

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PARISH PARTNERSHIP PANEL

Thursday, 26th May, 2011

Present: Cllr M S Worrall (Chairman), Cllr O C Baldock (Vice-Chairman), Cllr J Atkins, Cllr Mrs J M Bellamy, Cllr Mrs E M Holland, Cllr Mrs S L Luck and Cllr M Parry-Waller.

Councillors Rhodes and Miss Sergison were also in attendance.

Together with Kent County Councillors Mrs Hohler and Homewood and representatives from Addington, Borough Green, East Malling and Larkfield, Kings Hill, Offham, Stansted, Trottiscliffe, West Peckham, Wouldham and Wrotham Parish Councils.

Apologies for absence were received from Borough Councillors Mrs Anderson, Balfour, Miss Moloney, Sayer and Mrs Woodger and East Peckham, Ightham and Ryarsh Parish Councils.

PART 1 - PUBLIC

**PPP
11/013**

CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed new members to the Parish Partnership Panel and explained that the Borough Council found this forum a beneficial and effective way of communicating with parish councils. The Chairman also recognised the important role the Panel had in creating and maintaining partnership working.

In addition, the parish councils were invited to suggest issues for inclusion at future meetings and their greater participation was encouraged.

Wrotham Parish Council welcomed the opportunity to have a greater input in setting future agendas and urged that consideration be given to shorter presentations and speedier meetings to keep Members fully focused on the issues being discussed. It was also noted that the Kent Association of Local Councils would like the opportunity to suggest issues for discussion.

The Chairman conceded the point raised by Wrotham Parish Council regarding the length of past meetings and agreed that the Borough Council had similar concerns and was looking to restrict the number of presentations on each agenda.

The Chairman introduced the following Borough Council Members to the Panel, as they had responsibilities that concerned parishes and

communities: -

- § Councillor Owen Baldock, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Communities and Vice-Chairman of the Parish Partnership Panel.
- § Councillor Mark Rhodes, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and likely Chairman of the Community Safety Partnership.
- § Councillor David Evans, Chairman of the newly created Community Infrastructure Levy Panel.

Finally, the Chairman declared a personal interest in the Pembury Hospital redevelopment project update item as he was a non executive member of the Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust.

**PPP
11/014**

MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the inclusion of Hadlow Parish Council on the attendance list for the last meeting.

**PPP
11/015**

UPDATE ON ANY ACTION IDENTIFIED IN THE LAST MINUTES.

The Democratic Services Officer, A Parris, advised that the various website links, contact numbers and presentations mentioned in the Minutes had been circulated via email to all Members of the Parish Partnership Panel.

The Chairman advised that the presentations could now be found on the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council website, attached to the recent Minutes, if Members preferred this way of looking at the information.

**PPP
11/016**

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL SERVICES UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed Mr Paul Wickenden, Overview and Scrutiny Localism's Manager at Kent County Council, to the meeting. Attention was drawn to the content of a written report which was tabled prior to the meeting, with particular reference being made to the consultation on adult social care. It was explained that Kent County Council had not previously charged the maximum amount possible for this care. It was now proposed to charge people who used mental health services in the same way as all other people in receipt of services and reduce the standard amount allowed for the Disability Related Expenditure Assessment from £21 to £17 per week for everyone.

Reference was made to the upcoming opportunity to take part in the Vision for Kent Consultation. Kent County Council would be asking about the actions needed to grow the economy, tackle disadvantage and to put citizens in control.

Other issues highlighted included the County Council's commitment that no supported bus services would be withdrawn until 2012 at the

earliest and that the support of local children's centres would be maintained and retained.

Wrotham Parish Council asked if the dates for the Waste Management Plan and Mineral Extraction Plan consultations were known. Mr Wickenden replied that he did not have this information and he offered to investigate further and report back.

The Chairman thanked Mr Wickenden for his contribution to the meeting. Copies of the Kent County Council Services Update would be circulated with the Minutes.

**PPP
11/017**

STOP PRESS ITEMS

The Central Services Director reported on a number of *stop press* items of interest. The headline messages included the summer programme of events for young people; the Opera at the Castle events on 7,8 and 9 July, performed by Opera Brava and the Freedom Parade for the 2nd Battalion of the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment at 1400 hours in Tonbridge on Sunday 19 June. It was anticipated that many residents would wish to pay their respects to the troops and the parish councils were asked to promote the March.

Particular reference was made to the Community Enhancement Fund, which had been newly created to support local community groups and projects. The criteria would be determined at the Cabinet meeting on 22 June and more information would be circulated to parish councils and other organisations when available.

Copies of previously issued guidance on dealing with unauthorised encampments were distributed at the meeting and set out the actions any landowner could take.

Members were reminded that the digital tv switch over would start in the south east this time next year. Full details could be found on the digitaluk website. The Central Services Director referred to the National Switch Help Scheme run by the BBC to help older and disabled viewers. Parish councils had an important role to play in ensuring that residents were aware of the support and assistance available. The Cabinet Member for Communities had invited digitaluk to a future meeting of the Communities Advisory Board and any learning from that presentation would be shared.

Members were reminded that the Coalition Government had sign posted change in the development control regime, although there were still very few firm changes announced. It was anticipated that the Localism Bill would continue to flag up some of the changes. Once changes were confirmed a briefing session would be arranged for parish councils and the Central Services Director urged Members to participate in these training events as there were significant changes and challenges ahead.

The Chairman introduced the Chairman, Councillor Miss Sergison, of

the newly created Training Committee with responsibility for addressing training and development opportunities.

Promotional literature and briefing sheets on all the topics raised were circulated prior to the meeting and were available on request, either as email or hard copy.

**PPP
11/018**

PEMBURY HOSPITAL REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT – UPDATE

The Chairman introduced Mr Ashley Scarff, Associate Director of Strategy and Planning at Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust, who gave a presentation on the Pembury Hospital Redevelopment Project.

Members were advised that this was a £226m development scheme with a total of 512 beds, which were all single rooms with en-suite facilities. This was the first UK Acute NHS Hospital to be configured this way and there had been significant patient and public involvement in the concept and innovative design. It was noted that there would be a separation of visitor and patient flows and splitting of emergency from elective.

The strategic context, which consolidated Kent, Sussex and Pembury Services; centralised some Trust Services; provided modern estate and equipment by replacing old building stock and improved infection control was outlined.

The hospital was scheduled to be fully open to patients in September 2011.

Mr Scarff was pleased to report a generous donation from the Friends of the Hospital, which had seen televisions to a value of £340,000 provided for patient's use.

Reference was made to the sustainable transport and travel plan for the development which included a planning obligation for bus services, particularly improved routes from Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone Hospital. In an effort to address this important issue the Trust had appointed a Travel Plan Co-ordinator to incentivise change and influence staff to consider alternative means of transport. Mr Scarff reassured Members that the NHS Trust took the commitment to improve public transport seriously and there was ongoing dialogue with bus companies and stakeholders. The obvious solution appeared to be an increase in the frequency of bus services, although it was recognised that these needed to be financially viable for operators.

Members expressed their deep concern and disappointment at the continuing issues regarding the lack of public transport access to the hospital for patients living in rural villages or in the area surrounding West Malling or Borough Green. Members asked that the transport plan and improved public transport links be dealt with urgently.

Wrotham Parish Council expressed concern and frustration at what

they perceived to be the growing divide in the county. The parish council urged careful consideration when developing schemes, that parts of the region were not neglected when looking at transport links. Mr Scarff noted this point, which would be fed back to the NHS Trust.

The Chairman advised that the Borough Council and particularly the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation was actively involved in the A21 Dualling Project Group and was instrumental in trying to progress the scheme. Members were also reminded that the NHS Trust did not have sole responsibility for transport and any influence and contribution from them was welcomed.

Finally, it was noted that the Volunteer Agency West Kent (VAWK) offered a volunteer car service to shuttle patients to the new hospital.

In addition, Members hoped that car parking provision was adequate for the site, that car parking charges would be reasonable and in comparison with other hospitals and that dedicated disabled spaces were sufficient for demand.

The Chairman thanked Mr Scarff for his contribution to the meeting.

**PPP
11/019**

WOODLAND TRUST – JUBILEE WOODS PROJECT

This item was DEFERRED.

**PPP
11/020**

LIGHT POLLUTION AND NUISANCE – GENERAL BRIEFING

Addington Parish Council referred to problems they were experiencing with light pollution and nuisance and asked for general guidance on the issue.

The Area Planning Officer reported that the Borough Council, as the local planning authority, could only take action with regard to artificial lighting in certain circumstances. Where artificial lighting was controllable its impact should be adequately mitigated. Therefore, development proposals should include adequate information about artificial lighting and planning conditions should be used to prevent and control adverse impacts.

Further guidance on the planning perspective was available as hard copy on request.

The Chief Environmental Health Officer advised that there was no simple definition of 'statutory nuisance' regarding lighting. However, in general terms statutory nuisances needed to pose a threat to health or to have a significant effect on another person.

It was explained that staff in the Borough Council's Environmental Protection Team relied on their training and experience when deciding whether a statutory nuisance existed or was likely to occur. This decision, amongst many other factors was based on the nature, severity, frequency and duration of the nuisance.

In cases where the complaint was deemed to be a statutory nuisance an officer would make contact with the person causing the nuisance and give them the opportunity to abate it. If this did not work an Abatement Notice could be served and this would require the nuisance to be stopped or restricted. If the recipient of the notice failed to comply without a good reason an offence would have been committed and they could be prosecuted.

A leaflet about security lights was available to download from the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council website and further information could be obtained from the Environmental Protection Team via environmental.protection@tmbc.gov.uk or 01732 876 184.

Addington Parish Council asked what action the Borough Council was taking towards achieving the ISO 14001 standard to improve environmental health. The Chief Environmental Health Officer offered to deal with this question outside the meeting.

The Chairman took the opportunity of advising Members that he, as the Leader of the Council, together with the Director of Finance might seek the help of parish councils in persuading Government to change their mind on the timetable for public consultations when setting levels for Council Tax increases. The Borough Council supported the idea in principle but was concerned about the suggested timescales, as this could impinge on setting budgets and collecting payments.

**PPP
11/021**

POLICE LIAISON.

The Chairman welcomed Chief Inspector Kirby of Kent Police to the meeting and congratulated him on being confirmed as Borough Commander for Tonbridge and Malling.

An overview of the achievements made in performance and in the neighbourhood policing agenda was provided. Members were advised that overall crime figures were down slightly compared to last year and Chief Inspector Kirby was pleased to report satisfaction levels of 92%.

Reference was made to the financial challenge facing the police service and the savings requirement over four years was estimated at £50m.

Changes to operational policing were highlighted and included a flexible deployment of officers based upon demand; the requirement to respond to all immediate and high calls across the county and a dedicated team, deployed locally but managed centrally.

The changes to neighbourhood policing would see an increased number of officers, moving from 19 to 46, taking on additional work. Chief Inspector Kirby was pleased to report that funding would continue for Police Community Support Officers and he welcomed the opportunity to improve neighbourhood policing.

The Chairman thanked Chief Inspector Kirby for his contribution to the meeting and invited questions from the Panel, none of which were forthcoming.

**PPP
11/022**

COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP ACTION PLAN 2011/12

The Community Safety Manager presented the Community Safety Partnership Action Plan 2011/12 which set out the actions to be taken to address crime and anti-social behaviour issues in the borough over the coming year. Members were advised that the Action Plan was based on the current Strategic Assessment, November 2010, that looked at current data and trends to address the priorities for the Borough in reducing and tackling crime, anti-social behaviour and community safety issues.

The top priorities agreed through the Strategic Assessment for 2011/12 were: -

- § Substance Misuse
- § Domestic Abuse
- § Anti-Social Behaviour
- § Young People's Issues

It was also agreed that the following would be addressed by the Community Safety Partnership: -

- § Burglary
- § Violent Crime
- § Driver Behaviour

Priorities would be monitored on a quarterly basis and if the targets were not being met then the Partnership would look at ways of improving them.

The Community Safety Manager advised that funding for the Partnership for this year had been cut by 20% (£20,000) with a further 40% (£40,000 approximately) cut for the year 2012/13.

Members were asked to feed back any comments on the Action Plan to the Community Safety Manager for inclusion in the final version.

Borough Green Parish Council asked what action could be taken to assist homeless young people, who often had problems accessing services due to having no form of identification or address. The Community Safety Manager advised that the Community Safety Partnership would liaise with the YMCA and the Borough Council's Housing Service to see what action could be taken.

The Chairman thanked everyone involved in producing the Action Plan for their hard work.

The meeting ended at 2150 hours