

Community Newsletter

The Forum

A successful meeting on 25th Feb. was well attended by residents and representatives of the various organisations working in the area. Copies of the minutes will be posted on Alan Mosley's web site and a more detailed account will be given in the next Newsletter.

SCC Assistant Director, Phil Crossland reported that work was being undertaken to identify improvements to the Chester Street gyratory which is the cause of much congestion in the area. The lights at the bottom of Mt Pleasant Road were also to be reviewed to aid traffic flows.

Richard Lawrence, manager of the Growth Point Shrewsbury project gave a full report of his work to stimulate affordable housing and also informed residents that there was progress with detailed design work at the Flaxmill and in attracting a key user for the main building.

Emma Bulland, SCC, gave an explanation of the many **cycling initiatives** throughout Shrewsbury with the plans for our area being warmly welcomed.

Steve Gittens of Severnside announced that they hope that problems around their properties at Avondale/New Park road would be resolved as a 'Sensitive Lets' policy was to be introduced which would limit tenants to those over 45 with good references.

The Police announced that a new local officer would soon take over the team - Pete Franklin, who has been doing excellent work in Meole Brace.

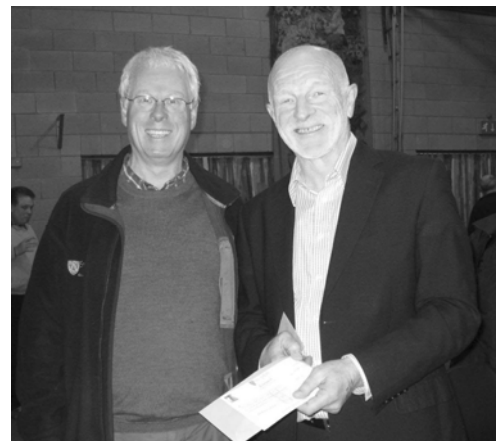
Peter Dunhill gave a report on the Castlefields Action Team including their efforts to develop plans, with Severnside, for improvements to the car park at the Precinct.

Alan Mosley presented a grant cheque to Pete Dunhill, Chair of the Cyber Café and reported that virtually all the £20k grant had been allocated to local causes. He also detailed success in achieving Action Plan targets, especially in relation to some behaviour problems in Ditherington.

Mt. Pleasant Road

The new pedestrian lights by the railway bridge have been a great success but the efforts to get people to use the footway by extending the railings make the area look a mess. **Alan Mosley** has got the engineers back to the drawing board and a new scheme is planned. This has the added benefit of putting a pavement at the base of the embankment along the whole length of the lay-by, from shops to lights. There will be steps down to it, level with the first bungalow nearest the bridge. So, there will be much easier access to the crossing, no more muddy paths across the grass and better access for parking for the shops. Plus most of the ugly railings removed!!

Contact Alan, or visit his website, if you wish to see the plans.



Alan Mosley hands over a Forum grant to Peter Dunhill Chair of the Castlefields Cybercafe.

- Plans are in place to remove the dilapidated fence along the roadside at Cadron Place.
- Severnside are to erect new metal fencing around the corners of Wingfield/Whitehouse.
- Contracts have been given to sort out the gardens to the rear of the Water Street flats.
- SABC are working with the owners of the betting shop in Ditherington to tidy up the area.
- Sorry, but no news on Castlefields PO though they are actively working on finding a solution.

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The New Council

Alan Mosley writes: - "On the 31st March the Borough Council ceases to exist and after the elections on June 4th the new Shropshire Council and the Shrewsbury Town Council come into existence. I have always supported this reorganisation on the basis that it will bring enhanced services, greater efficiency and reduced expenditure, greater clarity about who does what and a bigger say for residents on what goes on in their area.

Obviously the proof of the pudding will be in the eating but we can already see the impact in the unitary budget which has just been agreed. Some £11m has been saved directly from the reorganisation and another £1.2m from other efficiencies. Examples of improvements are:-

- Additional **street cleansing and litter** collection - £553k
- Extending the Government's concessionary bus fares to '**free at any time**' - £970k
- Extending the Government's swimming scheme to **under 18s and over 60s** - £94k
- Growth in services for **looked after children** - £525k
- Additional staffing to support **community based working, regeneration, housing management and customer first initiatives** - £2m
- Growth in Local Joint Committees **delegated budgets** - £530k
- Contribution to creating an important and viable **Shrewsbury Town Council** - £415K
- Funding for growth **commitments of the predecessor authorities** - £1.6m

Sadly some also has to go to compensate for the loss of income in the recession, from building control, planning, etc. - £1.7m

In addition guarantees are possible to limit the level of Council Tax increases to no more than 3.5% as the levels close to a common tax across the County, over the next 3 years. For this year though, additional savings from staffing, pay rises, retendering efficiencies and balances has meant that there will be no Council Tax increases this year.

In the budget debate I tried to change the rules on tax discounts for long term vacant properties. The additional revenue would have allowed increased spending on climate change initiatives, the youth service, adults with learning difficulties, economic regeneration and lower leisure fees. I was unsuccessful. However, I went on to support the budget as the very welcome outcome of the unitary change.

During the transition many have been concerned about the loss of local democracy if the SABC were to cease. I'm confident that the new Local Joint Committees, building on our Castlefields and Ditherington Forum, together with the town council and local partnerships will greatly increase your involvement and influence in decision making and scrutiny of the new Council.

There will be greater clarity in who does what – a single Council with a single customer centre number (**03456789000** – at local rates) and a series of local access points and 'telly talk' units.

Success will be shown by residents not noticing any difference in facilities and services, except improvements. On a personal note, I will be standing for election and am proud to have played a prominent role in the changes. Obviously, I hope you will want me to carry on my work for all residents of Castlefields and Ditherington so as to ensure the gains are fully realised here".

The proposal for a Battlefield's Incinerator

This is the most controversial issue for many years and I am against it!! I will be opposed unless I am 100% convinced that it is safe, necessary and that there are no sensible alternatives. Or until you, as the people I represent, overwhelmingly tell me otherwise.

I fear health hazards from the pollution and more so since I gathered the information that commercial waste can be burned from anywhere in the Country. The vast scale will be an eyesore however well designed. I also question the longer term need as recycling rates increase and new, more effective techniques are developed. Indeed, the drive for more recycling may be reduced. As for the energy, it will yield a maximum of 8MW. For comparison the Ironbridge station gives 2,990MW. There are better ways of reducing waste and minimising landfill.

Please look here: - <http://planning.shropshire.gov.uk/PlanAppDisp.asp?RecNum=59315> to see the application and comment. Or you can write to: **Planning Services, Shirehall, SY2 6ND**, or email: **planning.development@shropshire.gov.uk** Please quote no. **MS2009/0125/SY**