

**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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

**Minutes of the meeting held in St. Martin's Parish Centre, St. Martin's Road,  
Knebworth on Thursday 21 December 2006 at 7.30 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** *Councillor D.J. Barnard (Chairman), Tom Brindley (Vice-Chairman),  
A. Bardett, J. Bishop, Tricia Gibbs, J. Gray, Sal Jarvis, and David  
Miller.*

**IN ATTENDANCE:** *John Chapman - Area Planning Officer,  
Garry Gover - Community Development Officer,  
Roger Harrison - Head of Communications,  
Dr. Patrick Candler - Head of Community Development and Cultural  
Services,  
David Miley - Democratic Services Manager  
Tim Hobman - Committee and Member Services Officer.*

*9 Members of the Public*

**75. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs C.P.A. Strong.

**76. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2006 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman.

**77. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was submitted for consideration by the Committee.

**78. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

No declarations of interests were made during the meeting.

**79. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr Nicolas Collingridge had given due notice that he wished to speak at the meeting regarding planning application 06/02271/1 – Priory Farm, Priory Lane, Little Wymondley.

Mr Christopher Baker (Chairman of Kimpton Parish Council) had given due notice that he wished to speak at the meeting regarding Agenda Item 6 – Area Governance and Cost of Democracy.

Mr Baker addressed the Committee on Agenda Item 6 and made the following comments:

- Appreciated the need to review the budgets of NHDC, but was concerned about the representation of wards and parishes at Committee level;
- Considered the proposals in the report a retrogressive move and reiterated his earlier comment, adding that he was concerned that Kimpton Parish Council would not be adequately represented through the Ward Councillors;
- Appreciated the work of Southern Rural Area Committee;

- He was concerned that the Parish Councils would not receive adequate funding if the proposals were accepted;
- He urged the Head of Community Development and Cultural Services to reconsider the proposals in the report and to develop a proposal that would better serve the needs of the Southern Rural Area.

**RESOLVED:** That Mr Baker be thanked for his comments.

**80. AREA GOVERNANCE AND COSTS OF DEMOCRACY**

The Head of Community Development and Cultural Services presented a joint report of the Heads of Community Development and Cultural Services, Planning and Building Control and Legal and Democratic Services to the Committee that set out a series of proposals and options to determine savings which could be made if the Council's approach to its governance and decision making arrangements was restructured. The report had been presented to Cabinet at its meeting held on 19 December 2006 (Minute 119 refers).

The Head of Community Development and Cultural Services confirmed that this report was being brought to all five Area Committees as a direct response to implementing the Council's decision to make savings of £50,000 which was part of the Service and Financial Planning Process for 2006/2007.

The Head of Community Development and Cultural Services acknowledged that the proposals represented a fundamental change to the way that the Council's civic process currently operated, but stated that the resulting arrangements would be more streamlined and less bureaucratic. He also informed the Committee that the report before them presented only the outline proposals and principles, and that a further report with more detailed information about the proposals would be presented to Cabinet on 27 February 2007.

**RESOLVED:** That the report of the Heads of Community Development and Cultural Services, Planning and Building Control and Legal and Democratic Services be noted.

**RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:** That the following key issues raised by the Southern Rural Area Committee be taken into account when considering the recommendations in the report:

- (1) That there is support for the dissolution of the Southern Rural Area Committee.
- (2) That the rural area of North Hertfordshire not be overlooked in favour of the four main towns and that the word 'rural' be adopted into the title of any proposed amalgamated Committees;
- (3) That planning issues formally dealt with by Area Committees could be taken into consideration by a newly formed Rural Development Planning Control Committee;
- (4) That improving the links provided by Area Committees between the Community and the District Council be taken into account when making any changes;
- (5) That any proposed restructure of Area Committees must retain the current officer representation in respect of Community Development.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:**

- (1) To provide the Southern Rural Area Committee with an opportunity to provide its views on the proposed changes to the Area Governance and decision making arrangements;

- (2) To ensure that savings identified within the context of the Service and Financial Planning process for 2006/2007 and beyond are achieved.

**81. DISTRIBUTION OF OUTLOOK MAGAZINE IN THE SOUTHERN RURAL AREA**

The Head of Communications presented a report, which advised the Members of the current position regarding the distribution of the Council's quarterly residents' magazine 'Outlook' and reviewed the issues affecting the Southern Rural Area.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the report of the Head of Communications be noted;
- (2) That the Head of Communications should continue to pursue cost effective methods of distributing *Outlook* in the Southern Rural Area in order to improve coverage;
- (3) That consideration should be given to reducing the number of issues of *Outlook* per annum, and consider combining one issue of the magazine with the issue of Council tax demands;
- (4) That the Head of Communications be requested to present a report to the next meeting of Southern Rural Area Committee to be held on Thursday, 1 February 2007 outlining costings of various methods of distribution, with particular emphasis on the proposal of using Royal Mail to distribute *Outlook*.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To improve the circulation of *Outlook* which creates a better informed community and helps the Council to meet its strategic objective in regard to satisfied communities.

**82. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

Mr Nicolas Collingridge spoke at the meeting regarding planning application 06/02271/1 – Priory Farm, Priory Lane, Little Wymondley.

**RESOLVED:** To determine the applications as set out in the report of the Planning and Building Control as submitted to the Committee in the following schedule:

**SCHEDULE**

Reference Number	Description of Development and location	Decision
1. 06/02449/ 1	Offley Place, Kings Walden Road, Offley, SG5 3DS Part single storey side extension with glazed timber lantern roof, part two storey side extension to Fisher Wing. Single storey rear link to Marquee Suite. Flat roof and high level flat roof, bounded by brickwork parapet, over existing open courtyard to rear of kitchens.	<b>Conditional Permission</b> (see (a) below)
2. 06/02451/ 1LB	Offley Place, Kings Walden Road, Offley, SG5 3DS Part single storey side extension with glazed timber lantern roof, part two storey side extension to Fisher Wing. Internal alterations to Fisher Wing. Single storey rear link to Marquee Suite. Flat roof and high level flat roof, bounded by brickwork parapet over existing courtyard to rear of kitchens. Internal alterations to kitchen area. Vertically boarded door to replace existing wrought iron gate in south west elevation. Door raised to new floor level in north east elevation.	<b>Conditional Permission</b> (as per report)

3. **06/02271/ 1** Priory Farm, Priory Lane, Little Wymondley, SG4 7HD **Conditional  
Permission**  
Change of use of agricultural building to Use Class B2  
(General Industrial). (as per report)

4. **06/02483/ 1HH** 51 Gun Lane, Knebworth, SG3 6BJ **Conditional  
Permission**  
Retention of summerhouse. (see (b) below)

(a) That with regard to planning application reference 06/02449/1 permission be **GRANTED** as per the recommendations of the Head of Planning and Building Control and the following additional condition:

5. No development shall take place within the application site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological observation and recording of the construction groundworks in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order that a record is made of anything of archaeological interest within the site.

(b) That with regard to planning application reference 06/02483/1HH permission be **GRANTED** as per the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control with the **REMOVAL** of Condition 1. As a result conditions 2,3 and 4 should become conditions 1,2 and 3.

### 83. **PLANNING APPEALS**

The Area Planning Officer informed the Committee that the following three planning appeals had been lodged since the meeting of the Committee held on 16 November 2006:

Appellant	Mr and Mrs J. Corrie
Address	17 Stockens Green, Knebworth
Description	Two storey side/rear extension following demolition of existing single storey side extension Ref. 06/01340/1HH
Procedure	Written Representations

Appellant	Mr and Mrs Dixon
Address	Land to the rear of Elm Cottage, Chequers Lane, Preston
Description	Outline Application: 4 bedroom dwelling with detached double garage (siting, design and external appearance reserved) Ref. 06/00791/1
Procedure	Written Representations

Appellant	Ms T. Little
Address	4 The Drive, Wheathampstead
Description	Outline Application: Detached dwelling (design, external appearance and landscaping reserved) Ref. 06/00665/1
Procedure	Hearing

The Area Planning Officer informed the Committee that the following two appeals had been determined since the meeting of the Committee held on 16 November 2006:

Appellant	Wilbury Estates Limited
Address	Gosmore Hill Wood, Preston Road, Gosmore
Description	Lawful Development Certificate: Use of overnight sleeping

	accommodation for private recreational use to holiday letting purposes Ref. 05/00349/1PUD DISMISSED on 20 November 2006
Decision	
Appellant	Wilbury Estates Limited
Address	Gosmore Hill Wood, Preston Road, Gosmore
Description	Use of overnight sleeping accommodation for private recreational use to holiday letting purposes Ref. 05/00350/1
Decision	ALLOWED on 20 November 2006 and full costs awarded to appellant

#### 84. CHAMPION NEWS

The Community Development Officer for the Southern Rural Area presented a report of the Head of Community Development and Cultural Services to the Committee, which advised them of the activities undertaken by the Community Development Officer for the Southern Rural Area since the meeting of the Committee held on 16 November 2006, and brought to their attention the important community based activities that would be taking place during the next few months.

These activities included:

- Lilley Young People – The Steering Group continued its positive work into the needs of young people in Lilley and a further meeting would be held on Tuesday 16 January 2007 at 7.00pm at the Cassel Memorial Hall, Lilley;
- Environmental Action Day – This took place on 16 November 2006 and saw NHDC working alongside local authorities to clamp or remove vehicles and provide advice to residents about rubbish disposal and related fire risks;
- Parish Challenge / Playground Challenge/ Parish Enhancement and Cleansing Fund and Parish Amenity Capital Improvement Fund (PACIF) 2006/07 – There was approximately £86,000 of funds available for PC/PP/PE&CF and £355,000 for PACIF. All applications, were presented to the Parish Challenge Panel on 11 December 2006 and an update on the decision of all awards will be provided once approved by the Head of Community Development and Cultural Services in consultation with the relevant NHDC Portfolio Holder.
- ‘Put Your Best Foot Forward’ – This training course for podiatry carers was scheduled for 15 January 2007 between 10am - 12noon at the Codicote Sports and Social Centre and had been organised by the Councils 50+ Development Officer with funding support from this Committee.
- North Hertfordshire Highways Partnership – Proposed schemes for 2006/2007 were submitted for the consideration of the Committee.

In relation to Appendix A, the Members were requested to:

- (a) Consider the ‘suggested action/way forward’ points outlined in the table,
- (b) Agree the action points if considered appropriate;
- (c) Agree the necessary match funding for those schemes to be put forward for inclusion on the Forward Works Programme (FWP) to be considered by the Joint Member Panel on 29 January 2007.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the report of the Head of Community Development and Cultural Services be noted;

- (2) That the actions taken by the Community Development Officer for the Southern Rural Area to promote greater community capacity and well-being for the Southern Rural area communities be endorsed.

**RECOMMENDED TO NORTH HERTS HIGHWAY PARTNERSHIP – JOINT MEMBER PANEL**

That the following comments and suggestions made by the Southern Rural Area Committee at its meeting held on 21 December 2006 be considered by the Joint Member Panel (JMP) at its meeting to be held on 29 January 2007:

**Scheme**

- (1) **Works to repair Rabley Heath Road**  
That the JMP at its meeting on 29 January 2007 be requested to include the repairs and resurfacing of Rabley Heath Road in the forward work programme for implementation in 2009/2010 with funding from HCC maintenance budget.
- (2) **Repairs to Grimstone Road, Little Wymondley**  
That the JMP at its meeting on 29 January 2007 be requested to include the repairs and resurfacing of Grimstone Road in the forward work programme for implementation in 2009/2010 with funding from HCC maintenance budget.
- (3) **Repairs to Bedford Road, between Ickleford and Holwell**  
That the JMP at its meeting on 29 January 2007 be requested to include the repairs and resurfacing of Bedford Road, between Ickleford and Holwell in the forward work programme for implementation in 2009/2010 with funding from HCC maintenance budget.
- (4) **Extension of repair works to Old Hale Way, with particular reference to the section along past schools towards Ickleford**  
That the Committee noted that the section of Old Hale Way mentioned in scheme 4 is not in the Southern Rural Area, but that of Hitchin Committee.
- (5) **Bury Lane, Codicote – explore and identify simple measures that can be taken to address problems with frequent accidents and cars leaving the roads.**  
No funding decisions can be considered until all the Discretionary Grant-Aid applications have been presented to the Committee for consideration on the 1 February 2007. The Community Development Officer will present projects for further funding consideration, subject to any underspend, to the Committee at the meeting on the 15 March 2007.
- (6) **Transitional speed limit on the B656 into Codicote to mirror the other end of the road as it enters St Ippolyts**  
It was agreed to consider this at the meeting on 15 March 2007 once the grants had been agreed and subject to there being any underspend from the discretionary budget; and also to advise North Hertfordshire Highways Partnership Joint Member Panel of the reason for the delay in reaching a decision.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To keep members of the Committee apprised of the latest developments in community activities in the Southern Rural area and support the local community for appropriate traffic management and road safety schemes.

85. **DEVELOPMENT AND AREA VISIONING BUDGETS 2006/2007**  
The Community Development Officer for the Southern Rural Area presented a report of the Head of Community Development and Cultural Services to the Committee,

which set out the current status of the 2006/2007 Development and Area Visioning Budgets.

**RESOLVED:** That the current expenditure and balance of the Development Budget and Area Visioning Budgets for 2006/2007 be noted.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

- (1) The report was intended to apprise Members of the financial resources available to this Committee. It drew attention to the current budgetary situation, assisted in the effective financial management of the Committee's budget and to comply with the Council's Financial Regulations and the guidance contained in the Grants procedure;
- (2) The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and strategic priorities of the Council.

The meeting closed at 9.20 p.m.

.....  
Chairman