

**ACTION POINTS/DECISIONS FROM
CASTLEFIELDS & DITHERINGTON FORUM
7PM ON 25 FEBRUARY 2009
AT THE MARTIN WILSON SCHOOL**

Present

Some 36 residents and:

Celia Bahrami	Shropshire Partnership	CB
Emma Bullard	Shropshire County Council	EB
Phil Crossland	Shropshire County Council	PC
Nicola Fisher	Shrewsbury & Atcham Borough	NF
Steve Gittins	Sevenside Housing	SG
Richard Lawrence	Shrewsbury Growth Point	RL
Alan Mosley	Shropshire County Council	AM
Inspector Payton	West Mercia Constabulary	IP
Julie Sheppard	West Mercia Constabulary	JS
Della Walker	Shropshire Partnership	DW
Anthony Williams	Shropshire County Council	AW

Apologies

Joe Bubb	Shropshire County Council	JB
Marianne Grant	Sevenside Housing	MG
Dorothy Jones	Reccy Rangers	DJ
Dave Roberts	Shrewsbury & Atcham Borough Council	DR

1. Welcome and introductions

Alan Mosley (AM) welcomed all to the meeting and began the meeting a minute silence in memory of Nikki James, Head of Martin Wilson school.

2. Reports arising from the last meeting

At the last meeting of the Forum (and also of the Steering Group) concerns were expressed about obstructions caused by thoughtless parking of some buses at the Arriva depot. AM wrote to Arriva inviting a representative to attend this meeting. Unfortunately the depot manager left Arriva without passing on the correspondence to his replacement. AM will write to the new manager.

AM wrote to the police regarding frequent changes in the local police team. A response had been received and was circulated at the meeting. John Payton and Julie Sheppard of West Mercia Constabulary were in attendance and will address the meeting later.

Action

AM

As a result of the comments made about crossing the road at the junction of New Park Road and Sultan Road, Council engineers have made road markings/signs proposals. Plans will be published in due course.

The removal of the white line from the middle of New Park Road has seen the average traffic speed reduce by two miles an hour.

3. The Action Plan

AM said that the Action Plan had been discussed in detail at the last meeting. It was warmly received and adopted by the Forum.

Progress has been made regarding provision of activities for young people. AM has met with Karen Bradshaw (Assistant Director of Youth Support) and the police and new schemes will be developed. AM has also visited Ditherington Youth Club and has seen the new equipment, provided via the Forum grant, in use. Anthony Williams (Youth Worker) thanked the Forum for the grant.

AM is trying to get a Telly Talk installed in Castlefields precinct. Telly Talk allows residents to talk face-to-face with an adviser from the council's customer services centre (or from other organisations, including Age Concern and housing associations) using a tv screen.

The Action Team in Ditherington remains very active. Malcolm Price has been arranging the removal of graffiti. Agencies have been working together. Both Severnside Housing and the police report lower levels of disturbances/complaints. There will be a mass litter pick in April.

4. Highways and transport – question and answer session

Phil Crossland (PC), Assistant Director of Transport and Highways at Shropshire County Council attended the meeting to answer residents' questions.

A query was raised regarding lorries exceeding weight restrictions on Mount Pleasant Road. PC explained that this presented difficulties as vehicles suspected of breaking the restrictions had to be followed to ensure that they had no legitimate reason to be in the area. However, he is talking to colleagues about how best to take action. AM reported that a prosecution had been made within the last three months.

PC

A resident asked about the number of potholes and the use of a new machine to deal with them. PC explained that there were two machines and that both were predominately used in rural areas. Roads are inspected monthly. Potholes reported by the public are inspected and repairs prioritised on the basis of size. The Council endeavours to keep the roads safe but this can be especially difficult after periods of snow and frost. PC urged people to report potholes to the Council's Customer Service Centre on 0345 6789000.

PC said, in response to a query, that tarmacing of the lane between Darville and Ditherington would be done by Persimmon depending on the economic climate.

A resident asked about the procedure for friend/neighbours taking household rubbish to the council waste and recycling centre in a van without incurring charges. Celia Bahrami said that the driver should contact the Customer Service Centre (number above) to arrange a permit.

PC will investigate the query about the dangers posed to pedestrians crossing Mount Pleasant Road by the volume of traffic, amount of street furniture and lack of street lighting.

PC

A resident pointed out that the dropped kerbs in Queen Street and North Street are too high for wheel chair users. The worst section is opposite Dixons. A surveyor will check this.

PC

In response to a query about the difficulty of crossing the road at the bottom of Howard Street/Gateway, PC said that an examination of busy junctions was being carried out with a view to updating some traffic light systems, the railway station gyratory system being a key area.

A resident asked about the traffic/pedestrian lights at the Abbey Foregate gyratory system which do not appear to operate in conjunction (ie sometimes the traffic lights are on red but the pedestrian light fails to switch to green). PC will ask an engineer to investigate.

PC

5. Shrewsbury Growth Point

Richard Lawrence (RL) explained that the Growth Point is a government initiative providing funding for 3 years and that Shrewsbury is one of the first Growth Points in the country. Priorities of this initiative include new housing, employment, transport infrastructure, education and health and well-being.

The housing programme hopes to see 3500 new homes by

2016 and up to 8000 by 2026 with at least 100 affordable housing units per annum. Land owned by public sector organisations will be considered for housing development.

Economic development is a key feature of the Growth Point. Town centre regeneration will be vital to ensure that Shrewsbury is a major employment centre. Employment, the environment and better connections are central to the work being done on the Northern Corridor. There is also scope to link Shrewsbury with the high tech industries present in Telford and Wolverhampton.

Sustainable transport development will be a priority together with awareness of the need to protect and enhance Shrewsbury's green spaces.

Work done so far includes the clearing of Arlington Way and the potential to provide 18 new affordable homes on Ellesmere Grange and a further 30 new affordable homes on Moston Road.

Work is continuing on the Flaxmill. At present this is mostly behind the scenes with English Heritage, Advantage West Midlands and SABC/SCC pushing forward the design element of the scheme. There is a compulsory purchase order on the Arriva Bus Depot and the Midland Red Club which will allow more comprehensive development of the site. More visible progress on the development of the Flaxmill will be apparent over the next two years. AM said that on 20 February a tender document for the Flaxmill had gone out to architects to develop plans to put forward for planning permission. Approximately £900,000 has been pledged by partners in order for this planning work to be done. Both RL and AM are confident that end users will be found for the Flaxmill with a training and education provider becoming a key tenant in the old part of the building.

In response to a query about the role of the canal in the Flaxmill development RL said that although a marina had been part of the original plan and the Canal Trust were keen to see the canal fully opened, this was not realistically likely to happen in the short term due to the high costs involved.

A resident asked about the Persimmon development on St Michaels Street. RL said that Persimmon was looking at resubmitting a planning application, but this had not been received as yet.

When asked about funding of the Growth Point scheme RL explained that funding came from central government with the

aim of encouraging development sites. Approximately £5.5 million is provided for capital development in the first three years to kick start the programme, but the initiative lasts for 20 years. European funding is not currently available for this scheme.

Concern was expressed about the possible traffic problems which could be caused by development in the town. RL agreed that any development needed to be balanced with transport needs but also stressed the need for vibrancy in the town to encourage economic growth.

A resident asked about the possibility of having more railway stations in the town (for example near the Football Club). PC explained that this would be too expensive.

There were also queries about the appearance of the railway bridge by the station. AM said that renovation is part of the Northern Corridor plans.

6. Cycling initiatives

Emma Bullard (EB) Promotions Manager for Cycle Shrewsbury at the Council explained that Shrewsbury had been selected as one of 18 cycle towns in the country. Cycle Shrewsbury will include provision of new cycle tracks, cycle parking at all schools and around town and training for adults and children. An event, Bike Fest, will be held on 13 June 2009 at the Sports Village. More information on Cycle Shrewsbury can be found at www.cycleshrewsbury.co.uk.

Connect 2 funding has also been awarded via a lottery bid. This funding will be used to make walking and cycling easier for everyday journeys. A starting point will be public consultation about the Welsh Bridge junction with Smithfield Road. There are also plans for a new crossing on New Park Road (near the Canal Tavern) and off road provision along Castle Foregate to Howard Street.

A resident asked about cycle paths along New Park Road. EB said that this would be difficult. When the path was improved along the canal this would help (although it would not be as direct a route).

In response to a query about the need for cyclists to dismount at junctions when using cycle ways on pavements EB said that all staff involved in the Cycle Shrewsbury project are cyclists and so understand and empathise with the problems faced. Priority crossings will be provided in some areas but this is a long term project.

A resident asked about the old canal path at Ditherington Road. EB replied that it would be a shared foot and cycle path.

PC said that it was hoped that a cycle path could be developed between Abbey Foregate and the Railway Station, however this involves the use of network rail land which can make progress slow.

In response to a resident's concerns EB urged all present to report any possible dangers to cyclists caused by road cambers to the Council.

7. Community speed gun scheme

PC explained that the community speed gun scheme is a joint initiative between West Mercia Constabulary, Shropshire Council and local residents which aims to tackle the problem of speeding motorists. Local volunteers are trained in the safe use of speed guns and then capture the speed of offending vehicles, recording the necessary data and sending it to the police. The police write to the registered keepers of the vehicles explaining the dangers and problems caused by speeding. Repeat offenders will be targeted for possible police prosecution. All villages and local urban communities in Shropshire are eligible to take part in this scheme but evidence of local support must be provided. The police support this scheme and have cleared all legal aspects. Speeding vehicles is the top issue at PACT meetings.

A resident expressed reservations about the effectiveness of the scheme. PC responded saying that a pilot scheme in Oswestry has revealed that 52% of offenders are local residents and that warning letters had proved useful. However, the scheme should be used as one of the number of measures to combat speeding.

AM asked attendees to vote on whether they thought the scheme should be used in Castlefields & Ditherington, highlighting New Park Road and Mount Pleasant Road as particular locations. About half the residents present were in favour of the scheme, 2 people were against and the rest abstained. AM then asked for volunteers to take part in the scheme. 2 people raised their hands. Some people expressed concern about being exposed to violence. AM will make further enquiries and publicise the scheme.

AM

8. Local grant application outcomes

Due to lack of time this item was not discussed. However information about grants awarded was circulated at the meeting. If you would like a copy of this information please visit Alan Mosley's website: alanmosley.co.uk or contact Della Walker on 01743 252278 or della.walker@shropshire.gov.uk. £18,761.00 has been distributed to local groups in grants, £1,239.00 remains available.

9. Local issues and reports

• Local police team

Inspector John Payton (JP) and Julie Sheppard (JS) said that PC Franklin would be taking on responsibility for local policing in the area in the near future. He is a very experienced officer and will be moving from Meole where he has had particular success in working with local young people.

JS also reported that there is now a youth inclusion officer who is working on schemes for young people including Consequence Sessions where young people who may be in danger of offending are taken through the custody process (with the agreement of their families).

JS also informed the meeting that the police are working with Severnside Housing to identify young people causing problems in the area and are setting up anti-social behaviour contracts as a first step leading to anti-social behaviour orders where necessary. Patrols are targeting the Wingfield area and also a problem area behind the betting shop. JS asked residents to let the police know about any other areas where anti-social behaviour was taking place. Non-emergencies can be reported on 0300 3333000.

JS will look into the vandalism of vehicles in Beacalls Lane and Victoria Street mentioned by a resident and also into claims that CSOs are no longer present outside the school.

A resident reported that the precinct remains a problem, in particular behind the Chinese restaurant.

Another resident said that Old Heath is deteriorating. JS confirmed that the police are aware of this and are looking at the problem in conjunction with Severnside

All

JS

Housing.

In response to a query AM said that Dave Roberts of Shrewsbury & Atcham Council was working on the provision of CCTV.

- **Sevenside Housing**

Steve Gittins (SG) reported that the targeting of anti-social behaviour in Wingfield by the police and Sevenside Housing had resulted in improvements in the area. Fencing will be improved in Wingfield Gardens. Consultation with residents will be undertaken regarding gardens at the back of Water Street. Sevenside Housing and the police are looking at anti-social behaviour in New Park Road and will issue anti-social behaviour contracts.

SG urged residents to come forward with any reports of anti-social behaviour.

SG informed the meeting that Sevenside Housing is adopting a sensitive letting policy in Avondale Drive and New Park Road, which will see the selection of older tenants, requests for references and the signing of acceptable behaviour contracts.

- **Castlefields Action Team (CAT)**

Peter Dunhill (PD) reported that the CAT is working with Network Rail on improving the Dana footbridge.

PD also reported that a Pleasure Day will be held on 14 June 2009. All are welcome to assist in the organisation and/or attend the event.

10. New Shropshire Council and Shrewsbury Town Council

AM reported that the move to a new Council is going as planned. The unitary council will include benefits such as a saving of £12 million in staffing and a 0% council tax increase. After the elections in June there will be 74 councillors in Shropshire. The boundary for Castlefields & Ditherington will change. St Michaels Gate and housing in Ditherington Road up to the Flaxmill will no longer be in Castlefields & Ditherington but become part of the new Town Centre ward. Areas around Whitemere Road will move to Harlescott ward. Old Heath will be part of Sundorne ward.