

PARISH PARTNERSHIP PANEL

10 March 2005

Present: Councillor Worrall (Chairman); Councillor Aikman (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Mrs Anderson, Balfour, Chapman, Coffin, Dalton, Mrs Holland, Miners, Porter and Miss Sergison.

Councillors Baldock, Davis, Dobson, Hickmott and Smith were also in attendance.

Together with representatives of Aylesford, Borough Green, Hadlow, Hildenborough, Ightham, Offham, Platt, Watringbury and West Peckham Parish Councils, and Snodland Town Council.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs Simpson and Thornewell, County Councillor Rowe and Sergeant Terry (West Kent Area Police).

PP 05/001 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 14 October 2004 were received and agreed as a correct record of the proceedings.

PP 05/002 UPDATE ON ANY ACTION IDENTIFIED IN THE LAST MINUTES

In response to a request for an update on the Licensing Act 2003 and the Council's policy (Minute PP 04/048) from the representative of Hadlow Parish Council, the Chairman reported that meetings had been held to advise licensees of the changes and how it would affect them. A further meeting would be held in mid July/August for Parish Councils and voluntary bodies. Existing licensees were now able to apply to transfer their licences under the new Act and there was a cut off point of 4 September 2005 in order to allow enough time for everyone to have their applications transferred in time. If anyone had any further questions or needed any advice they were advised to contact Mr Melvyn Wood, Licensing Manager (Tel: 01732 876368 or melvyn.wood@tmbc.gov.uk).

The representative of Borough Green Parish Council felt that the Kent Design Guide (Minute PP 04/047) was an excellent document and requested a final version when available.

PP 05/003 POLICE LIAISON

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Sergeant Hutton (Maidstone and Malling Area) who reported that from 1 April 2005 there were proposals to revert to more community-based policing. This would result in six more ward-based beat constables, raising the number to 25 within the community liaison unit, and a number of wards having a beat constable (who otherwise did not have one at the moment) and a Police Community Liaison

Officer (PCSO). There would be a presentation at Headquarters, to which the Parish Councils would be invited, to explain the proposals. The proposals were not finalised but the main point to note was that there was a strong intention to return to neighbourhood policing. The representative from Aylesford Parish Council queried the reference to being linked with Walderslade which she understood not to be in the Maidstone and Malling policing area. The Chief Executive advised that Walderslade ward of Aylesford parish was currently in the Medway policing area, but would be transferred on 1 April to the Maidstone and Malling policing area to ensure co-terminosity.

The representative from Hadlow Parish Council raised an issue concerning no appointment of PCSOs in their area which the Chief Executive undertook to pursue on their behalf with Superintendent Price, West Kent Police. With regard to an issue concerning a request for speed camera signs he also undertook to route their enquiry to the Kent Safety Partnership.

The representative of Watlington Parish Council asked how the Deputy Prime Minister's announcement on temporary prevention orders would affect policing of travellers. Sgt. Hutton explained that this was a policy question and would be better answered by his Superintendent whose contact details he would share.

The representative of Offham Parish Council expressed concern at the apparent speeding of traffic, especially during peak hours and asked why the Police had not yet carried out any speed checks. Sgt. Hutton responded that usually a request for patrol support was commenced after Council data had been acquired proving a potential problem. However he would make a request for a vehicle to be displayed and liaise with the Parish Clerk. The Cabinet member for Planning and Transportation advised that traffic devices were to be installed in the near future in order to check the volume and speed of traffic in that area. Sgt. Hutton thanked him for that information and explained that once the data was received it would make a better case for a request for police presence.

PP 05/004 IMPROVEMENTS TO YOUR LOCAL PATH NETWORK

The Panel received a presentation from Abigail Mansley, Rights of Way Improvement Plan Officer, and Ben Collins, Community Paths Project Officer on 'Improvements to your Local Path Network'. They explained the difference between their roles and the support they could offer, advising that they were involved in proactive path improvements and not general queries on maintenance, legal duties, enforcement and definitive mapping. The Community Paths Project was designed to help volunteers and give small grants for local path improvements. An Improvement Initiative Survey was being carried out that the Parish Council representatives were encouraged to complete. It was hoped that it would help build a true picture of the paths network to enable accurate assessment and long term planning for improvements.

PP 04/044 HILDENBOROUGH CYCLE PATH

The representative of Hildenborough Parish Council explained the reasoning behind the item placed on the agenda by them concerning the recent cycle path and their request for Council support in calling for better local consultation prior to construction in future. There were no Kent County Council (KCC) representatives present to respond to this issue. In their absence the Chairman advised that this issue had recently been discussed at the Planning and Engineering Advisory Board meeting and the Parish Council's sentiments

endorsed. It was his intention that this would be forwarded to KCC informing them of the Parish Partnership Panel's full endorsement and support, inviting them to consult more fully and widely in the future. However he understood that it had involved ring fenced budgets from central government that had had to be used and that he was aware that the engineers involved would be sympathetic with the points raised. It was agreed that consultation needed to be undertaken before contracts were awarded so that local views could be taken into account.

PP 04/045 KENT HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP (KHP)

The Chief Executive reported that on 1 April 2005 the Kent Highways Partnership (KHP) would come to an end, and that KCC would be responsible for highways matters and street lighting. He reported that a lot of work had had to be carried out in a short space of time to make the handover as smooth as possible. KCC had requested that the Council host the transferring officers for at least six months before moving them to temporary accommodation in Gravesend. At the moment it was not known where the area office would be finally based. However it was their intention to co-locate the contractors with the officers, in order to improve co-ordination and delivery. One of the main problems that would be faced was that no matter how much information and publicity was given to the handover there would undoubtedly be some confusion. The Council was working closely with KCC to put in place new IT equipment to reroute calls that needed to be passed on. The Chief Executive added that if at any time anyone was unsure as to who to contact that they should not hesitate to contact the Borough Council who would attempt to help or pass the information on as appropriate. He further advised that the Director of Planning and Engineering had asked that he give everyone present assurance that he would be writing to all Parish Clerks with up to date information and all contact details within the next week or so.

PP 04/046 CABE (COMMISSION FOR ARCHITECTURE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT) MANIFESTO FOR BETTER PUBLIC SPACES

The Panel was advised of a government funded independent organisation championing excellence in the quality of public spaces whose website could be viewed at www.cabespace.org.uk. The Council had agreed to sign up to a ten point manifesto for better public open spaces, as the majority of the principles outlined were already Council aspirations. As part of the Local Development Framework the Council would be contacting Parish and Town Councils on how open space was used in their areas. The Chairman hoped that the Parish and Town Councils would also consider signing up to the manifesto.

PP 04/047 CRIME AND DISORDER AUDIT

A report was circulated on the Crime and Disorder Audit and Strategy. The Panel was advised that an audit had been carried out during the summer and autumn of 2004, and the report set out the findings. The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) was now preparing its next Strategy covering the period April 2005 to March 2008.

In response to a question from the representative from Watringbury Parish Council, it was explained that the CDRP were aware that there was under-reporting within certain categories such as domestic violence and work was being taken to encourage reporting of

crimes. The downside of this was that, if successful, figures would initially rise before being reduced.

The Chairman thanked all the officers involved for their hard work along with the Chief Executive as co-Chair of the CDRP and Cabinet Member for Community Development who served on that body.

PP 04/048 GREEN WASTE IMPLEMENTATION OF PHASE 3

The Panel was advised of the expansion of the Green Waste Scheme, Phase III into North Tonbridge, Hildenborough and East Peckham. Information and leaflets had been sent out and a series of public meetings was being held to explain the process. The public so far had been largely supportive, with the lack of plastics recycling often being raised but understanding when the reasoning behind this was explained. The first collections would commence in late April with officers on hand for advice and help. A tendering process was underway at KCC for an in vessel composting facility that would allow for future collection of food waste, but this would not be in place for at least a year. The Phase IV publicity programme would start in June with a further 6000 households (locations not yet confirmed) with collection starting in September 2005. In response to a question from Offham Parish Council, it was agreed that the Contractor would be contacted about not collecting additional green waste left, as it was understood that they should collect up to six extra sacks of green waste.

PP 04/049 DRAFT SOUTH EAST PLAN

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation reported that South East of England Regional Assembly (SEERA) was consulting on its draft South East Plan which set out its 'strategic long term vision for the South East of England'. This would be sent out to every household, Parish/Town/District and County Council in the South East. He considered that it was very important for responses to be made to this questionnaire and not necessarily with the multiple choice answer supplied if one did not agree with it. He also advised the Panel of two new regional boards: the Regional Housing Board and the Experimental Regional Transport Board.

The meeting ended at 2120 hours