

## **South Mid Sussex County Local Committee**

29 April 2009 – **At a meeting of the Committee at 7pm in the Albourne Village Hall, The Street, Albourne**

Present:

Peter Griffiths	-	Member for Hurstpierpoint and Bolney
Sue Knight	-	Member for Burgess Hill
Colin Wilsdon	-	Member for Hassocks and Victoria

Apologies:

Andrew Barrett-Miles (Chairman)	-	Member for Burgess Hill
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In attendance:

Spencer Bryan	-	Locality Manager
Teresa Gittins	-	Action in Rural Sussex
Laura Johnston	-	Assistant Locality Officer
Margaret Enstone	-	Rural Operations Team
Nick Rae	-	Acting Economic Development Group Manager
Peter Simpson	-	Rural Operations Team
Suzanne Thompson	-	Locality Officer

### **Chairman's Welcome**

133. Peter Griffiths welcomed all to the meeting and thanked Graham Stafford, Chairman of Albourne Parish Council, for helping to prepare the venue. Mr Stafford responded that the Parish Council were pleased to support the County Local Committee (CLC) and noted that the security lighting outside the hall, purchased with a contribution from the CLC Community Initiative Fund (CIF) was now installed and working well.

134. Mr Stafford also informed all that the Safer Routes to School (SRTS) programme was now being implemented for Albourne Primary School and highlighted the importance of this noting that children coming from Sayers Common had to cross the B2116 three times in 150yds as there was no footpath. It was anticipated that the SRTS would encourage these children, and those from the new estate in Hurstpierpoint, to walk to their Primary school.

135. Mr Griffiths informed all that Mr Andrew Barrett-Miles could not attend and had sent his apologies. Mr Griffiths indicated his willingness to Chair the meeting which was put to the Committee vote and Mr Griffiths formally elected.

### **Declaration of Interests**

136. There were no declarations of interest.

### **Minutes**

137. Resolved that the minutes of the South Mid Sussex (SMS) County Local Committee (CLC) meeting held on 18 February 2009 are confirmed as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

### **Urgent Matters**

138. The Chairman informed the meeting that the West Sussex protocol on Finger Post refurbishment/replacement was now available and would be circulated to Parish Councils shortly, that there was an additional CIF application from the Hurstpierpoint Community Partnership to be discussed at Item 9, and an additional Local Authority School Governor to be considered at Item 10.

139. A representative from the Hurstpierpoint Community Partnership was asked to give a brief outline of their new CIF bid. Members noted that the Partnership had identified the KAVE building in Hurstpierpoint as a possible location for the proposed Children's Centre, The Willow Tree Hub, but that the building urgently required a structural survey which would cost £633. Members noted that should this survey be undertaken and a satisfactory report received, the Hub could be up and running within four months.

### **Matters Arising/Progress Statement**

140. The Chairman referred members to this document updating all on progress since the last meeting, noting that he also had three verbal updates to give:

- That the mobile speed monitoring device agreed upon at the October meeting would soon be available for use and that members were now working on identifying roads where the device would initially be sited. The Chairman reminded all that the device would be used 50% of the time in Burgess Hill, 25% in the Hurstpierpoint and Bolney areas and 25% in the Hassocks and Victoria areas.
- That the SRTS scheme at Manor Field was complete with the bollards and the Traffic Regulation Order in place and concerns about a reduction in parking had resulted in a further site meeting on 28 April and that residents concerned would be updated on the outcome.
- That WSCC are looking into the possibility of providing battery charging points in Burgess Hill town for disabled residents' electric cars, in response to a request at the last meeting, and that the next step would be to determine how payment for the electricity used by this facility might be levied. Members noted that the Mid Sussex Disabled Group had recently been disbanded but that the Burgess Hill CVS Manager would put the CLC in touch with a member of a newly formed Access Focus Group of which she was aware.

### **Keep Rural West Sussex Working**

141. The Chairman noted that, with regard to this agenda item, the local firm Honeywell had announced that evening the necessity to reduce its labour force, he then introduced Acting Economic Development Group Manager, Nick Rae to outline his presentation (copy appended to the signed minutes) on the steps being taken

by West Sussex County Council to ensure that rural businesses in South Mid Sussex continue to survive and thrive despite the current economic downturn.

142. Mr Rae informed members that he would be supported in his presentation by Teresa Gittins from Action In Rural Sussex (AIRS). Mr Rae then gave an overview of the current economic position countrywide and noted how this was affecting people locally, highlighting difficulties in accessing services, the increase in energy costs, increasing closures of shops and pubs, difficulties faced by the farming community, housing affordability and rising transport costs. Members noted that WSCC and West Sussex District and Borough Council authorities had signed up to a 'Keeping West Sussex Working' action plan, the key element of which was to signpost help to individuals and businesses to other agencies such as the Burgess Hill based Business Link, the Citizens Advice Bureau and others.

143. Members noted that the West Sussex Rural Forum and Partnership provided the opportunity for key agencies to meet and consider policy issues and actions for rural West Sussex. Mr Rae highlighted recent discussions around local opportunities such as the use of existing resources to produce renewable energy, farm diversification and skills training, considering what extra facilities could be offered to tourists, campaigning for better Broadband and administering the Sussex Downs and Low Weald LEADER programme which has around £2m for supporting a range of rural economic initiatives.

144. Mr Rae informed all that Peter Simpson the LEADER Programme Manager was available at the meeting to speak to those interested in this. Mr Rae also highlighted that the new National Park Authority would be established from 2011 and that work was underway on the opportunities that that would bring. Mr Rae concluded with examples of local business successes including Sussex Cattle, and locally sourced and produced foods. A resident pointed out the particular successes of local award winning vineyards at Bolney and Newtimber.

145. Mr Rae introduced Teresa Gittins to describe the contribution of AIRS to ensuring the continued success of South Mid Sussex businesses. Members noted the two main responsibilities of AIRS in identifying problems and responding to the needs of residents of rural areas in East and West Sussex. Ms Gittins highlighted the importance of gathering information from rural communities to make sure local needs are known and that all organisations and authorities are adjusting their work programmes and responding to the current economic downturn. Key aims for AIRS currently were to continue to develop community hubs to provide services locally encompassing a range of information points, to develop rural transport services, and to continue to work with the PCT on the Rural Pathfinder Project. It was emphasized that the focus was on 'thinking local'.

146. The Chairman endorsed earlier comments regarding local vineyards and the Committee undertook to look into the possibility of holding a CLC meeting in the Conference Room at Bookers Vineyard. The Chairman invited further comments from members. Responses were as follows:

- It was noted that many of the issues highlighted were not new but were now more prominent and a stronger incentive now existed to address and solve problems. The issue of rural transport was emphasized and the suggestion made that with focussed effort on behalf of all partners something positive might come out of a difficult situation.

- It was noted that the services of a Credit Union were now available in Burgess Hill creating opportunities for borrowers to access funds at a low rate of interest and that should resources be made available now would be the time to build affordable housing in the area.
- It was pointed out that this would be in accordance with the 'Power of Wellbeing' concept that both Burgess Hill Town Council and the Parish Councils were signed up to and could conceivably use their precepts for.

147. The Chairman asked Peter Simpson to outline the LEADER Programme. Mr Simpson invited residents to speak to him at the meeting or to telephone him on 01243 756755 or

<http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment/rdpe-leader-funding/>

It was noted that in the first instance an application to the LEADER fund would require an 'expression of interest', that it was a 'bottom up' process with bids being considered for support by a Local Action Group and that they would help with the outline of the proposal although bidders would need to provide the financial information.

148. The Chairman questioned whether AIRS with their 'Heart of the Village' Campaign would be able to create an IT drop-in space in the Albourne Village Hall. Ms Gittins informed members that AIRS did not have funding for such a venture, as they were essentially a support and lobbying group but that they could enable a local group who wished to create such a project.

149. The Chairman invited questions and comments from residents; responses were as follows:

- A resident noted that as part of the new National Park South Mid Sussex had the Northern Scarp slope gateway which could give local people great opportunities for businesses such as shops and that this should be welcomed. *It was agreed that the new Park status should be seen as an opportunity while tempered with caution as consideration needed to be given to the impact of additional traffic to the area. Members noted that the Leader of the County Council welcomed the park as now defined, although there was concern that planning mechanisms should be in the hands of local democratic bodies rather than quangos.*
- It was noted that an announcement had been made by Central Government that taxpayers were to fund a broadband super highway. *Members were informed that indeed, it was suggested that 30% of new businesses would be started up at home and that the importance of broadband infrastructure in South Mid Sussex could not be underestimated. It was emphasised that this was a complex market issue affected by some regulatory aspects of BT and that WSCC and SEEDA were meeting to discuss this issue in the coming week.*
- A resident offered to give contact details on how local groups might access computer equipment that was no longer required by businesses. *This information would be taken during the interval and reported back to the next CLC meeting.*

- A resident informed the meeting of the expense of cabling in order to get broadband services at his business and that it was not possible to share the line despite all attempts at persuading BT to do so. *It was noted that this was a known problem with private arrangements with BT and would be discussed at the WSCC meeting with SEEDA and telecommunications companies as already mentioned.*
- A resident questioned whether village and church halls could be used to better effect to help unemployed people in their job searches. *It was noted that to create a village hubs with IT facilities was part of the AIRS aim with their 'Heart of the Village' campaign and that all village shops and halls are being contacted with a view to setting these up.*

150. The Chairman thanked all for their input and indicated that the meeting would shortly be adjourned for a 20-minute break for refreshments and informal discussions with officers and representatives of local groups and businesses attending the meeting.

151. Resolved that:

- i) It would be determined whether it would be possible to use Bookers Vineyard as a venue for the October CLC meeting; and that
- ii) Information on methods for obtaining second-hand IT equipment for local groups would be reported back to the next CLC

152. On behalf of the Committee the Chairman then informed all of the impending retirement of the Highway Manager, Vincent Tipper. The Chairman extended thanks and congratulations to Mr Tipper on behalf of the Committee and South Mid Sussex residents for his excellent work over the years. Mr Tipper was then invited to receive a card and a cake to mark the occasion. Mr Tipper thanked the Committee and said that he had enjoyed his work tremendously over the years and that it had always been challenging and extremely interesting. A warm round of applause was given.

153. The meeting was adjourned at this point.

### **talk with us (Community Forum)**

154. The Chairman invited questions and comments on anything not already on the agenda. Responses were as follows:

- A resident questioned the possibility of addressing the current oversubscription of the St Lawrence School at Hurstpierpoint, asking whether it might be possible to emulate the Hassocks school where the Committee had helped arrange for extra temporary facilities to be provided. The Chairman informed the resident that he would consult with the Head teacher and Chairman of Governors at the school and requested that the resident speak to him after the meeting before writing to him formally at County Council.

155. The Chairman invited Spencer Bryan, Locality Manager to address the meeting. Residents were informed of the importance of CLC meetings in highlighting local issues and that the Committee were keen to gauge what the residents felt was of importance to them. Residents were referred to the feedback leaflet placed on their chairs and encouraged to respond to the questionnaire and leave responses with the Locality Working Team.

### **Post-Implementation Monitoring of Speed Limit Changes – Hassocks and A273**

156. The Chairman introduced Roger Harper, Team Leader - AIP/Speed Management to introduce an information report (copy appended to the signed minutes), advising the Committee of results of monitoring following the implementation of two road safety schemes. One, a scheme to reduce the traffic speed within Hassocks Village introduced in 2004 the other to reduce speeds on the A273 route between Hassocks and Pyecombe, introduced in 2006.

157. In respect of the Hassocks scheme Mr Harper noted that the speed limits had reduced and the accident rate had dropped, although Members noted that the speeds on the Hurst Road were still too high. Members were informed that Mr Harper intended to look into this and to include this area on the programme for a permanent vehicle activated speed-indicating device but that this was dependent on finance and so would probably be in 18 months' time.

158. The local member for Hassocks and Victoria emphasized the importance of increasing the safety of this route particularly for young cyclists, noting that this was not just about speed but also traffic volume and that other measures may well be needed in addition to addressing the speed limit.

159. In respect of the A273 route scheme between Hassocks and Pyecombe Mr Harper indicated that speed limits had reduced but the accident level had increased. Members noted that the increased casualty rate appeared to be random in nature and that Mr Harper would continue to monitor this situation. Members were informed that surfacing measures would be implemented over the summer and consideration given to installing further safety measures at the junction.

160. A resident questioned the lack of a cycle route continuing from Brighton over Clayton Hill. The Chairman undertook to investigate the reason for this and expressed support on behalf of the Committee for making the road safer for cyclists.

161. Resolved that:

- i) the Hurst Road, as part of the Hassocks Village scheme, would be included on the programme for a permanent vehicle activated speed indicating device; and that
- ii) speeds on the route between Hassocks and Pyecombe would continue to be monitored and additional surfacing measures be introduced during the summer of 2009; and that
- iii) the question of implementing a cycle route up Clayton Hill would be raised and an answer brought back to the CLC at the next meeting.

## **Community Initiative Funding**

162. The Chairman introduced a Report by the Head of Democratic Services detailing bids for Community Initiative Funding. He then outlined the budget for the new financial year and requested Members consideration of the applications.

163. The Committee considered and approved 742: Bolney Parish Council for £2,000. It was noted that 899: Age Concern and 906: Hurstpierpoint Community Partnership had been withdrawn, but that the latter was re-presented as a late item. The Committee awarded the Partnership £633. The Committee declined funding to 920: Burgess Hill and District Arthritis Support Group as the bid was considered to be for running costs and as such was outside the funding criteria. The Committee awarded 921: Time 4 Children, £654 and 940: Poynings Parish Council £750. The Committee declined to fund 941: Hassocks Parish Council for tree planting as it was felt that the application for this project should come from Hassocks Community Partnership and 985: Ariel Othellos as this also represented running costs. 994: Pyecombe Golf Club had been withdrawn by the applicants prior to the meeting. The Committee awarded 998: Mid Sussex CVS £550 and 999: Hassocks Parish Council £500.

164. Resolved that:

- i) the following applications for funding were approved: Bolney Parish Council for £2,000, Hurstpierpoint Community Partnership for £633, Time 4 Children for £654, Poynings Parish Council for £750, Mid Sussex CVS for £550, Hassocks Parish Council for £500; and that
- ii) the following were declined: Burgess Hill and District Arthritis Support Group, Ariel Othellos and Hassocks Parish Council.

## **Local Authority (LA) School Governors**

165. The Chairman referred members to the applications for appointment to school governorships highlighting the late tabled application from Mr Sion Humphreys to also be appointed to Oakmeeds Community College.

166. Resolved that:

- i) Mr Sion Humphreys be appointed to Birchwood Grove Primary and Oakmeeds Community College for four year terms; and
- ii) Mrs Eileen Balsdon be appointed to Gattons Infant School for a four year team; and
- iii) Mr Christopher Thomas-Atkin be appointed to the Gattons Infant School for a four year term; and
- iv) Mrs Janice Henwood be reappointed to Manor Field Primary for a further four year term.

## **Date of Next Meeting**

167. The Chairman informed all of the date of the next meeting on 08 July 2009 at St Paul's Catholic College, Burgess Hill and invited suggestions for agenda items. An item on route B2116 was requested.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.

**Chairman**