

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Area North Committee** held on **Wednesday, 22nd August 2007** at the Village Hall, Chilthorne Domer.

(2.00 p.m. – 4.30 p.m.)

Present:

Members:

Patrick Palmer (Chairman)

Jill Beale
Tony Carvin
Ann Campbell
Rupert Cox
Roy Mills

Paull Robathan
Jo Roundell Greene
Sylvia Seal
Sue Steele
Derek Yeomans

Officers:

Charlotte Jones
Fiona Johnson
Steve Brewer
Andrew Gunn
Angela Cox

Head of Area Development (North)
Senior Housing Support Officer
Community Safety Coordinator
Deputy Team Leader – Development Control
Committee Administrator

Others:

Kim Sharp

Assistant Highway Service Manager, SCC

39. Minutes (agenda item 1)

Councillor Paull Robathan queried the second resolution of Agenda Item 16, Planning Applications, Application 07/01276/FUL for the Seavington Community Shop. He said that he could not recall agreeing to the second resolution at the meeting and, as a Ward Member, he had not been consulted on the appropriate conditions. Subsequently, the Deputy Team Leader – Development Control confirmed that these would be standard and appropriate conditions as attached to any planning application for a community shop regarding materials to be used and that the development be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of the permission.

Councillor Robathan confirmed he was content with this and therefore, the minutes of the meeting held on the 25th July 2007, copies of which had been previously circulated, were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

40. Apologies for Absence (agenda item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Derek Nelson and Keith Ronaldson.

41. Declarations of Interest (agenda item 3)

Agenda Item 14: Planning Applications

Councillor Derek Yeomans declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in planning application 07/01311/COU COU – Alterations and change of use of farm building (part) to use class B8 (storage and distribution) at Littlefield Farm, Littlefield Lane, Long Sutton as part-owner of a nearby property in Crouds Lane, Long Sutton.

42. Date of Future Meetings (agenda item 4)

Members noted that the next Area North Committee meeting would be held on **Wednesday 26th September 2007 at The Village Hall, Norton-Sub-Hamdon.**

43. Public Question Time (agenda item 5)

There were no questions from Parish Councils or members of the public.

44. Chairman's Announcements (agenda item 6)

The Chairman reported that he had recently attended a seminar on 'Planning for a Sustainable Future' at the Brympton way offices in Yeovil where he had been pleased to see 7 members of the Area North Committee also attending. The thanked those members for their support.

45. Reports from Members (agenda item 7)

Councillor Ann Campbell reported that she had recently attended a presentation of the Gifted Childrens' Association at Westfield School where they displayed their work with staff and rangers at Ham Hill. The display and work had been excellent and she commended the staff at Ham Hill for their assistance to the Association.

Councillor Rupert Cox reported that the Youth Facility and Play Area Steering Group had met the previous week where they had reviewed ongoing schemes. He reminded Members that a planning gain for youth and play provision must be incorporated into any future housing schemes in the area.

46. Area North Highways Update Report (agenda item 8)

Mr K Sharp, Assistant Highway Service Manager, commended his report to Members and informed them that since writing it, grass cutting across the district and weed killing in urban areas had been completed. Some re-surfacing work was still outstanding.

One Member commented that in his parish, holes in the road had not been filled prior to surface dressing. The Assistant Highway Service Manager asked for details of the area and he would investigate this.

In response to questions from Members, the Assistant Highway Service Manager replied that:-

- The budget for gully cleaning had been reduced and so subsequently had the service, however, if a problem was reported then they would respond.
- A program of ditching work was due to start soon, which would include rural areas and cuts in verges.

Several Members noted their concern at the spread of ragwort, a plant highly poisonous to horses, on highway verges. The Assistant Highway Service Manager confirmed that the pulling of ragwort was done on a reactive basis on A and B roads.

The Chairman thanked the Assistant Highway Service Manager for his report.

RESOLVED: That the Report be NOTED.

*Kim Sharp, Assistant Highway Service Manager, Somerset County Council – (0845) 345 9155
e-mail: kpsharp@somerset.gov.uk*

47. Report on Welfare Benefit Work in South Somerset (agenda item 9)

The Senior Housing Support Officer reported that she now managed both the Careline and Welfare Benefits services. One benefit of the amalgamation of the two services was the Careline staff were now trained to do a Welfare Benefit check for new clients when they installed a Careline monitor. She said that she was very pleased with the achievements on behalf of clients during the past year, despite only having one member of staff for part of the time.

In response to questions from Members, the Senior Housing Support Officer replied that:-

- Chard in Area West was an area of high deprivation and this had resulted in high numbers of clients making use of the Welfare Benefit service in that area.
- The Careline service was self-financing and profitable.
- The Welfare Benefits Officer employed by South Somerset Homes primarily assisted their own tenants and did not overlap with SSDC Welfare Benefit Advisers.
- She would welcome any assistance from Members for information on the new 4 Block Model of assessing the Formula Spending Share. Councillor Paull Robathan offered to raise this at his next meeting with the Corporate Director at the Children and Young People's Directorate of Somerset County Council.

Members commended the Senior Housing Support Officer and her staff for their vital assistance to the residents of South Somerset.

RESOLVED: That the Report be NOTED.

*Fiona Johnson, Senior Housing Support Officer - (01935) 462737
e-mail: fiona.johnson@southsomerset.gov.uk*

48. Area North Community Safety Action Panel (agenda item 10)

The Head of Area Development (North) introduced Mr John Deering as the Chairman of the Area North Community Safety Action Panel (ANCSAP), Councillor Sue Steele as the Member Representative on the Panel and Steve Brewer, the Community Safety Coordinator. She provided a short powerpoint presentation on the partnership work of

the Panel who met to develop and exchange ideas and supported positive activities for young people and social and community activities around crime prevention. She said that all the minutes, agendas and constitution of the Panel were available from herself and she reminded Members that the Panel had a budget of £10,000 to support community safety initiatives across Area North.

Councillor Sue Steele said the Panel had supported many small projects and Local Action Teams which had jointly had a great impact on community safety.

Members discussed at some length the support for youth development in the market towns and villages in Area North. The Head of Area Development (North) suggested that the newly appointed SSDC Young Peoples Coordinator and the relevant Portfolio Holder at Somerset County Council be invited to attend a future meeting of the Area North Committee to discuss youth services. She also noted that youth providers in Area North had met, and would continue to meet to increase the levels of cooperation and planning to further youth development needs.

Mr Deering thanked the Committee for their discussion and ideas which he said would be discussed further at the next meeting of the Panel. He invited all present to the Community Safety Workshop for parishes being held on 4th September at 6.30p.m. at Long Sutton Golf Club.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the report be NOTED.
 2. That the Area North Community Safety Action Panel look at ways of addressing youth development in Area North

*Charlotte Jones, Head of Area Development (North) - (01458) 257401
e-mail: charlotte.jones@southsomerset.gov.uk
Steve Brewer, Community Safety Coordinator – (01935) 462390
e-mail: steve.brewer@southsomerset.gov.uk*

49. Area North 2007/08 Budget Monitoring Report for the Period Ending 30th June 2007 (Executive Decision) - (agenda item 11)

The Head of Area Development (North) said this was the first quarterly budget monitoring report of the financial year, the content of which had also been reported to the District Executive Committee. She noted that £20,000 would be received in October for service enhancement projects and that some of the money allocated to the various youth and play schemes had been identified as no longer required by those schemes and so would be reallocated to other projects.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the current financial position of the Area North Budgets be noted.
 2. That £5,000 be allocated from the Area North Reserve to the Small Business Development Grants Budget.
 3. That the current and future spend on the revised Area North Capital Programme, as shown in the agenda report, be agreed.

Reason: To note the current financial position of the Area North Budgets, allocate additional funding to the Small Business Development Grant Budget and agree the revised Capital Programme

(Voting: Unanimous in favour)

*Jayne Beevor, Principal Accountant – Financial Services - (01935) 462320
e-mail: jayne.beevor@southsomerset.gov.uk*

50. Forward Plan – (For Information) (agenda item 12)

Members recommended that the new Police Inspector, Andy Whitfield, based at Somerton Police Station be invited to attend the next Committee meeting along with Chief Superintendent Nikki Watson.

Members were content to note the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the Forward Plan be NOTED.

*Angela Cox, Committee Administrator - (01458) 257437
e-mail: angela.cox@southsomerset.gov.uk*

51. Planning Appeals (agenda item 13)

The Chairman asked that Members note the report.

RESOLVED: That the Report be NOTED.

*Simon Gale, Head of Development & Building Control - (01935) 462071
e-mail: simon.gale@southsomerset.gov.uk*

52. Planning Applications (agenda item 14)

07/01311/COU – Alterations and change of use of farm building (part) to use class B8 (storage and distribution) at Littlefield Farm, Littlefield Lane, Long Sutton, Langport, Somerset

The Deputy Team Leader – Development Control advised that the proposal would not alter the existing farm building to any great extent and the Case Officer was happy with the proposals, but, he had spoken to the County Highway officer that day and their concerns with the width of the access lane and its junction onto the A372 remained.

Ms H Lazenby, Agent for the applicant, reminded Members that the only objectors to the proposal were the County Highway office. She confirmed that the proposal would generate no more traffic movements than there were currently to the farm and the applicant had indicated that he would be willing to provide passing places along the lane to the farm buildings. They expected the occupiers of the units to be small scale businesses which would not affect the applicants residential amenity and she compared the application to a farm shop, recently given permission along the same road, where the speed limit had been 50m.p.h.; the speed limit at this junction being 30m.p.h.

The Ward Member, Councillor Rupert Cox, said that although reason two of the recommendation of refusal referred to a substandard junction with the A372, neither the hedge to the West nor the wall to the East were high or obstructed a driver's visibility.

He proposed approving the application with appropriate conditions on hours of operation, construction of passing places in the access lane, and the number of traffic movements.

Members briefly discussed the application and were in agreement with the Ward Member that this was an acceptable farming diversification scheme and should be allowed with appropriate conditions.

RESOLVED: That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to appropriate conditions, including hours of operation, construction of passing places in the access lane, and the number of traffic movements.

(Voting: Unanimous in favour)

07/01103/FUL - Demolition of lean-to shed, alterations and the erection of a rear extension to convert ciderhouse into dwelling at The Ciderhouse, Farnham House, North Street, South Petherton, Somerset

The Deputy Team Leader – Development Control advised that he had spoken to the County Highway officer who still had concerns regarding visibility at the entrance to the site. He personally also had some concerns that the proposal would overlook the garden of Farnham House and he provided Members with several photographs of the site and its entrance.

Mr P Dyke, Agent for the applicant, pointed out that North Street was a no through road and so the traffic was limited. Pedestrians used the footpath on the other side of the road. He said the current entrance was 3.2m wide and had been safely used by the current owner for many years, however, he had indicated that the pillar to the North of the entrance could be reduced in height and the foliage to the South could be replaced with low level planting to assist visibility. There would be plenty of room in the courtyard to the rear of Farnham House to turn vehicles and he referred to an existing permission to convert a building to the south of the site to flats, which he said would be more intrusive to Farnham House than the proposed conversion of the Ciderhouse.

The Ward Member, Councillor Paull Robathan, confirmed that the applicant was willing to reduce the height of the pillar and foliage at the entrance to improve visibility onto the road and he referred to other developments in the village, which he felt had more restricted access. He said the garden to the rear of Farnham house was extensive and he did not feel that overlooking from the Ciderhouse would be an issue however the applicant could re-consider the layout of the garden to further prevent this. He proposed that the application be approved with a condition that the pillar and foliage at the entrance to the site be reduced in height to overcome Highway objections.

During discussion Members were generally in favour of granting permission although one Member expressed reservations at the width of North Street, the parked cars and the future safety of pedestrians. It was proposed and seconded to grant permission with conditions, to include reduction in height of the pillar and foliage, and, on being put to the vote was carried (10 in favour, 0 against, 1 abstention).

RESOLVED: That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to appropriate conditions, to include the reduction in height of the pillar to the North of the entrance to the site and the replacement of the high foliage to the South of the entrance with low level planting.

(Voting: 10 in favour, 0 against, 1 abstention)

07/02316/FUL - Erection of a building with garage facilities for cars and horse lorry, a workshop including storage of agricultural machinery and an office over at Wishel Cottage, Henley, Langport, Somerset

The Deputy Team Leader – Development Control advised that this application had been withdrawn.

*Simon Gale, Head of Development and Building Control - (01935) 462071
e-mail: simon.gale@southsomerset.gov.uk*

.....
Chairman