

**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**ROYSTON AND DISTRICT COMMITTEE**  
**(Royston and Ermine Ward – Parishes of Barkway, Barley, Kelshall, Nuthampstead,  
Reed and Therfield)**

**Meeting held at Royston Town Hall, Melbourn Street, Royston  
on 30 July 2008 at 7.30p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Councillors: Mrs F.R. Hill (Chairman), H.M. Marshall (Vice Chairman), Mrs Liz Beardwell, P.C.W. Burt, A.F. Hunter, R. E. Inwood and F. J. Smith.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Alan Fleck - Community Development Officer  
Susanne Gow – Committee and Member Services Officer

**ALSO PRESENT:** Dr John Hedges – Royston Health Centre  
Hertfordshire County Cllr Doug Drake

**18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

**19. MINUTES – 11 June 2008**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Royston and District Committee Meeting held on 11 June 2008 be approved as a true record of the proceedings, and be signed by the Chairman.

Arising from the Minutes, the Community Development Officer reported that the Police had agreed to organise a speed check on Barkway Road.

He also stated that a report on the weight limit suggested for Melbourn Street would be presented to the Royston and District Committee at the next meeting on 1 October 2008.

**20. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman announced that there were two items to be discussed under this heading, and these would be taken after the other items. The Royston Town Ditch in Stamford Avenue would therefore be taken as Item 11 and Twigden flooding would be discussed at Item 12.

**21. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. She particularly welcomed back Councillor Smith, and on behalf of the Royston and District Committee wished him a speedy return to good health.

She reminded Members of the Royston and District Committee 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 they were 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 were to leave the room and not seek to influence the decision during that particular item.

**22. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation at this meeting.

**23. HEALTH**

Dr John Hedges of the Royston Health Centre updated the Royston and District Committee on current issues facing GPs in Royston.

He covered four topics: Health Centre development; progress of practice-based commissioning; out of hours' services; and Royston Hospital. He also volunteered to answer any other concerns which the Committee Members may have had.

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Dr Hedges informed the Committee that the Primary Care Trust (PCT) person in charge of the Health Centre Development was Graham Bell, and when consulted he stated that North Hertfordshire District Council and Hertfordshire County Council would use the same 'LIFT' development process as the PCT. It was suggested that part of the new development would need to be revenue and capital neutral.

Referring to practice-based commissioning, Dr Hedges declared that there were too few local GPs to manage active commissioning themselves. Royston patients had a choice of care, but the majority tended to choose the community-based CATCH clinics administered by Cambridge GPs rather than Hertfordshire clinics, as patients appeared to prefer Addenbrookes Hospital to the Lister or QEII Hospitals. It was vital that there were separate commissioning and provider functions to prevent conflicts of interest in GP clinics. CATCH was forming a provider arm using ASSURA care to manage its GP clinics.

Regarding the out-of-hours service, Dr Hedges revealed that St Albans and Hertford out-of-hours service had won the contract, and would take over from 1 September 2008 as "Herts Urgent Care (HUC)". He also explained that the service in the west of the county would be provided by HUC. He stated that home visits had already increased significantly, and resulted in better patient care. The bid had been expensive, but the PCT had chosen quality rather than low cost.

On the subject of Royston Hospital, Dr Hedges reported big improvements in PCT support of the Hospital. However, only 5 to 7 beds were in use, and it was important that these were used to reduce PCT costs for patients in Lister Hospital who could be cared for in a Community Hospital. The GPs provided care for their own patients, but had not been paid for 4 years for this work. They were not willing to provide in-patient supervision for non-Royston residents without adequate reimbursement.

The Chairman thanked Dr Hedges for his interesting and informative report and said that it was excellent that everything seemed to be moving in the right direction. The Committee discussed the points raised by Dr Hedges, and he was asked about the proposed closing of dispensaries. Dr Hedges stated that it would be a significant reduction in the provision of patient services in market towns. He revealed that dispensary teams do a lot of extra work for practice patients. Pharmacists are able to monitor the dispensing of all drugs used by individuals, but their lack of access to patient GP notes limited their effectiveness. Further national discussion and changes were likely to follow on this issue.

The Chairman proposed that a letter of support was sent from the Royston and District Committee to the contact at the PCT and other relevant bodies/individuals (**Action**).

Having been given permission by the Chairman, County Councillor Drake asked Dr Hedges if an emergency centre was to be established, and was told that one would be set up in the grounds of the QEII Hospital in Welwyn Garden City. Dr Hedges stressed the urgent need for space for clinics and surgeries in Royston, as there was a current lack of medical infrastructure. He stated that development of the Health Centre site would definitely improve the town centre.

Dr Hedges was also asked whether it was possible for Royston Hospital to become a community hospital. He replied that Royston Hospital was a "community hospital", and more services could be developed if space were available.

On being asked if there was any difficulty in recruiting doctors, nurses and health care workers, Dr Hedges replied that GP recruitment was in the ascendant, and that general practice was a very patient-focused system of cost-effective care.

The Chairman once more thanked Dr Hedges for attending the Royston and District Committee Meeting and for his interesting talk, and also for the clarification afforded by his answers to the questions posed. She stated that the Committee supported the dispensaries in Royston, and repeated that this support would be put in writing to the PCT contact and other relevant individuals.

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### 24. AREA COMMITTEE SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS – REVIEW OF 2006-2009 AND PROPOSALS FOR 2009-2012

The Community Development Officer introduced the Report, and noted the organisations which most frequently approached the Royston and District Committee for funds as the Royston Arts Festival, Royston Town Council and the local Rotary Club. He also noted that there was already an SLA set up for Royston Cave, and after discussion it was concluded that as Royston Cave was a Scheduled Ancient Monument and a major tourist attraction, central funding would be more appropriate.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the Royston and District Committee note the review of the local Service Level Agreement (SLA) arrangements for 2007/08 as set out in Appendix 2;
- 2) That the Royston and District Committee note that a rebalancing of the funding of SLA is proposed, to better reflect the district-wide/local area focus;
- 3) That the Committee determine the approach to be adopted for any further tranche of SLA to be funded through Area Committees for 2009-2012;
- 4) That the Committee confirm that the detailed negotiations with individual projects will be conducted by relevant officers, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement and Rural Affairs (for Major and Minor funded projects) and Area Committee Chairmen;
- 5) That the Committee note the proposed timescale for implementing the new SLA;
- 6) That the Committee receive a further report on SLA outcomes later in the year, as part of the Corporate Business Planning Process.

#### **REASON FOR DECISIONS:**

To confirm the future strategic policy direction for the programme of financial assistance for the voluntary and community sector, through the negotiation of SLA.

### 25. BT TELEPHONE BOXES

A proposal had been put forward by BT for the removal of two telephone boxes in Royston – one in Melbourn Road, and one in York Way. The Community Development Officer checked on all the telephone boxes in Royston, finding that there was a total of nine boxes in Royston, both red and silver.

The Committee discussed the situation, which had previously also been debated by Royston Town Council, who felt they had no comment to make, and had elected to preserve the status quo.

The point was raised that most people had access to mobile telephones for emergencies nowadays, including the majority of elderly people, so perhaps there was less of a need for telephone boxes. In addition, if telephone boxes were not used as much as in previous years, they would be less cost effective, as the line would still need to be paid for, together with maintenance and cleaning – all of which would have to be paid for by BT.

On the other hand, telephone boxes, especially the older red ones, were part of country life, and as such should not be summarily discarded.

The Chairman proposed, and the Committee agreed, that BT be contacted in writing to support the retention of the two telephone boxes (**Action**).

### 26. CHAMPION NEWS

The Community Development Officer (CDO) took the Royston and District Committee through the activities and schemes with which he had been involved since the last meeting on 2 April 2008, and brought to their attention some important community-based activities which will take place over the next few months.

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### **Royston Youth Council (RYC)**

The CDO had nothing to add to the report given in the Agenda for the Royston and District Committee Meeting. The RYC committee continued to meet during school holidays.

### **Royston Youth Network**

Once more, there was little else to add to the report given in the Agenda to the Royston and District Committee Meeting, except that the Royston Youth Network was having great success in co-ordinating activities, and met with much greater frequency than had been originally envisaged.

### **Town Centre Partnerships**

The Community Development Officer (CDO) has supported both the work of the Royston Town Centre Partnership and the Baldock Town Partnership, and provided photographs for both a collaborative project in Baldock and for literature in Royston.

Work on the BIDS project was currently up to date.

The CDO recently analysed the Baldock Town Partnership Questionnaire asking for views on the state of the Town and comments on likes and dislikes. The majority of comments supported the Town Centre Enhancement, and some comments will help to refine the Partnership's Business Plan for the future.

### **Other Work**

The CDO related to the Committee the work in which he had been engaged. This included holding citizenship classes in five Royston primary schools alongside Town, District and County Councillors; writing to English Heritage to clarify the exact size of Royston Cave and its position in relation to Melbourn Street; assisting at a drop-in event to promote NHDC grants; updating the internet version of the NHDC Village Hall Handbook; setting up the itinerary for the tour around North Hertfordshire of the Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, Lady Dione Verulam, on 27 August; and taking part in a Careers Event at Knights Templar School involving people from a wide range of trades and professions who spoke about their work and how they started out.

The Royston and District Committee discussed the matter of the damage being done to Royston Cave by exhaust pollution and the weight of passing traffic, and it was decided that a contingency plan should be prepared in case of a traffic accident in the area of the Cave.

Councillor Smith made the suggestion that the continuing problems of congestion and illegal parking may be solved by making Melbourn Street one-way. On being requested to speak by the Chairman, County Councillor Doug Drake proposed that the problems might also be solved by forming a pinch-point with bollards to slow traffic passing Royston Cave for 10ft on each side of the entrance. He suggested also expanding the pavement, which would make the area more pedestrian-friendly. The CDO was asked to request a feasibility report from the relevant Highways authority on each of the above options as soon as possible and if possible bring them to the next meeting on 1 October 2008. It was suggested that any possible solution to the problems arising at Royston Cave should be linked to the Royston Town Centre Strategy.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Drake and Councillor Smith for bringing the matter of the problems at Royston Cave to the attention of the Committee, and thanked the CDO for all his hard work in Royston.

### **RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the Royston and District Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community Development Officer to promote greater community capacity and wellbeing;
- 2) That the Royston and District Committee request a feasibility report on each of the options and any other options to ease the traffic problems in Melbourn Street and prevent further damage to Royston Cave.

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- 3) That the CDO is thanked for all his hard work in Royston.

### **REASON FOR DECISION:**

To ensure that the Royston and District Committee are kept informed of the work of the Community Development Officer.

### **27. ROYSTON AND DISTRICT COMMITTEE DEVELOPMENT AND AREA VISIONING BUDGETS 2008/2009**

The Community Development Officer (CDO) took the Committee through the Royston and District Budget Statement for 2008/2009, and advised the Committee of the following grant applications for determination: from Royston Arts Festival for £1,000, Barkway Village Hall for £500, Rotary Club of Royston for the Royston Kite Festival (£750) and Young Person of the Year for £1,000.

Members were asked to note the information in Appendix 1, which related to Area Committee Budget balances for the Financial Year 2008/09, the pre-allocations carried forward from 2007/08, and the balances allocated to Visioning Budgets available to respective wards within the Royston and District area.

The Committee considered the highways schemes listed in Appendix F, which had been proposed by the North Herts Highways Partnership-Joint Member Panel (NHHPJMP) at its meeting on 23 June 2008, for implementation subject to 50% matched funding from the Royston and District Committee, and agreed that all those marked in bold go to the Joint Member Panel for 50% matched funding.

In addition, the Royston and District Committee expressed their concern over the current condition of the road surface in Barkway High Street. They agreed that any future plans for surface dressing in the Integrated Works Programme should be brought forward as soon as possible.

The Committee also requested confirmation that Mallard Road was included in the Highways programme for repair in the near future.

### **RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the budgetary expenditure, current balances and carry forwards from the Development Budgets 2008/09, the Small Area Grants Budget and the allocated Discretionary Budgets be noted;
- 2) That the Committee consider the grant applications from Royston Arts Festival, Barkway Village Hall, the Rotary Club of Royston and Young People of the Year;

### **REASONS FOR DECISIONS:**

To use the allocation of funds available and accessed by various members of the community to improve the services provided by the local organisations and groups.

- 3) That the North Herts Highways Partnership-Joint Member Panel be informed of the opinions and decisions made by the Royston and District Committee regarding the proposed projects and schemes from Hertfordshire Highways put forward for 50% joint matched funding from the Committee.

### **RECOMMENDED TO NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP - JOINT MEMBER PANEL:**

That the following projects and schemes were reviewed by the Royston and District Committee and it was agreed that they all be put to the Joint Member Panel for 50% joint matched funding.

- 1) Speed limit countdown: paint Investigation into possible 40mph buffer zone (50% of cost sought from Royston adjacent to VASS south of Committee is £1,500) Royston
- 2) No right turn when emerging from Investigation into this traffic scheme (50%

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- Garden Walk at the A10/Garden Walk junction of cost sought from Royston Committee is £2,500). **Cost to be queried.**
- 3) Traffic speeds and introduction of chicanes at junction of B1368 and B1039 Signing improvements and investigation of traffic calming methods (50% of total cost sought from Royston Committee is £5,000)
- 4) Royston Town Centre:  
Sinking paviers in several places  
Tarmac in place of paviers after utility works in several places  
Replacement of street furniture Town centre maintenance (50% of estimated cost sought from Royston Committee is £2,500)
- 5) Complete relaying of cobbles in George Lane Town centre maintenance (50% of cost sought from Royston Committee is £500)
- 6) The Committee requested that although Barkway High Street was included in the Integrated Works Programme for the future, this item should be brought forward as soon as possible.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To ensure that Royston and District Area funding is utilised to optimum effect.

### 28. GRANT APPLICATION – ROYSTON ARTS FESTIVAL

**RESOLVED:** That the sum of £1,000 be awarded to Royston Arts Festival, to part-fund the Royston Arts Festival 2008.

**REASON FOR DECISION:**

The allocation of funds would improve the services provided by the local organisations and groups that are available and accessed by various members of the community.

### 29. GRANT APPLICATION – BARKWAY VILLAGE HALL

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee agree financial support to the tune of £500, towards refurbishment of the Gents WC in Barkway Village Hall.

**REASON FOR DECISION:**

The allocation of funds would improve the services provided by the local organisations and groups that are available and accessed by various members of the community.

### 30. GRANT APPLICATION – ROTARY CLUB OF ROYSTON

**RESOLVED:** That the sum of £750 be allocated to the Rotary Club of Royston towards costs for the Royston Kite Festival. It was suggested that for 2009 the committee consider a guarantee against loss instead of a grant.

**REASON FOR DECISION:**

The allocation of funds would improve the services provided by the local organisations and groups that are available and accessed by various members of the community.

### 31. GRANT APPLICATION - YOUNG PERSON OF THE YEAR

**RESOLVED:** That the sum of £1,000 be awarded to Young People of the Year to assist with administration costs.

**REASON FOR DECISION:**

The allocation of funds would improve the services provided by the local organisations and groups that are available and accessed by various members of the community.

### 32. ROYSTON TOWN DITCH

Members were advised that Royston Town Ditch started in Melbourn Street, ran under the Police station and the car park and along St Mary's Park and King James's Way. It then proceeded to Stamford Avenue and the corner of Queen's Road, under the railway line, through an estate and on to the sewage works.

Next to the open section of the Ditch close to 26 Stamford Avenue, the water comes

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off the highway and the Ditch is blocked with rubbish and dead rats etc, causing great concern amongst local residents. The Members agreed that culverting should have been completed several years ago.

The decision was taken to ask Anglia Water and Hertfordshire Highways to deal with the whole problem as soon as possible (**Action**).

**33. TWIGDEN FLOODING**

The Chairman reported to the Committee that residents on the Twigden estate had a problem with flooding. Concerns have been raised with regard to the Anglia Water pumping station.

It was suggested that the flooding situation in Royston was referred to Anglia Water and the Highways Authority (**Action**).

The meeting closed at 9.08 p.m.

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Chairman

