

Joint Western Arun Area Committee

7 January 2015– At a meeting of the Committee held at 7.00 p.m. at Bersted Park Community Centre.

Present:

West Sussex County Council: Mr Jones, Mr Patel, Mrs Rapnik and Mr Sutcliffe

Arun District Council: Councillors, Mr Cunard, Mr Edwards and Mr English

Town/Parish Council representatives: Councillors Dr Poland (Aldwick), Mr Knight (Bersted), Mr Wells (Bognor Regis), Mr Peerman (Felpham)(Vice Chairman), Mrs Pendleton (Middleton) and Mrs Hall (Pagham)

Officers: Philippa Dart, Assistant Director (ADC), Monique Smart, Democratic Services Officer (WSCC), Gregory Merrett, Principal Community Officer (WSCC), and Ben Whiffin, Assistant Highways Manager (WSCC).

Chairman's Welcome

52. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

53. Apologies had been received from Councillors Mr Oppler, Mrs Philips, Mr L Brown, Mr Wotherspoon (Chairman) and Mr Hitchins.

54. As the Chairman had given his apologies this evening, the Chairmanship would fall to the Vice Chairman. However the Vice Chairman had a sore throat and therefore it was requested that the County Local Committee Chairman, Mrs Rapnik, become Chairman for this meeting and the Vice Chairman would remain as Vice Chairman.

Declarations of Interest

55. No declarations of interests were declared.

Minutes

56. Resolved –that the minutes of the Joint Western Arun Area Committee (JWAAC) held on 17 September 2014 are confirmed as a correct record and that they are signed by the Chairman.

Urgent Matters

57. The Chairman informed the Committee that he had agreed an urgent item be included on this evening's agenda. It had been requested by County Councillors that they reconsider the recommendations made in the Bognor Regis High Street Improvement scheme report of 17th September 2014. An update and the original report had been emailed to Members this afternoon and are tabled tonight. Copies were made available for the public.

58. The Chairman invited the Principal Community Officer, Mr Gregory Merrett, to introduce the report (copy appended to the signed minutes). Mr Merrett explained that Local County Council Members of JWAAC met the Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport on 6 January 2015 to discuss progress on the Bognor Regis High Street Improvement scheme and the possibility of progressing improvements on the High Street as proposed by officers in recommendation 1a of the report considered in September 2014, whilst maintaining the future possibility of additional measures, should they be required.

59. It was explained at that meeting, and highlighted by Mr Merrett for Members of JWAAC, that any recommendation would be subject to available resources, consultation, necessary approvals and a period of monitoring and evaluation. Mr Merrett went on to explain that the 2015/16 Integrated Works Programme (IWP) was currently in the consultation phase and will be finalised by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport in March 2015. It was therefore acknowledged by the Local County Councillors that tonight's JWAAC provided the final opportunity to review the September recommendations to enable a recommendation to the Cabinet Member that proposals progress in 2015/16 in accordance with recommendation 1a of the September report.

60. A number of issues were discussed including those set out below:

- It was explained that the original proposal was to change the appearance of the road and pavement into a shared space with a view to altering driver behaviour.
- The scheme design proposed by officers is based on the recommendation made by JWAAC on the 25.9.13.
- The proposed scheme would not include rising bollards.
- The recommendation not to include rising bollards was not primarily financial.
- Many Members expressed concern about not including rising bollards and many stated that a physical barrier would be the only effective way to stop people driving down the high street.
- It was requested that if the recommendation was approved by County Councillors tonight then it should include a request that the scheme be monitored and reviewed within 6 months of implementation.

61. Resolved that the County Council Members of the Joint Western Arun Area Committee agreed to recommend to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to implement the Bognor Regis High Street Improvement scheme as proposed by officers for delivery within the 2015/16 Integrated Works Programme and then review to assess whether further enforcement mechanisms are required. Members requested that the scheme be monitored and reviewed within 6 months of implementation.

Progress Statement

62. The Committee had before it a progress statement on matters arising from the previous meeting (copy appended to the signed minutes). The progress statement was noted.

63. Mr Hugh Coster stated that he had not received anything from Mr Karl Roberts in relation to his request for plans for the Station Square proposals.

Talk with us – public question time

64. The Chairman invited questions from members of the public. Questions were asked to which responses were given (in italics), including those set out below:

- Mr Colin Mansfield from Middleton asked when the OPUS flood report for Yapton Road, Middleton, would be issued and if the conclusions would be subject to road improvements at Comet Corner? *Mr Gregory Merrett responded stating that he understood that Mr Mansfield had been in communication with the Drainage Team at WSCC and it had been confirmed that these were being treated as two separate projects but that engineers working on the scheme for comet corner are informing drainage colleagues with a view to working together. Mr Merrett also added that it was hoped a stakeholder meeting would take place in February or March to provide a further update.*
- *Mrs Jean Coles asked stated that within a few days of completion, the replacement street lights on the Esplanade and Promenade, have rust marks which have spread around various parts of posts and lamps. The Contractor s (SSE) response is that the rust marks are "merely cosmetic". Mrs Coles asked if this could be followed up by JWAAC as she felt it was unacceptable. Since receiving this question via email this morning, Mr Merrett confirmed that he had spoken to colleagues in the Street Lighting Team and they would follow this up with SEE and progress would be reported back via JWAAC.*
- Mr Pat Dillon from Bognor Regis Town Council raised concern about some of the proposed changes to parking arrangements as discussed at the last H&T sub group meeting. The chairman confirmed that this could be discussed under the agenda item 8A.
- Mr Harvey from Felpham Parish Council asked if the signage on the new relief road could be reviewed. In particular over the just over the railway bridge is a sign to get into lane for the A29 and this leaves it quite late for cars to get into lane. *This was noted for investigation by the Assistant Highways Manager, Ben Whiffin.*
- Mr Hugh Coster expressed dissatisfaction that a question he raised 14 months ago at JWAAC has still not been answered satisfactorily and he requested that the Chairman arrange for this to be responded to. *The Chairman stated that she understand Mr Coster have been in dialogue with WSCC officers on this issue and his question was now being dealt with by WSCC Customer Relations Team and a written response would be provided very soon. The Chairman added that she had requested that JWAAC be kept informed and the final response be shared with us.*
- Mr Brooks from Bognor Regis Town Council asked what the net loss of parking spaces would be if the changes proposed to parking on the esplanade are implemented? *This question would be referred to the parking team at WSSC for a response.*
- A Felpham Parish Councillor ask how much interest the County Council had made on the £1million Section 106 money for road mitigation of site 6 and who it had been invested with? *Gregory Merrett undertook to get a response to this question and respond directly to the Parish Council.*

- A member of Bognor Regis Chamber of Commerce raised concern about the proposed restrictions to London Road particularly for stores where people wish to use a car to collect large items. He also asked what provisions would be made for disabled drivers. *It was confirmed that the issue regarding disabled access was addressed in the Traffic Regulation Order report to the last JWAAC. It was also confirmed this would be subject to public consultation.*

Community Policing Update

65. The Chairman welcomed Sergeant Christian Thomas who provided an update on current issues in the JWAAC area. A number of issues were discussed including those set out below:

- Operation Tinsel that aimed to combat shoplifting during the festive period resulted in 7 arrests and other interventions.
- New mobile devices are being rolled out across the area to allow Police officers to log and record when they are out and about.
- The problems with the 101 non-emergency number have improved significantly as more call centre staff have been recruited and work has been undertaken to deal with persistent callers.
- The circulated statistics showed an increase in overall crime. Sergeant Thomas explained that the Police are now recording all crimes when reported.
- The issue of street drinkers in the Town Centre was discussed. Sergeant Thomas stated that the section dispersal order ended in December and resulted in 90 dispersals and 19 arrests in the 6 month period. Sergeant Thomas assured Members that the Police are working with partners on an action plan to address issues. Members did stress that the retailers need to be responsible for the state of the shopfronts.
- Staffing levels in the Neighbourhood Policing Team are currently good but there is likely to be restructuring and therefore possible changes in the next few months.

Highways and Transport Sub Group

66. The Chairman referred Members to the minutes of the last meeting of the Highways and Transport Sub Group (copy attached to the signed minutes).

67. Councillors Mr English and Mr Peerman both declared an interest as Members of Felpham Parish Council.

68. A number of issues were discussed including those set out below:

- It was confirmed that the minor amendments to TRO's were discussed at the H&T Sub Group and that they recommended all but two progress to formal consultation subject to the usual fast track approval from the local County Councillor. However a number of Members shared the concerns raised by Mr Brooks during TWU that the proposals for the Esplanade would have a detrimental impact on tourist parking and spaces would remain empty during the day when residents are at work. As the local County Councillor was not

in attendance it was agreed that officers would contact him after the meeting to clarify if he supported this to progress to formal consultation.

- Councillor Mr English summarised the situation with regard to the Felpham Relief Road mitigation and that it was unlikely that all the agreed schemes for Felpham could be delivered for the available budget. He asked if WSCC could give reassurance that the Comet Corner scheme could be delivered within the timescales of the S106 agreement. The Chairman confirmed that WSCC officers will be attending the Site 6 Meeting on the 26 January to discuss the current position in more detail and any concerns should be directed to the project manager to be discussed at that meeting. Mr Merrett confirmed that an email had been sent to the Parish Councils today by the Project Manager to confirm this.
- Members expressed disappointment that the Vehicles for Sale pilot had ended. Ben Whiffin, Assistant Highways Manager, confirmed that only two vehicles were towed during the pilot period and it was therefore not cost effective to have a contract for this service. He also confirmed that reported issues post pilot have vastly reduced. Mr Merrett confirmed that WSCC is happy to support Members and Parishes to develop an alternative solution where it can be locally resourced, should they feel vehicles for sale remain a priority.

Highways update

69. The Chairman referred Members to the update report (copy attached to the signed minutes) and asked Assistant Area Highways Manager, Benjamin Whiffin, to introduce the report.

70. It was confirmed that Bognor High Street near Gloucester Road would be resurfaced in the upcoming programme. Ben Whiffin would let Councillor Mr Wells know the intended date.

Community Initiative Funding

71. The Committee considered a report by the Head of Law, Assurance & Strategy, West Sussex County Council (copy appended to the signed minutes), which sought a decision from the County Council Members of the Committee on the applications received under the Community Initiative Funding (CIF) scheme.

72. The Chairman stated that a number of repeat applications had been received and as Members are probably aware, the CIF policy does state that repeat applications are ineligible for funding. However the Chairman confirmed that the policy was for guidance and Members are able to set local priorities. County Councillors have therefore agreed that they will except repeat applications when they are from community organisations and fit other aspects of the CIF criteria.

73. Councillor Mr Paul Wells declared an interest in the application from the Local History Society and the Southdowns Folk Festival.

74. Councillor Mr Cunard repeated his request that there be a scoring mechanism for applications. The Chairman stated that applications are decided upon based on the criteria and available funds.

75. The County Councillors on the Committee resolved that Community Initiative Funding be allocated as follows:

a) The following awards were made:

443/JWAAC, My Sisters House, £1,608.00 towards the costs of purchasing a marquee.

447/JWAAC, International Birdman Bognor Ltd, £3,500.00 for various event costs.

462/JWAAC, 5th Pagham & Aldwick Brownies, £850.00 towards the costs associated with a Brownie event at Foxlease.

489/JWAAC, Southdowns Folk Festival, £2,500.00 towards advertising and marketing and to hire a PA system. However Members did suggest that in future this organisation and others work together and look to purchase and share equipment such as PA systems, that they can all use and then no need to hire every year.

496/JWAAC, The Hanover Band Foundation, £261.43 towards the purchase of musical instruments to lend to children.

507/JWAAC, Bognorphenia CIC, £1,200.00 for office equipment including a laptop, software and peripherals, printer ink and paper, stamps and envelopes and publicity and fund raising materials.

b) The following applications were declined:

448/JWAAC, Jeneses Ltd, requested £2,800.00 for cavity wall insulation of the Jeneses Centre. This was declined as it does not fit the criteria. However it was stated that the application had been referred to 'Your Energy Sussex' to look into other possible areas of funding.

477/JWAAC, Bognor Regis Local History Society, requested £5,000.00 towards the costs of converting an outbuilding to create extra museum space and room for catering facilities. Although Members supported this application the project is at an early stage and still required much more funding and CIF must be spent within 6 months. Members felt it would be more beneficial to apply for to the Members Big Society Fund as larger amount are possible with that fund. Therefore they declined the application and requested the applicant follow up with the local County Councillors support.

c) The following application was deferred:

451/JWAAC, Youth of Bognor, requested £1,500.00 to purchase craft materials, to subsidise leader's and children's places at YOB camp 2015 and other running costs. Members deferred this application and requested more information about which schools are involved, confirm how much is required per child and that they are all from the JWAAC area.

Community Projects Fund Grant Applications

76. The Committee considered a report by the Assistant Director, Arun District Council (copy appended to the signed minutes), which sought a decision from all Members of the Committee on the applications received under the Community Projects Grants.

77. In relation to recommendation two, to split the remainder of the fund equally between Parish Councils, Councillor Mr English expressed disappointment that this had not been discussed with sub group members. He also stated that the promotion of this fund had been poor.

78. The Committee resolved:

1. to grant requested funding of £400 for security cameras for West Meads Precinct.
2. the balance of the funds for this financial year to be distributed equally to the Town and Parish Councils by the 31 March 2015

Items to be raised by Town and Parish Council representatives.

79. The Chairman invited questions from Town and Parish representatives on the Committee. No questions were raised.

Items for Future Meetings

80. The following items were agreed for consideration at future meetings:

- Representation/presentation from South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECAMBS)

Date of Next Meeting

81. The Chairman confirmed that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on Wednesday 18 March 2015 at The Arena Sports Centre

The meeting closed at 9.05pm

Chairman