

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

ROYSTON & DISTRICT COMMITTEE

(Royston and Ermine Ward – Parishes of Barkway, Barley, Kelshall, Nuthampstead, Reed and Therfield)

**Meeting held at Icknield Walk First School, Poplar Drive, Royston
on 1 February 2006 at 7.30 p.m.**

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

IN ATTENDANCE: *Area Planning Officer, Community Development Officer for Royston and Committee & Member Services Officer.*

ALSO PRESENT: *Mr Geraint Burnell (Royston Town Centre Manager) and County Councillor Doug Drake.*

92. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

93. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 December 2005 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman.

94. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was submitted for consideration by the Committee.

95. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Mrs F.R. Hill declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 10 – Area Committee Development Budget 2005/6: Grant Application from Smiles Parent & Baby Group – as she attended the group with her daughter. Councillor Hill reserved her right to speak and vote in relation to this item.

Councillor R.E. Inwood declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 10 – Area Committee Development Budget 2005/6: Grant Application from Smiles Parent & Baby Group – as he had been subsidising the Group's rent for the period November 2005 to April 2006 to help alleviate the pressure of the Group's financial difficulties. Councillor Inwood stated that he would remain in the room and answer any questions the Committee may have for him in relation to this item but would not vote.

Councillor Mrs F.R. Hill declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 10 – Area Committee Development Budget 2005/6: Grant Application from Royston Town Council – as she was a member of the Royston Town Council. Councillor Hill reserved her right to speak and vote in relation to this item.

Councillor P.C.W. Burt declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 10 – Area Committee Development Budget 2005/6: Grant Application from Royston Town Council – as he was a member of the Royston Town Council. Councillor Burt reserved his right to speak and vote in relation to this item.

Councillor A.F. Hunter declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 10 – Area Committee Development Budget 2005/6: Grant Application from Royston Town Council – as he was a member of the Royston Town Council. Councillor Hunter reserved his right to speak and vote in relation to this item.

96. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr Malcolm Brown had given due notice that he wished to speak at the meeting regarding planning application reference 05/01152/1 – Land at September Cottage, High Street, Barley. Mr Brown informed the Committee that he was the applicant's agent, and also a resident of Barley himself, and

so he had developed the scheme to ensure that it did not detract from the character of the village, and addressed any problems that were identified during the design process.

Key points raised by Mr Brown were:

- Whilst concern had been raised about limited visibility from access onto High Street, this was the case at the access points for all properties along the High Street, and there were very few accidents;
- Overlooking – windows in the barn were very high up and could only be seen out of by standing on a ladder. Glass would also be obscured.
- Lighting – external lighting had been reduced to address light pollution concerns.
- Consultation with Council officers, including the Conservation Officer, had taken place throughout the design process to ensure any issues that arose were addressed.
- The work on the most important elevation for impact on the street scene had been kept to absolute minimum – only insertion of a couple of small additional windows – to preserve character of site from village.

The Chairman thanked Mr Brown for his presentation and informed him that the points he had raised would be considered when the Committee determined the application.

Mrs J. Nicholson had given due notice that she wished to speak at the meeting regarding planning application reference 05/01767/1 – Horseshoe Close Stables, London Road, Barley. Mrs Nicholson lived next to the site and had some serious concerns that she wished to bring to the Committee's attention.

Key points raised by Mrs Nicholson were:

- Concerned that increased traffic and horse boxes will damage her property, particularly with the poor quality of the track.
- As the track is single-lane, if a vehicle came off by accident to the rear of her property, both her and her neighbour's oil heating store could be damaged and destroyed causing serious injuries.
- Vehicles using the track at present already cut the corner as they turn into/out of London Road, as evidenced by tyre marks, which pass over the verge and worryingly close to an existing wall. Would it therefore be possible to install bollards at that corner to prevent this?

The Chairman thanked Mrs Nicholson for her presentation and informed her that the points she had raised would be considered when the Committee determined the application.

97. REVISED STRATEGIC OUTLINE CASE FOR ROYSTON HOSPITAL

The Chairman informed the Committee that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda, and read out the following statement from the Head of Public Involvement and Communications at the Royston, Buntingford & Bishops Stortford Primary Care Trust.

"I would like to apologise on behalf of the PCT that our Chief Executive and the Executive Director responsible for taking forward the Royston development are both on annual leave this week (and out of the country) and are unable to attend the meeting of the Royston & District Committee."

The Committee expressed their strong disappointment that this item had been withdrawn at such late notice, and Councillor Inwood stated that he would raise the matter at the next meeting of the Trust's Scrutiny Committee.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Chairman stated that it was anticipated that the Trust would be in attendance at the meeting of the Committee to be held on 15 March 2006 instead.

98. PARKING POLICY

The Royston Town Centre Manager presented to the Committee a report from the Royston Town Centre Forum on Parking Policy in Royston, which had been submitted to North Hertfordshire District Council for consideration in December 2005. Alongside this was a response from North Hertfordshire District Council which had been received in the last week of January 2006.

The Royston Town Centre Manager stressed that the response from the Council had not yet been circulated to the members of the Royston Town Centre Forum. However, he made some initial comments on the Council's response, key points of which included:

- The response included the statement that under 2,000 penalty charges were levied in Royston in the previous 12 months whilst many people were aware that the actual number, as previously stated, was more than 30% higher than this – a significant discrepancy.
- It was difficult to see how the flat, open car parks of Royston were as expensive to maintain as the multi-storey car parks seen in Letchworth Garden City and Hitchin.
- Whilst it was fair to say that the Council had no control over the general state of the retail economy or planning policy with regards to superstores, the point the Forum wished to emphasise was that the Council did have control over local parking policy and could/should use this to assist Royston's town centre.
- The rejection of free parking in the John Street car park and, indeed, the removal of charges from Baldock was apparently judged on the needs of the Parking Services department. The correct perspective for a public service was surely to adjudge the needs of the town and its people and act accordingly.

The Town Centre Manager had opened his briefing by stating that, in essence, Royston did not suffer from a shortage of parking but rather from a shortage of shoppers. He concluded his briefing by characterising the Forum's report as "stating a reasoned case for why Royston should be treated differently from other North Herts towns" and the response from the Council he characterised as "stating why the Council had no intention adjusting from current District-wide policies". The Town Centre Manager informed the Committee that there would be a Town Centre Forum response to the Council's letter and, as he felt very little progress had been made, he was confident that the Forum would not accept the Council's response. He asked for the Committee's agreement to review the Forum's response, once prepared.

The Committee expressed their strong disappointment that a response to the Royston Town Centre Forum's report had been sent out from North Hertfordshire District Council without any consultation taking place with Royston Members or with the Royston & District Committee. They therefore agreed to disregard that response when considering the Town Centre Forum's report.

The Committee examined the suggested measures put forward by the Town Centre Forum and expressed their support. They particularly expressed their agreement for the Forum's statement that the circumstances differ within each town and parking policy and charges should also differ in line with this. The Committee also noted, however, that there was a review of car parking in North Herts still being carried out by Council officers, and that many of the issues raised by the Forum could not be addressed until after that review had been completed.

County Councillor Drake stated that he was heartened to listen to the Committee's response to the report as it showed how responsible they were being towards the economic viability of the town centre, which was especially important when there had been a 7.5-10% reduction in trade for town centre retailers in the previous twelve months.

The Chairman thanked the Royston Town Centre Manager for addressing the Committee, and confirmed that the Committee would like to receive copies of the Town Centre Forum's response to the Council. The Chairman also confirmed that the Committee's comments would be forwarded to the appropriate Council officers.

99. CAR PARKING PROVISION & CHARGES

Following the Committee's discussions under Item 7, it was agreed that all issues to be discussed had been covered. This item was therefore withdrawn from the agenda.

100. CHAMPION NEWS

The Community Development Officer for Royston presented a report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services to the Committee, which advised them of the activities undertaken by the Community Development Officer for Royston since the meeting of the Committee held on 21 December 2005, and brought to their attention some important community based activities that would be taking place during the next few months.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report of the Head of Community Development be noted;
- (2) That the actions taken by the Community Development Officer for Royston to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Royston communities be endorsed.

REASON FOR DECISION: To keep members of the Committee apprised of the latest developments in community activities in Royston.

101. ANNUAL GRANTS AND DEVELOPMENT DISCRETIONARY BUDGET 2004/05

The Community Development Officer for Royston presented a report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services to the Committee, which set out the budgetary situation for the Committee, together with 2 additional grant applications that had been received. The Community Development Officer for Royston drew the Committee's attention to 2 further grant applications that had been received, which had been circulated to Members under separate cover.

RESOLVED: That the current expenditure and balance of the Development Budget 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 ensured actions were performed within the Authority'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.

102. GRANT APPLICATION – SMILES PARENT & BABY GROUP

RESOLVED: That the sum of £500 be awarded to the Smiles Parent & Baby Group as a financial contribution toward the start-up costs of the Group, including the purchase of new toys.

REASON FOR DECISION: 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.

103. GRANT APPLICATION – ROYSTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOLVED: That the sum of £550 be awarded to the Royston Town Council as a financial contribution toward the Royston May Fayre & Classic Car Day.

REASON FOR DECISION: 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.

104. GRANT APPLICATION – ROYSTON BOXING CLUB

RESOLVED: That, subject to planning permission being granted, the sum of £1,327 be awarded to the Royston Boxing Club for the purchase, delivery and installation of a container unit to house the club's equipment outside the Coombes Community Centre where they were based.

REASON FOR DECISION: 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.

105. GRANT APPLICATION – THERFIELD & KELSHALL SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB

RESOLVED: That the sum of £1,000 be awarded to the Therfield & Kelshall Sports & Social Club as a financial contribution toward the provision of movable goal posts.

REASON FOR DECISION: 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.

106. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Committee heard the following oral representations:

- Mr Malcolm Brown with regard to planning application reference 05/01152/1 – Land at September Cottage, High Street, Barley.
- Mrs J. Nicholson with regard to planning application reference 05/01767/1 – Horseshoe Close Stables, London Road, Barley.

Details of these representations can be found above at Minute 96.

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

SCHEDULE

Reference Number	Description of Development and location	Decision
05/01152/1	Land at September Cottage, High Street, Barley Erection of terrace of 3 x 2-bedroom dwellings and 1 x 4-bedroom dwelling with associated gardens, store sheds, parking spaces and ancillary works, following demolition of existing garages and barns; external alterations to existing office building, involving blocking up of existing windows on rear elevation and installation of new windows and rooflights on front and rear elevations; re-arrangement of existing yard to provide 8 parking spaces with amenity area and landscaping; alteration of existing access from High Street.	GRANTED (see (a) below)
05/01153/1CAC	Land at September Cottage, High Street, Barley Demolition of existing barns and garages, preparatory to redevelopment of site.	GRANTED (see (b) below)
05/01365/1	Land adjacent 2A Lower Gower Road, Royston Outline Application (Siting, design, external appearance and landscaping reserved) for erection of detached dwelling.	REFUSED (see (c) below)
05/01767/1	Horseshoe Close Stables, London Road, Barley Change of use of agricultural buildings to livery yard (stables, tack and storage).	GRANTED (see (d) below)

- (a) **RESOLVED:** That, with regard to planning application reference 05/05/01152/1, planning permission be **GRANTED**, subject to the conditions as set out in the report of the Head of Planning & Building Control, with the following amendments:

(1) *The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this permission.*

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

(6) *Prior to the commencement of development details/samples of materials to be used for all hard landscaping and boundary treatment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Notwithstanding the proposed boundary treatment set out on approved drawing no. WB-P2-07, the details shall include provision of a 2.5m high flint and brick wall (as measured from the southern side of the wall) on the northern boundary of the application site. Such works shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved details or particulars prior to the first occupation of the dwellings hereby permitted and thereafter retained and maintained unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory standard of development and finish and to protect the amenities enjoyed by occupiers of adjoining residential properties.

- (b) **RESOLVED:** That, with regard to planning application reference 05/05/01152/1, planning permission be **GRANTED**, subject to the conditions as set out in the report of the Head of Planning & Building Control, with the following amendment:

(1) *The work to which this consent relates shall be began not later than the expiration of the period of 5 years from the date of this decision.*

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as modified by Regulation 12 and Schedule 3 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990.

- (c) **RESOLVED:** That, with regard to planning application reference 05/01365/1, planning permission be **REFUSED** for the following reason:

(1) *In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, the proposal represents a cramped form of development leading to the loss of a gap between nos. 2a and 2b Lower Gower Road which would, both of itself and by the precedent it would create for similar proposals in the vicinity, detract from the character of the street scene and lead to an incremental erosion in the visual amenities of the area. The proposal therefore conflicts with policies 1 and 57 of the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No. 2 - with alterations.*

- (d) **RESOLVED:** That, with regard to planning application reference 05/01767/1, planning permission be **GRANTED**, subject the following amended and additional conditions:

4. *Prior to the commencement of the use hereby permitted full details of the resurfacing of the private access drive off London Road and the courtyard area within the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall include provision of bollard(s) and kerbing on the eastern side of the drive leading into the application site. The approved works shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved details or particulars prior to the commencement of any construction/conversion works on the application site and prior to the commencement of the use and thereafter maintained to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.*

Reason: In the interests of road safety, to enhance the appearance of the site and to ensure protection of the boundary wall on the eastern side of the driveway.

7. *Prior to the commencement of the use hereby permitted full details of animal waste storage and disposal provision shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall specify the location of any temporary animal waste storage area prior to its removal from the site. The storage and disposal of animal waste from the site shall thereafter be carried out in complete accordance with the approved details or particulars unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*

Reason: To accord with the terms of the submitted application and to protect the amenities of the application site and surrounding area.

8. *The use of the site hereby permitted as a commercial livery yard shall not commence until Barley Public Footpath no. 2 which runs across the application site, has been reclassified as a public bridleway.*

Reason: In the interests of road safety, for the benefit of horse riders and to connect the site to the public bridleway network.

107. PLANNING APPEALS

The Area Planning Officer informed the Committee that the following planning appeal had been lodged since the meeting of the Committee held on 21 December 2005:

Appellant	Howan Homes Ltd
Reference number	05/00965/1
Address	8 Newmarket Road, Royston
Proposal	Erection of three storey building comprising 5 x 2-bedroom flats, provision of 8 car parking spaces, refuse store and ancillary works.
Method	Written representations.

The Area Planning Officer informed the Committee that no appeals had been determined since the meeting of the Committee held on 21 December 2005.

The meeting closed at 9.29 p.m.

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Chairman