

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE
(Cadwell, Chesfield, Codicote, Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo, Kimpton
and Knebworth Wards)**

**Minutes of the meeting held at The Council Offices, Letchworth Garden City on
Wednesday, 20 February 2008 at 7.30 p.m.**

MINUTES

PRESENT: Councillor D.J. Barnard (Chairman), Tom Brindley (Vice-Chairman), Alan Bardett, John Bishop, Tricia Gibbs, Jane Gray, Sal Jarvis, and Mrs C.P.A. Strong.

Note: Councillor Mrs C.P.A. Strong joined the meeting at 7.49 p.m.

Note: Councillor Tricia Gibbs left the meeting at 9.37 p.m.

IN ATTENDANCE: *Mary Caldwell – Planning And Conservation Manager
Giovanna Silverio – Enforcement Manager
Liz Marten – Principal Conservation Officer
Garry Gover- Community Development Officer,
Mark Simmons – Conservation Officer
Nigel Schofield and Hilary Dineen – Committee and Member
Services Officers.*

*Approximately 14 members of the public at commencement of
meeting.*

45. APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillors: David Miller and Lee Downie.

46. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman confirmed that there would be no other items of business at this meeting.

47. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially to those making a presentation to the Committee.

The Chairman confirmed that the next meeting of the Southern Rural Committee would be held on 3 April 2008 (previously 10 April 2008) at the Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City.

The Chairman reminded the Members that any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda, should be declared as either a prejudicial or personal interest and are required to notify the Chairman of the nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. Members declaring a prejudicial interest should leave the room and not seek to influence the decision during that particular item.

48. MINUTES – 13 DECEMBER 2007

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2007 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

MINUTE 34 – TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ISSUES IN ICKLEFORD

The Chairman read out the following update on Minute 34 which was a result of the referral made to the North Hertfordshire Highways – Joint Member Panel

The Hertfordshire Highways - North Herts Manager (NHM) acknowledged the receipt of this referral and advised the JMP that the concerns of Ickleford Parish Council over traffic management issues in Ickleford had already been noted by Hertfordshire Highways. The NHM confirmed that these issues had been noted in the Ickleford Parish Transport Plan, during discussions with four Ickleford Parish Councillors and that the provision of a Vehicle Activated Sign would probably be included within this transport plan.

The JMP consequently:

RESOLVED: That the confirmation provided by the North Herts District Manager that the provision of a Vehicle Activated Sign in Turnpike Lane, Ickleford would probably be included in the Parish Transport Plan for Ickleford Village be noted.

MINUTE 25 (19 SEPTEMBER 2007) DISABLED PARKING BAYS IN RURAL AREAS

The following update was provided by the Head of Planning and Building Control:

The matter of disabled parking bay provision in North Herts was discussed at the meeting of the Joint Member Panel on 28 January 2008 (Minute 34 refers). A preliminary analysis had been undertaken of the approach taken in other Districts in Hertfordshire. In light of the varying approach across Districts and enforcement issues raised it was concluded that this matter would appropriately be incorporated within the Transport Fundamental Service Review (TFSR). The scope and timetable for the TFSR was reported to PARC on 31 January 2008 to commence in February 2008 and to be completed in September 2008.

49. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – OLD KNEBORTH, DEARDS END LANE AND STOCKENS GREEN CONSERVATION AREAS

Dr. J. Corrie thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee. He informed the Committee that he had lived in the area for many years and seen building works take place throughout that time. He advised that, in his opinion, the local planning authority restricted homeowners freedom to make decisions regarding their own properties. He made a forceful statement that development within conservation areas was too restrictive.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Dr J. Corrie be thanked for the presentation;
- (2) That the information provided by Dr J. Corrie on Conservation Area Policy be noted.

50. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - OLD KNEBORTH, DEARDS END LANE AND STOCKENS GREEN CONSERVATION AREAS

Mr P. Calver thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee. He gave an informative presentation regarding the work of Knebworth Tenants Ltd. He explained that they maintained and upkept the appearance of 42 houses in the Stockens Green conservation area, with three dwellings currently requiring extensive upgrading, including extensions for bathrooms. Mr Calver asserted the organisation's efforts that all development and improvements should be in keeping with the existing properties. He highlighted concern that costs may increase if the properties they manage are included or added to the number of dwellings detailed in the Conservation Area.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Mr P. Calver be thanked for the very informative presentation;
- (2) That the excellent work undertaken by the Knebworth Tenants in the Stockens Green Conservation Area be applauded.

51. OLD KNEBORTH, DEARDS END LANE AND STOCKENS GREEN CONSERVATION AREAS AND KNEBORTH PARISH REGISTER OF BUILDINGS OF LOCAL INTEREST

Declaration of Interests:

Councillor Alan Bardett declared a personal interest as Chairman of North Herts District Council and his appointment (during his tenure) to the Knebworth House Education and Preservation Trust and advised that he would remain in the room and reserved his right to speak and vote.

Councillor Jane Gray declared a personal interest as a personal friend of the Honourable Henry Lytton Cobbold and advised that she would remain in the room and reserved her right to speak and vote.

Councillor Mrs C.P.A. Strong declared a personal interest in that as a previous Chairman of North Hertfordshire District Council she had also been appointed (during her tenure) to the Knebworth House Education and Preservation Trust. Councillor Strong advised that she would remain in the room and reserved her right to speak and vote.

At the Chairman's request the Conservation Officer (CO) presented the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control and confirmed that a firm of consultants had been appointed to undertake site surveys and documentary research for each Conservation Area (Appendix A) and a site survey and documentary research for the Register of Buildings. The CO detailed the important and relevant sections for each Conservation Area (Old Knebworth: Paragraph 5, Deards End Lane: Paragraph 6, Stockens Green: Paragraph 7. The CO also referred the Committee to the Register of Local Buildings of Interest in Knebworth Parish as detailed at Paragraph 8 to the report. The CO confirmed to the Committee that he had taken note of the comments made during a presentation on Stockens Green Conservation Area.

The Committee commenced their review of the Conservation Areas with Old Knebworth. Councillor A. Bardett advised the Chairman that information, by way of a letter and A4 diagram, received from Knebworth Estates had very recently been sent to all Members of the Southern Rural Committee and copied to officers. The Committee reviewed this new information at great length and ultimately found it difficult to relate the proposals made by Knebworth Estates to the maps presented at Appendix G. The difference in scales of the two images meant that certain areas that were proposed by Knebworth Estates were not clear and despite an attempt to transfer the Knebworth Estate proposals to a much larger scale image (Appendix G) the Committee agreed that they were unable to reach any decision on the potential amendments to the external and internal boundaries of Old Knebworth Conservation Area without further consultation and clarification of the boundaries proposed by Knebworth Estates.

Members raised questions on Tree Preservation Orders and Open Air concerts at Knebworth Park and officers advised that any revised boundaries to Old Knebworth Conservation Area would not be affect any current legislation pertaining to TPOs or concerts (temporary structures) It was noted that Knebworth Park was at times an intensive leisure facility and Members agreed that any changes to the conservation area should not impede any business opportunities for Knebworth Estates.

Noting the concerns of the Committee and the reluctance to reach a decision as to the new boundaries for the Old Knebworth Conservation Area the Chairman proposed and it was agreed to defer a decision until the next meeting of the Southern Rural Committee to be held on 3 April 2008.

The Conservation Officer next described in more detail the proposed changes to the Deards End Lane and Stockens Green Conservation Areas. In response to an enquiry the CO confirmed that agreement to an Article 4(2) would not preclude any applications for development and for example new porches would be regarded as a modest addition to a property. The Planning Control and Conservation Manager confirmed that in certain circumstances planning application fees would not be charged.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Principal Conservation Officer and Conservation Officer be thanked for the comprehensive report on the three conservation areas and the Knebworth register of buildings of local interest.
- (2) That a Recommendation to Cabinet concerning the Old Knebworth Conservation Area appraisal and map be deferred until the next meeting of the Southern Rural Area Committee to be held on 3 April 2008 to allow further consultation, clarification and assessment of proposals made by Knebworth Estates.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

- (1) That the Southern Rural Area Committee supported the revised Deards End Lane Conservation Area appraisal and map as presented at Paragraphs 6.1 to 6.12 and Appendix G in the Conservation Areas report;
- (2) That the Southern Rural Area Committee supported the revised Stockens Green Conservation Area appraisal and map as presented at Paragraphs 7.1 to 7.10 and Appendix G in the Conservation Areas report;
- (3) That the Southern Rural Area Committee supported the proposed Article 4(2) Direction at Stockens Green as presented at Paragraphs 7.11 to 7.18 in the Conservation Areas report;
- (4) That Recommendation (3) above should not be progressed until this authority had received a revised version of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order;
- (5) That the Southern Rural Area Committee supported the revised Knebworth Register of Buildings of Local Interest as presented at Paragraphs 8.1 to 8.16 in the Conservation Areas report.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

- (1) To allow further consultation and review of the proposed boundary changes to the Old Knebworth Conservation Area;
- (2) To ensure that the statutory duties of North Hertfordshire District Council are carried out and that targets set under BV219 – 'The percentage of Conservation Areas in the local authority area with an up-to-date character appraisal' are met;
- (3) To allow North Hertfordshire District Council adopt a Register of Buildings of Local Interest for Knebworth Parish;
- (4) To allow North Hertfordshire District Council provide an up-to-date review of Old Knebworth, Deards End Lane and Stockens Green Conservation Areas with appropriate documents that would inform planning decisions.

52. PARTNERSHIP ENFORCEMENT PERTAINING TO THE LAW OF FLY TIPPING

The Licensing and Enforcement Manager (LEM) was pleased to present the report of the Head of Housing and Environmental Health. The LEM was aware that fly tipping was of concern to Members of the Southern Rural Committee and updated the Committee on a successful prosecution and a forthcoming prosecution of fly tippers in the Southern Rural area. The LEM reminded the Committee of current legislation that would be used in a prosecution and fly tipping was the illegal deposit of any waste on land and included waste dumped or tipped onto a site that was not authorised to accept such waste.

The LEM referred the Committee to Paragraph 4 and Fixed Penalty Notices and specifically to the table at Paragraph 4.6.1 which detailed the number of fixed penalty notices issued by North Hertfordshire District Council across its administrative area from September to December 2007

The Committee were pleased to note that there was excellent partnership working with other agencies e.g. Police, Police Community Support Officers, CCTV officers and other relevant NHDC departments. The LEM advised the Committee that increased on - street presence was used to deter anti – social behaviour such as littering, fly posting, graffiti and fly tipping.

In response to an enquiry the LEM confirmed that the covert camera which had been financially supported by the Committee was working well and the current pending prosecution was a covert camera 'success'. The LEM advised that a fly tipping offence was committed by the driver of a vehicle and that each unauthorised fly poster was an offence and referred the Committee to the table at Paragraph 6 which gave examples of possible incidents where there was a sharing of responsibility between NHDC and the Environment Agency and actions that would or could be taken.

In conclusion the LEM confirmed that NHDC would always investigate a case of fly tipping and prosecute if evidence was available.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the current arrangements for the detection of environmental crime and its enforcement be noted;
- (2) That the current partnership working arrangements with Hertfordshire Constabulary and The Environment Agency in respect of environmental crime enforcement such as fly tipping be noted.

REASON FOR DECISIONS

To ensure that the NHDC key priorities and targets are met and that the NHDC Vision and Mission Statements are met.

53. PARISH PLANS

The Chairman advised that the individuals who attended the meeting to make presentations on Parish Plans had not been able to remain due to other commitments. The Committee confirmed their full support for the development of Parish Plans and requested that an opportunity should be offered for a presentation on Parish Plans at a future meeting of the Southern Rural Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Community Development Officer be requested to make the necessary arrangements for presentations on Parish Plans to be made at a future meeting of the Southern Rural Area Committee.

REASON FOR DECISIONS

To acknowledge the work undertaken by the local community and the development of Parish Plans.

54. CHAMPION NEWS AND COMMUNITY REPORT

The Community Development Officer (CDO) updated the Committee on his activities since the last meeting of the Southern Rural Committee held on 13 December 2007.

Inter alia the CDO had been involved with: Big Lottery Playful Ideas fund, the Parish Challenge fund, The Letchworth Arts Centre roadshows and the North Hertfordshire Safety Advisory Team. The CDO provided additional information on the application for grant support by Letchworth Arts Centre who wished to commission a peripatetic art workshop in 10 villages in the Southern Rural area which would take the format of 'Inspiring Creativity' in:

- Increased awareness and development of their own creativity and imagination;
- Increased access to play opportunities for children in rural areas;
- A greater understanding of the play potential of items they find around them;
- Increased opportunities for children to access working artists rather than teachers;
- Increased opportunities for children to mix with other children outside their immediate groups, building friendships and develop social skills.

The Committee were pleased to note the provision of an advisory and support role from the Safety Advisory Team (SAT) which has the objective to ensure that the necessary public health and safety arrangements are in place for community and public events and therefore organised in a timely, proper and safe manner.

RESOLVED: That the information provided by the Community Development Officer on activities since the last meeting of the Southern Rural Committee held on 13 December 2007 be noted.

55. ANNUAL GRANTS, DEVELOPMENT, DISCRETIONARY AND VISIONING BUDGETS 2007-2008

The Community Development Officer (CDO) made specific reference to the financial support made for covert cameras and that the final payment would be made at the end of March 2008 from the pre-allocated Revenue Visioning Budget.

The CDO was pleased to confirm that the NHDC magazine 'Outlook' continued to promote the availability of grant aid that had been made and that applications were welcomed from voluntary and community groups and organisations. The latest edition of the magazine had sought applications under the Parish Challenge funding stream.

The CDO confirmed that there were three grant applications before the Committee for determination: Wymondley Baptist Church – summer holiday club, Lilley Village Fete 2008 Committee and Letchworth Arts Centre.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forward items from the Ward Development Budgets and allocated Visioning budgets as set out at Appendix 5 be noted;
- (2) That the current unallocated base budget of £18, 982 be noted;
- (3) That the need to allocate if at all possible all outstanding unallocated budgets no later than the next meeting of the Southern Rural Committee to be held on 3 April 2008 be noted;
- (4) That the proposal to consider all applications for grant support at each meeting be agreed.
- (5) That the Head of Community Development and Cultural Services be requested to take note of the Committee's concern concerning the apparent in-balance of grant application and award to community groups as opposed to NHDC Commissioned grant award.
- (6) That the Head of Community Development and Cultural Services be requested to prepare a written response to the matter referred to in (5) above by way of the next issue of Champion News at the meeting of the Southern Rural committee to be held on 3 April 2008.
- (7) That the Head of Community Development and Cultural Services be requested to make the necessary arrangements for a Member Workshop that would review grant criteria and discuss the various criteria used in grant assessment and award.

56. GRANT APPLICATION: WYMONDLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

RESOLVED: That a grant of £642 be awarded 'in principle' from the 2008-2009 Discretionary Budget to Wymondley Baptist Church as a contribution to the associated costs of providing a 'One Week Holiday Club' from 4 to 8 August 2008 be agreed.

REASON FOR DECISION

To ensure that the Southern Rural Committee continues with its support for voluntary groups and community groups.

57. GRANT APPLICATION: LILLEY VILLAGE FETE COMMITTEE 2008

RESOLVED: That a grant of £597 be awarded 'in principle' from the 2008-2009 Discretionary Budget to the Lilley Fete Committee 2008 as a contribution to the associated costs of marquee, insurance premium, health and safety, entertainment for this very popular community event.

REASON FOR DECISION

To ensure that the Southern Rural Committee continues with its support for voluntary groups and community groups.

58. GRANT APPLICATION: LETCHWORTH ARTS CENTRE

RESOLVED: That a grant of £3000 be awarded from the 2007-2008 Discretionary Budget to the Letchworth Arts Centre in order to provide a ten session mobile roadshow to various villages in the Southern Rural Area in the period May to July 2008 and covering costs such as: Artist's fees, materials, travel costs and promotion.

REASON FOR DECISION

To ensure that the Southern Rural Committee continues with its support for voluntary groups and community groups.

The meeting closed at 10.19 p.m.

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Chairman