

WITHAM LOCAL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: 15th July 2008

Time of Meeting: 7:15pm – 09:25pm

Venue: Public Hall, Collingwood Road, Witham

Chairman: Councillor T J W Foster

Contact Point for further information: David Triggs, Locality Co-Ordinator

Membership Present:

Councillor J E Abbott	Yes	Councillor Mrs S A Howell	Yes
Councillor Ms L Barlow	Yes	Councillor P J Hughes	Yes
Councillor D L Bebb	Yes	Councillor M C M Lager	Yes
Councillor J G J Elliott	Yes	Councillor S J Lambourne	No
Councillor R Elliston	Yes	Councillor A M Meyer	Yes until 9:10
Councillor Dr R L Evans	Yes until 8:55	Councillor R G S Mitchell	Yes until 8:30
Councillor T J W Foster	Yes	Councillor Mrs J M Money	Apologies
Councillor Mrs M E Galione	Yes until 8:55	Councillor R Ramage	Yes
Councillor J E B Gyford	Yes	Councillor W Rose	Yes

Also Present:

Chris Fleetham	Corporate Director, Braintree District Council
David Triggs	Locality Coordinator, Braintree District Council
Melanie Ward	Locality Support Officer, Braintree District Council

Representatives of the Witham Local Community also in attendance: -

Representative	Address / Representing
John Boon	Witham Boys Brigade
Adam Skinner	Resident off Maldon Road
Tony Stotes	Witham Lions Club
Phil Barlow	Witham Town Council

Additional attendees: -

- 11** Representative from the press
- 12** The Chair welcomed and introduced Chris Fleetham as the new Area Coordinator for Witham Local Committee and Cllr Elliston as newly elected Councillor for Hatfield Peverel.
- 13** **Declarations of Interest**
- Councillor Lucy Barlow declared a personal interest in item 2.1 (Witham Boys Brigade Application for Grant Funding) as the sponsoring Ward Member.
- 14** **Minutes**
- The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 1st May 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

15 Question Time

No questions were received from members of the public.

16 Local Committee Budgets

16.1 Bids for grants from the Witham Local Committee.

John Boon, Group Leader of Witham Boys Brigade presented an application for funding a Community Development Project. The activities within this project aim to provide challenging and innovative activities, which are not readily available to young people in Witham.

In responding to Members questions, John Boon advised the Committee that;

- The Community Development Project was only set up to cover the Witham area and surrounding villages. The County Council was committing regular funds and the group had linked with other Community based projects.
- 95% of the Membership of the Boys Brigade resides in the District. Those involved in the Community Development Project all live in the district.
- All projects would continue through further fund raising, seeking additional grants and combining venues to reduce costs. The group would maintain these projects in a similar way to other projects that continue to be organised and funded.
- The application for funding from the Jack Petchey Foundation had been unsuccessful due to the fact that the area covered by Witham Boys Brigade UK did not fit into the criteria for the Grant.

During discussion of the bid for funding, Phil Barlow referred to the Witham Academy and suggested that there should be a more active collaboration with the Brigade and other youth groups in the area.

Members thanked John Boon for his hard work and commitment to providing opportunities for the young people of the District.

Decision: That the total request for a grant of £6,290; £2,500 Capital and £3,790 Revenue for the funding of the Community Development Project be agreed.

16.2 Additional bid for Funding – From the Templars Community Association Funday.

The Chairman agreed to take this bid as an urgent item of business as the Association required funding for an event that was due to take place before the Committee's next meeting

Councillor Gyford, Member for Witham North Ward, referred to a request for funding from Jen Adams a PCSO at Witham Police Station on behalf of Templars Community Association.

Details were set out in a briefing paper, which was circulated to all Members of the Committee. The aim of the event was to bring the Templars community together. The Police and Greenfields had indicated their support. Given the type of event and the brief outline of costs, Members felt that this was a good community project worthy of support and agreed to support funding of up to £500. The Locality Officer stated that the funding assessment panel set clear guidelines, on which this application would be assessed. Mr Stotes, a member of the Witham Lions Club offered the assistance of the Lions Club to help support the event.

Decision: That the Chairman of the Committee, in consultation with the Ward Councillors, be authorised to approve a bid for funding of up to £500 subject to such a bid meeting the criteria identified in the funding guidelines.

16.3 Kelvedon Springwatch Festival.

Members were informed that the Spring watch Festival had been postponed due to flooding. The 20th September had been chosen as a likely date.

Decision: That the Committee confirm its support for the funding of £1,180 awarded at the last meeting and for the Festival to be rescheduled.

Note: Members suggested the organisers alter the alternative date, if not yet finalised, so as not to clash with the Witham Puppet Festival and to rename the event Autumn Watch Festival.

16.4 Local Committee Budgets in 2007/08 and 2008/09.

Cllr Mitchell informed the Committee that the funding granted to Feering for the purchase of gazebos had already proved to be money well spent as they had been hired out to four other local events.

In considering the budget statement, Members noted that allotments had been discussed at the 7th July 2008 Cabinet meeting. This had highlighted the need for Local Committees to fund their provision. Some Members felt that there was an urgent need for improvements to allotments in the District, especially in the Cut Throat Lane area of Witham. A number of ideas were discussed including tenant involvement, the use of Council land to improve allotment provision and the involvement of the Town and Parish Councils. Councillor Abbott highlighted that it could be possible for works planned for the replacement of the pavilion in Silver End to be combined with minor works to adjoining allotment fencing to save money. Members agreed that the issue of allotments should be placed on the next agenda for further discussion. This could be combined with the Task & Finish group's report due in September in connection with fees and charges.

Decision: Members noted the updated current budget statement and agreed that the subject of allotment provision be placed on the next Local Committee agenda.

Action: Locality Coordinator to investigate whether a report on allotments and possible progress of projects could be brought to the next Local Committee meeting on 23rd September to combine with the Task & Finish Group's report.

17 Local Decisions

17.1 Rickstones Pavilion/Forest Road Community Hall

Following the Local Committee's recommendation, Cabinet had agreed to allocate £40,000 for works on the Pavilion enabling the Pre-School to return to the Pavilion. Cabinet Member Councillor Mrs Schmitt, reported at Cabinet on 7th July, that the Little Elms Pre-School had since found alternative accommodation at the local school, therefore the remedial work planned for Rickstones Pavilion had been halted pending further consideration to its future. Councillor Gyford put forward a motion that a request be made to the relevant Committee (Planning/Local Development Framework Panel) for a Planning Brief of the area. Councillor Dr Evans read out a statement of events that led to the closure of the Pavilion following a fire risk inspection during which the Pavilion had been identified as being unsafe. Finally the Chairman read out a letter from the Little Elms Pre-School in which a member of staff confirmed their relocation to Templars Junior School and thanked the Committee for its help and support.

Decision: That it be recommended to the appropriate Committee (Planning/Local Development Framework Panel) that a planning brief be prepared to cover the redevelopment of Rickstones Pavilion and the surrounding area.

Action: Locality Coordinator to take advice as to which Committee should consider this matter and ensure the recommendation is taken forward to the appropriate Committee.

17.2 Capital Programme 2008/09.

The Committee considered a schedule of the planned projects along with a report on the replacement pavilion at Silver Street, Silver End.

In considering a request for additional resources to fund the construction of the replacement pavilion at Silver End, Cabinet agreed that the Witham Local Committee should have received details of the project, enabling local members to have an opportunity to comment on the project.

The process would now be amended to ensure that the Local Committee would have the opportunity to consider future projects specific to its area.

The Committee agreed that the planned construction of the new pavilion and revised lighting proposal would suit the Conservation Area, deter anti social behaviour and be an improvement to the original site. Members endorsed the proposed external lighting scheme for the pavilion and car park at the playing fields. Councillor Dr Evans asked for confirmation that Witham Community Association (WCA) would be contributing to the project cost for the refurbishment of Spring Lodge.

In discussing the Capital programme, Members suggested that Tim Lucas be invited to the next Local Committee meeting to give an overview on the Social Housing Scheme at Riverview.

Decision: That the revised specification for the replacement pavilion and car park to include low-level external lighting provision be endorsed.

Action:

1. Chris Fleetham to find out if WCA still contribute to the internal refurbishment of Spring Lodge.
2. Tim Lucas to be invited to present information on the Social Housing Scheme at Riverview.

17.3 Petition – New Pedestrian Crossing for Maldon Road, Witham.

Cllr Elliot introduced a petition, which had been signed by 140 residents, calling for a pedestrian crossing and the introduction of a 30mph speed limit along the Maldon Road between Saul's Bridge and the Wickham Bishops crossroads.

Olive Cowell, Senior Traffic & Road Safety Engineer for Essex County Council (ECC) had responded to the petition stating that ECC officers were fully aware that this scheme had been requested and had responded to a previous petition from the Town Council and residents stating that ECC had not yet identified funding for the scheme which would cost in excess of £75,000. ECC is hopeful that there might be an opportunity to get the crossing constructed using Section 106 funding, if the development from Constance Close proceeded.

Cllr Barlow informed Members that a proposed roundabout and 30mph speed limit had been agreed for the Maldon Road and that works were due to commence during the Summer holidays. This would ease congestion, reduce the speed and create an opportunity to put the case forward to ECC to combine the works.

It was suggested that Cllr Elliot make a direct approach to Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, Norman Hume or Tony Ciaburro, Director of Highways, to ascertain the availability of funding for this scheme. During discussion of this matter Members felt that consideration should be given to the extension of footways in the Benson Close area due to the increase in the volume of traffic and the danger for pedestrians. Adam Skinner a resident in the Maldon Road area and instigator of the petition highlighted the dangers of crossing the road with young children.

Decision:

1. That the petition be received and noted.
2. That the petition be referred to County Council Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation
3. That Councillor Elliot make a direct approach to ECC to combine the proposed roundabout and 30mph speed limit works due to be undertaken on the Maldon Road during the school summer holidays with the requested pedestrian crossing along the Maldon Road between Saul's Bridge and the Wickham Bishops crossroads.

Action:

1. Cllr Elliot to directly approach Norman Hume, County Council Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation for funding of the pedestrian crossing and:
2. Put a case forward to ECC to combine the proposed roundabout and 30mph speed limit works due to be undertaken on the Maldon Road with the requested pedestrian crossing along the Maldon Road between Saul's Bridge and the Wickham Bishops crossroads.

17.4 Waste Facility at Rivenhall Airfield.

Members considered a report on the submission of a request (to Essex County Council) for a scoping opinion on the content of an Environmental Impact Assessment that will accompany a planning application for a waste facility at the Rivenhall Airfield site.

The report explains the purpose of such a request and includes, as an appendix, Braintree District Council's response to the County Council's consultation.

Decision: That the report be noted.

18 Witham Local Committee Action Plan and Priorities

18.1 Local Committee Action Plan

The Committee considered the notes of the informal meeting held on 17th June to discuss priorities and Community Led Plans. Cllr Rose requested that members note the Meetings arranged with a Mid Essex PCT representative on the 16th and 21st July and urged members to attend and identify priorities for Witham.

The Chairman tabled a paper proposing that the Draft Plan be produced identifying a Lead Member and Officer. Following discussion Councillor Gyford suggested that Councillor's involvement should focus on the issues within their Wards. It was agreed that the Locality Coordinator and the Chairman should meet and further develop the Action Plan before presenting them to the next meeting of the Committee.

Decision: Members agreed to adopt Appendix 1 as a basis to take plans forward

Action: Locality Coordinator/Chair to create plan of action to bring to next meeting.

19 Future Items

The Committee noted the list of items for the next meeting and agreed that the following issues had now been added:

To note the forthcoming items are scheduled for the next meeting on 23rd September 2008: -

- **Housing Strategy**
- **LDF Consultation**
- **Draft Community Strategy**
- **Review of Parking Charges**
- **Town Centre Regeneration – Braintree, Witham and Halstead**
- **Allotment Review**

T J W FOSTER

(CHAIRMAN)