communities wishing to take on projects themselves. Key points from the presentation included: -

- Mr Perks informed the meeting that his team was responsible for the day to day maintenance of the PROW network in West Sussex and hoped that each parish council was familiar with the PROW network within in their parish; these could be viewed via the following link <http://www2.westsussex.gov.uk/lvmaps/imap.html>. Each parish council should have its own copy of the Definitive Map, the legal map of PROW; the County Council's Legal Services send these to parish councils whenever the relevant Definitive Maps are updated. Volunteers were involved in inspecting paths with Access Rangers and parish councils were informed when the Rangers would be inspecting, which is an opportunity for them to share information. During inspections, this information together with problems reported by path users is assessed. After information is collated, maintenance issues such as small bridges, signage, vegetation and minor surfacing are passed to the maintenance contractor; other issues, such as obstructions, would then be for the Access Ranger to contact those responsible to rectify the problems. The County Council was not responsible for all PROW maintenance; however it did have a highway duty to maintain surfacing and to sign PROW from public highways. Many duties of maintenance are placed on those who owned the land that the PROW fell upon; more information was available on the County Council's website on PROW which could be accessed via the following link [http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/leisure/public\\_paths\\_and\\_the\\_countrysi.aspx](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/leisure/public_paths_and_the_countrysi.aspx)
- Mr Rolfe informed the meeting that he assisted volunteers or groups within communities with practical work on the ground. There were two ways in which issues could be addressed. There were 140 volunteers across the county who would work on projects which were not locality specific, Mr Rolfe would co-ordinate and supervise the use of tools. The other way was for members of the community to be trained so that they could take responsibility for a task. All projects would be covered by the County Council's public liability insurance. Training courses for becoming a task leader (for tasks without WSCC officer supervision), working with power tools and first aid were all available, free and certificated.
- Examples of community projects which Mr Rolfe had been involved in included:
  - Harting – cutting back overgrown vegetation
  - Woodmancote – restoration of pond
  - Maintenance of woodland surrounding Gatwick Airport
  - Pycombe Parish Council looks after a piece of highway land, planting flowers.
  - Washington Parish Council have a task force to undertake minor work
  - Faulking Parish Council built flint wall around pillars installed by the County Council's highway department to protect a spring to make it more in keeping with the village
  - Working with Arun District Council and residents in Bersted Park to establish a nature area on a new housing development

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- The Volunteer Development Team led on tasks relating to PROW with 130 volunteer rangers trained as parish path inspectors. There were also approximately another 100 volunteers training to look at highway problems. The issue of getting tasks done was finding enough people to get out and do them. Mr Rolfe also mentioned that projects could be done by corporate volunteers who undertook work as part of team building days.

44. Questions/comments included: -

- A representative from Duncton Parish Council commented that it would be useful for Parish Council's to be sent a copy of any reports reporting issues on PROW in their Parish as members of the Parish Council know local landowners well and could have conversations about works required. In addition it was commented that it seemed silly that local volunteers were not used to walk local paths but sent elsewhere in the county. *Mr Perks responded that inspections of the PROW network come in a variety of sources and that the County Council like to approach landowners but support from the Parish Council would be encouraged. At the moment the County Council was looking at improving its computer systems and digitalising the thousands of paper files at County Hall which would help when passing on reports. Regarding the use of volunteers, Mr Perks stated that when the County Council first advertised for volunteers most of them requested an area and due to the training element volunteers are kept in the same area however, the next time a path inspection in a particular parish arises there might be the opportunity to swap.*
- Mr McAra enquired whether if volunteers were able to install new fencing would WSCC be able to grant funding for the materials? *Mr Perks commented that, in PROW terms, the County Council was not responsible for fencing, this would be the responsibility of the landowner. Mr Rolfe added that if the was a community project and would improve a route then a source of funding might well be found.*
- A representative from Midhurst Town Council asked whether Town/Parish councils were made aware if communities were interested in undertaking projects within their area. *Mr Rolfe confirmed that they were. The representative also enquired about provision for disability access on PROW and if this was part of the inspection. Mr Perks responded that mobility access was accommodated in the PROW service work programme and the County Council was mindful of its duty under the Equalities Act. For example, when replacing bridges, ramps are installed rather than steps whenever it is reasonable to do so. Surfacing projects are delivered each year, for the benefit of all, particularly given the amount of Wealden clay across the county, but resources have to be used on a priority need basis. Mr Perks encouraged all to contact their local Access Ranger to raise their interest.*
- A member of the public stated the problems some walkers have with stiles and whether they could be replaced with kissing gates. *Mr Perks stated that the County Council supported landowners to remove stiles, however it did not have a duty to compel them to remove stiles. However, if a problem with a*

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*stile is reported, then the County Council could lobby a landowner to replace it with a kissing gate; over 900 stiles had been replaced over 8 years.*

45. The Chairman thanked Mr Perks and Mr Rolfe for attending the meeting.

### **North Chichester Community Initiative Funding (CIF)**

46. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Law, Assurance and Strategy, which sought decisions on applications received under the CIF scheme (copy appended to the signed minutes).

47. The Chairman stated that due to the number of applications, he and Mrs Duncton had met for preliminary discussions ahead of the meeting. Member comments included:

- Regarding application 512/NC, Mrs Duncton stated that the applicant had been clearing snow from the highway in Kirdford Parish for the last 40 years. The Principal Community Officer confirmed that Kirdford Parish Council had identified him for this role. The Chairman asked for a letter of assurance that the applicant would prioritise the removal of snow on public roads rather than his own land and suggested granting half of the money applied for. Members agreed that half should be funded.
- Regarding application 513/NC, the Chairman suggested that £2,400 be granted for installation of solar panels. Members agreed that they would encourage and consider a further application from the applicant for any further capital items (not revenue) at their next meeting as it was the last of the financial year.
- Regarding application 515/NC, the Chairman recommended that the committee decline the application as it was for running costs. Mrs James stated that volunteers were the lifeblood of the community and was disappointed not to award them funds. The Democratic Services Officer stated that she would see if there were any other funding streams available for the organisation.
- Regarding application 516/NC, the Chairman recommended declining the application as there was no particular shortage of publicity material in Midhurst. Mr McAra stated that there was an enormous demand for a pilot edition of Midhurst Together which at present was only available online and therefore unavailable for older residents who did not have access to the internet. Members agreed to grant half the application and Mr McAra undertook to fund alternative funding for the additional amount required.
- Regarding application 523/NC, the Chairman recommended declining the application as the applicant was a precepting authority and therefore ineligible for Community Initiative Funding. Mrs James stated that the committee had granted funds to Parish Council's in the past. The Chairman stated that from now on precepting authorities should not be awarded funding. Mrs Duncton encouraged an application from the sports club.

48. The Chairman highlighted that the next meeting was the last of the financial year and encouraged further CIF applications.

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49. Resolved –

a) The following awards were made:

**504/NC**, The Hanover Band Foundation, £261.43 to purchase musical instruments to lend to children as part of a countywide application.

**512/NC**, Nicholls Farm, £1,550.00 towards the purchase of a replacement snowplough.

**513/NC**, Petworth Community Garden, £2,400.00, towards the costs of installing solar panels for an allotment shed.

**514/NC**, Hampers Green Community Centre, £300.00, towards the cost of a ride on lawn mower for the Community Centre.

**516/NC**, Midhurst Together, £250.00 towards printing costs for a pilot edition of a community booklet.

b) The following applications were declined:

**515/NC**, Lodsworth Local Centre, £700.00, to reimburse volunteer drivers millage costs as the committee considered this to be running costs and therefore ineligible for Community Initiative Funding.

**523/NC**, Fittleworth Parish Council, £1,500.00 to purchase and install a "safety mesh" around a children's play area as the committee considered that this would be a subsidy to the Parish Council's annual precept or the replacement of an initiative which the council would be required to consider within its constitution and therefore ineligible for Community Initiative Funding.

### **Appointment of Authority School Governors**

50. The Committee considered a report by the Strategic Commissioner for Learning which set out proposed nominations to school governing bodies and the criteria for their appointment (copy appended to the signed minutes).

51. Resolved - That the North Chichester County Local Committee approves the following appointment/reappointment under the 2007 Regulations:-

- Reappoint Dr A Tate to Northchapel CP School for a three year term; and
- Appoint Cllr J Tassell to Compton and Upmarden CEP School for a four term.

### **Talk With Us**

52. The Chairman invited questions from members of the public. One question, which had been submitted prior to the meeting (copy appended to the signed minutes), from a representative of the Midhurst Old Town Residents and Business Association regarding parking arrangements in the Church Hill area of Midhurst Old Town which Midhurst Town Council had voted to change was discussed. The Chairman commented that any amendments to Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's)

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would be a matter for the CLC and if they were presented to the CLC the committee would welcome views from local residents before any decisions were made.

### **Date of the Next Meeting**

53. It was confirmed that the next scheduled meeting of the Committee would take place on 3 March 2015 at Lodsworth Village Hall, Gills Lane, Lodsworth, Petworth, GU28 9BL.

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm.

**CHAIRMAN**