

The Stratford-on-Avon Area Committee met at Elizabeth House, Church Street, Stratford-upon-Avon on the 23 January 2008.

Present:-

Councillors George Atkinson (Chair)
“ Richard Hyde (Vice Chair)
“ John Appleton
“ Peter Barnes
“ Jill Dill Russell
“ David Booth
“ Richard Hobbs
“ Nina Knapman
“ Helen McCarthy
“ Sue Main
“ Mike Perry
“ Chris Saint
“ Izzi Seccombe
“ Bob Stevens

Officers:-

Environment and Economy Directorate

Graeme Fitton, Head of Transport & Highways.
Annmarie Grace, Access Project Co-ordinator.
Nicholas Dauncy, Transport Planner.

Performance and Development Directorate

Ian Marriott, Community & Environmental Legal Services Manager
Martin Gibbins, Stratford Area Manager.
Pete Keeley, Member Services.
Amanda Wilson-Patterson, Localities and Communities Officer
Elizabeth Price, Area Administrative Officer.

Children, Young People and Family Services Directorate

Phil Astle, Assistant Head of Service – Service Planning.

Resources Directorate

Dina Pink, Senior Estates Surveyor

30 members of the public attended.

1. General

(1) Apologies

None

(2) Members' Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Item 5 - D5005 Malthouse Lane

Councillor George Atkinson declared a personal interest as the local member

Item 3 - Admission Number of Stratford upon Avon High School.

Councillors David Booth, Helen McCarthy, Izzi Seccombe and Bob Stevens declared personal interests as school Governors. Councillor Chris Saint also declared a personal interest as a Director of Advantage West Midlands.

Item 4 - Review of County Council Land and Property at Southam.

Councillor John Appleton declared a personal interest as the local Member.

Item 6 - Stroat Lane, Great Alne.

Councillor Nina Knapman declared a personal interest as the local Member.

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on the 14 November 2007 and Matters Arising

Resolved:-

That the minutes of the 14 November 2007 meeting be approved.

There were no matters arising.

2. Public Questions and Answers

(1) Proposals to install lighting on Bishopton Lane, Stratford upon Avon

(i) Question from Chris Morris

Chris Morris expressed concern about the proposal to install street lighting in the lower section of Bishopton Lane from the canal bridge to the junction of Partridge Road.

Some of the residents of Bishopton Lane had carried out a survey of all the residents of Bishopton Lane who would be affected by the installation of the street lighting. The results showed that the residents do not wish for this project to go ahead.

They believed that the figures quoted by Councillors Hyde and Perry supporting the installation were misleading since the vast majority of people consulted do not live on the lane.

(ii) Question from District Councillor Peter Morse

Councillor Morse spoke against the proposed street lighting. He indicated that the proposed lighting would be prejudging the possibility of public open space on the opposite side of Bishopton Lane and expressed concern about the intensity of the proposed lighting. He suggested that the money allocated for the scheme could be better spent on other schemes.

(iii) Question from Andrew Morris

Mr Morris advised the Committee that he was in favour of the proposed street lighting between the hump back bridge and Partridge Road.

In response to the objection that the lane is hardly used after dark. He considered that it was common sense that the very fact that the lane is unlit and therefore potentially unsafe, is the reason why there are not many people using the lane after dark.

His family would not feel confident nor safe walking along this unlit stretch of road. There are many scores of children and young adults living on the estates along Bishopton Lane who are also in the same position.

If traffic accidents are so prevalent on the hump back bridge then there may be a need for an alternative campaign for traffic control.

The number of homes which can actually look out of their window and see the lighting columns is very few. Just along from the bridge there are in fact only a handful of homes, four of which are For Sale and one is empty.

He rejected the suggestion that the columns would spoil the countryside outlook.

He felt the proposal for installing lighting followed a majority of people voting in favour, through a consultation process and if the householders at the top of Bishopton Lane felt as strongly he considered it is up to them to instigate a similar plan.

In terms of pollution and global warming, the Park and Ride Scheme increases carbon emissions in greater quantity than a few street lights and why should we not receive the benefits from street lighting as any other residents in the town?

Councillor Mike Perry and Richard Hyde stressed that a democratic survey had been undertaken resulting in 111 residents in favour of the proposal and 30 against and the installation of the lights would therefore be in accordance with the majority decision. Officers would ensure that the lighting was the least invasive possible.

Graeme Fitton reported that the road was a C class road and having regard to the volume of traffic, street lights were appropriate. He considered that 13 light columns would be required.

The Chair indicated that the installation of the light would now proceed.

(4) Question from Robert Howe relating to improvements to the Alderminster to Whitchurch footpath.

Mr Howe, Chairman of the Alderminster and Whitchurch Rural Paths Partnership, outlined the history of the replacement of the missing footbridge and expressed concern at the lack of progress particularly since the Local Inquiry.

He asked for responses to his communications with the Rights of Way Team and requested an assurance that action would be taken during 2008.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe advised Members that she was also waiting for responses.

The Chair asked the officers to examine the situation and respond without delay.

(5) Question from Philip Malan - Stoa Lane, Great Aine.

Mr Malan's question is referred to in Agenda Item 6

(6) Question from Peter Bostock

Mr Bostock's question is referred to in Agenda Item 6.

(7) Question from Jennie Murray relating to the Speed of Vehicles using Earlswood Lakes Causeway.

Jenny Buckley's question is referred to in Agenda Item 5.

3. Proposed changes to the Admission Number of Stratford-upon-Avon High School

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Children, Young People and Families which sought to inform Members of the response to the consultation with stakeholders on proposals to increase the admission number of Stratford High School. It also asked for any comments that the Area Committee wished to make to Cabinet.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- ❖ The proposed increase in numbers would impact on other schools.
- ❖ There was a need to review priority areas.
- ❖ The impact of housing development on the need to increase the admission numbers
- ❖ The extent of information about future housing which was available in local plans
- ❖ There was a possibility of housing development in other parts of South Warwickshire by 2026
- ❖ Information was sought about how many pupils went to Stratford High School that could go to other schools. This included out of county numbers.

It was then **Resolved:**

- (1) That the Area Committee having considered the responses to the consultation received from stakeholders, endorse the proposal to increase the admission number of Stratford High School as mentioned in the report.
- (2) That, as a matter of urgency discussions are held with schools and other interested groups concerning secondary school priority areas in South Warwickshire.

4. Review of County Council Land and Property - Southam (and its surrounding rural area)

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Resources.

The Estates Group within Property was undertaking a series of reviews to cover all the property holdings of Warwickshire County Council. Liaison

had taken place with each of Warwickshire County Council's property holding services, together with other public service landowners, to ensure that the Council optimised the use and efficiency of our collective property holdings. Southam and area is the second review and the report set out the findings in respect of Warwickshire County Council's properties and detailed the results of discussions with partners.

Dina Pink, Estate Group Manager, introduced the main points in the report

During the discussion Members noted that the Temple Herdwycke Primary School had not been mentioned in the Appendix to the report
It was suggested that the feasibility of generating electricity from Council property such as the windmill on the Burton Dassett Hills should be explored.

Councillor Bob Stevens moved and it was **Resolved:**

That the Committee approve the findings of the review subject to details of the Temple Herdwycke Primary School being included in the schedule of properties.

5. D5005 Malthouse Lane and D5008 Earlswood Lakes Causeway, Earlswood Common - Proposed Extension of 30 mph Speed Limit

The Committee considered the report of the Interim Strategic Director of Environment and Economy.

Following formal advertisement of the proposed regularisation and extension of the existing 30 mph speed limit on the D5005 Malthouse Lane and D5008 Earlswood Lakes Causeway, Earlswood, eight letters of objection were received.

Associated engineering measures include 30 mph speed limit signs on Malthouse Lane and at both ends of the Earlswood Lakes Causeway at its junction with Valley Road.

The report considered the objections and recommended that the 30 mph speed limit should be implemented as advertised.

(1) Question from Jennie Buckley relating to the Speed of Vehicles using Earlswood Lakes Causeway.

Jenny Buckley advised the Committee of the characteristics of the Causeway and stressed that she and local people were opposed to the proposed 30 mph speed limit on the Causeway. She advised Members that if any action had to be taken it should be to install signs restricting the speed of vehicles to 10 mph or 20 mph. A 30 mph speed limit would encourage drivers to use the road at that speed which was not acceptable to local people owing to the characteristic of the road.

Graeme Fitton, Head of Transport and Highways, advised Members that the imposition of a 20 mph speed limit which had been suggested would not meet the Council's policy and would be difficult to impose. The Police would not support a 20 mph speed limit. He added that this was a through road. As there is no speed limit at present the national 60 mph was in existence.

(2) **Committee's consideration**

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- ❖ The default speed limit is 60 mph
- ❖ Consideration should be given to signs "proceed with caution" being erected although there was a need to have regard to signage clutter.
- ❖ It was suggested that a survey should be undertaken of the road.
- ❖ Consideration should be given to a trial being undertaken along similar line to that undertaken at Fenny Compton.

Following comments from the Chair about the possibility of investigating a 20 mph speed limit it was **Resolved** by 9 votes to nil:

That the extension of 30 mph speed limit for D5005 Malthouse Lane be implemented as advertised but proposals for the D5008 - the Earlswood Lakes Causeway be referred back for further consideration if necessary.

6. **E5998 Stoa Lane, Great Alne - A Petition Requesting Mechanically Propelled Vehicles (except farm traffic) be Prohibited**

The Committee considered the report of the Interim Strategic Director of Environment and Economy.

A petition signed by 245 people requires the County Council to prevent Mechanically Propelled Vehicles (except farm traffic) from using Stoa Lane, a non-tarmac surfaced road that lies to the north of Great Alne. It is considered that the grounds cited on the petition do not justify such action and it is therefore recommended that the petitioners' request be refused.

(1) **Question from Philip Malan - Stoa Lane, Great Alne.**

Mr Malan informed the Committee that about twenty years ago the eastern section of Stoa Lane, from Park Lane to Spenal Lane, was a pleasant rural walk used by many hikers and families accompanied by children and dogs. It was also used by horse riders, cyclists and occasionally by horse drawn carts. It was used infrequently by farm tractors.

At about this time 4 x 4s started driving down the lane, particularly after rain when the surface was soft and muddy. Over relatively a few years they

succeeded in completely destroying the surface turning it into an impassable quagmire. It was no longer possible to walk or ride a horse or bicycle along it. Several vehicles ended up in the ditch.

After several years of badgering, County Council engineers flattened the surface, laid a large nylon mat and topped it with used road-stone. This produced a good useable surface which quickly became green and a pleasant walk was restored. Very few 4 x 4s came along it presumably because it was no longer a challenge. The walkers and riders returned.

Then the 4 x 4s came back together with fast and noisy motorbikes. They are once again churning the surface causing deep muddy ruts. Though not yet impassable the surface is deteriorating rapidly and could again become impassable for walkers and riders if nothing is done to stop or curtail vehicular access.

Motorbikes pose a more direct hazard to the safety of pedestrians, children and animals because of their speed. I am informed that the speed limit is 60 m.p.h. which, in view of the rutted and muddy surface and blind bends in a narrow lane, is highly dangerous.

Many vehicles have been observed using Stroat Lane late at night, some with additional spotlights. Several have not been displaying number plates. We are also aware that at the west end of the lane, near Coughton Fields Lane, there have been numerous instances of fly tipping, burnt out cars and dumping of mutilated deer carcasses. We are also aware that some vehicles have been "driven" over neighbouring crops.

He asked the Committee:

Is it reasonable to allow a relatively few drivers of 4 x 4s and riders of motorbikes to damage Stroat Lane to such an extent that walkers and riders cannot take healthy exercise along it?

Is it logical to allow a few people to destroy a County asset which will inevitably require costly repairs in the future?

Or is it Council policy to allow the lane to be destroyed?

(2) Question from Peter Bostock

Mr Bostock spoke in support of the points made by Mr Malan, In particular he mentioned the damage being done to the surface of the lane and mud on other roads from vehicles using the lane. He added that the petition was supported by the Parish Council.

(3) Committee's consideration

Annamarie Grace, Access Project Co-ordinator introduced the main points of the report.

Councillor Nina Knapman shared the concerns of local people and spoke in favour of preventing motorised vehicles from using the lane because of the damage being done to the surface of the lane and because of mud being deposited on roads adjoining the lane. She considered the lane should be classed as a bridleway.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- ❖ The use of such lanes was a national problem
- ❖ There were examples of similar lanes being closed on a temporary basis during winter. Seasonal orders were possible if evidence exists but problems arise and it is far from certain that it would solve the problem?
- ❖ The council were involved in a legal case relating to a lane at Newham and it was suggested that the Stoa Lane issues should not be determined until that case was resolved. Each case was considered on its merits.
- ❖ Speed limits could be considered but there was doubt if the police would enforce
- ❖ The legal criteria for installing gates could not be met.
- ❖ Hangar Lane in Worcestershire had been closed to vehicles except for farm vehicles and school buses and possibly this could possibly be used as a precedent.
- ❖ Agricultural vehicular use was not significant – the land was arable
- ❖ There has been no trespassing into fields since the surface works had been undertaken and the farmer had installed barricades to prevent access onto his land
- ❖ On the Plan attached to the report the section marked C to B was the biggest problem.
- ❖ The Parish Council seemed unclear in its views.
- ❖ Consideration of the matter should be deferred to enable the Area Manager to arrange a site visit for councillors in the area.

It was then **Resolved** by nine votes in favour and three abstentions:

That consideration of the petitioners' requests to prevent mechanically propelled vehicles (except farm traffic) from Stoa Lane be deferred pending further investigation, including a site visit by local members.

7. The Stratford on Avon District Council (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2008

The Committee considered the report of the Interim Strategic Director of Environment and Economy which sought approval from Members to the making of the Stratford on Avon District Council (Off-Street Parking Places)

Order 2008 which is necessary to comply with new legislation.

Resolved:

That Stratford on Avon Area Committee approves the making of the Stratford on Avon District Council (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2008.

8. Stratford on Avon Potential Well being Fund and Social Inclusion Fund Projects

The committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development.

Following introductory comments from Martin Gibbins, Area Manager, the Committee considered whether to approve the Well being Fund and Social Inclusion Fund projects set out in the report.

(1) Well Being Fund Proposals

(i) Public Realm Grant Programme.

Members noted that details of the grant would be published through all parishes and community groups

The Committee agreed to the recommended funding.

(ii) Eco Awareness Days

It was suggested that the parish councils should be the contact for nominations under the project.

The Committee agreed the recommended funding.

(iii) Warwick Road Lands Management Plan Action

In response to an enquiry during the discussion, Members were advised that the site concerned was not part of the scheme to address traffic issues.

The Committee agreed the recommended funding

(iv) Software for Community Groups

The Committee agreed the recommended funding.

(2) Social Inclusion Fund Proposals

(i) Welcome Pack Initiative

During his introduction Martin Gibbins indicated that the Welcome Pack Initiative did not detract from other initiatives such as parish communications.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- ❖ Consideration should be given to Parish Councils being able to apply for funding to develop their own welcome packs.
- ❖ There could be difficulties in the application of the initiative because Village Liaison Officers were not spread uniformly throughout the district.
- ❖ Some parishes had expressed concern on the general operation of the Village Liaison Officer Project in their areas.
- ❖ Support should be offered to parishes and other organisations where there is a will to develop the initiatives

The Committee then agreed that up to £20,000 should be made available to parish councils for communication initiatives.

(ii) Polish Community: Information & Advice

During the discussion Members considered that on the basis of the information before them, the project was not in the spirit of the Social Inclusion Fund and that the Polish community would normally be expected to provide interpreters themselves.

The Committee agreed by five votes to seven not to approve the application for grant.

(3) Former ACECS Funds

The Committee agreed to the establishment of the small grants fund as outlined in the report.

(4) Youth Developments Grants Panel

The Committee nominated Councillors Jill Dill-Russell, Helen McCarthy and Mike Perry to serve on the Funding Panel.

9. Provisional Items for Future Meetings

The Chair drew attention to the importance to tourism of T Stannals Bridge on the route of the Greenway and to the need for work to be undertaken to the overall structure of the bridge. He stressed that it was important not to

miss any opportunity for funding under Phase II of World Class Stratford. It was agreed that a report should be prepared on the subject to a future meeting.

Members also requested the submission of a briefing report to the next meeting dealing with the proposed Eco Town to the south of Stratford.

19 March 2008 Meeting

(1) Bishopton Primary School

As part of the consultation, report seeks the Area Committee's comments on increasing the school's admission number

(2) Acorns Primary School

As part of the consultation, report seeks the Area Committee's comments on increasing the school's admission number

(3) Stratford upon Avon Primary School

Report outlining the provision of primary school places in Stratford

(4) Capital Programme for Transport

The report setting out the 2008-09 Capital Programme for transport for Stratford on Avon Area

(5) Proposed Eco Town

A report briefing Members on current developments.

Future Meeting

- (4) Proposed pedestrian/cycle bridge over the River Avon at Stratford upon Avon.
- (5) Stannals Bridge.

10. Any Other Items

The Committee rose at 7 p.m.

.....

Chair.