

Meeting AN **06M** 07/08
Date **24.10.07**

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Area North Committee** held on **Wednesday, 24th October 2007** at the Village Hall, Ilton.

(2.00 p.m. – 5.05 p.m.)

Present:

Members:

Patrick Palmer (Chairman)

Jill Beale	Keith Ronaldson
Tony Carvin	Jo Roundell Greene
Ann Campbell	Sylvia Seal
Rupert Cox	Sue Steele
Roy Mills	Derek Yeomans
Derek Nelson	

Officers:

David Julian	Head of Countryside, Heritage & Tourism
Nigel Collins	Transport Strategy Officer
Louise Bulmer	Community Activity & Lifestyles Officer
Madelaine King Oakley	Area Support Team Leader (North)
Les Collett	Community Development Officer
Tim Bodys	Solicitor
Andrew Gunn	Development Control Deputy Team Leader
Greg Lester	Planning Officer
John Millar	Planning Assistant
Angela Cox	Committee Administrator

NB: *Where an executive or key decision is made, a reason will be noted immediately beneath the Committee's resolution.*

68. Minutes (agenda item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on the 26th September 2007, copies of which had been previously circulated, were approved as a correct record of the meeting, with the following correction:-

Minute 61. Social Housing Development Programme – Outturn 2006/07

Paragraph 2 – The Senior Housing Development Officer said meetings were ongoing to resolve where the additional £3,000 would be found.

Replace '£3,000' with 'funding'.

69. Apologies for Absence (agenda item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Charlotte Jones, Head of Area Development (North) and Councillor Paull Robathan.

70. Declarations of Interest (agenda item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

71. Date of Future Meetings (agenda item 4)

Members noted that the next Area North Committee meeting would be held on **Wednesday 28th November 2007 at The Millennium Hall, Seavington.**

72. Public Question Time (agenda item 5)

There were no questions from members of the public.

73. Chairman's Announcements (agenda item 6)

The Chairman advised that there would be a report on the November Agenda regarding Youth Services provision across Area North, to which Somerset County Councillors and representatives from the Somerset Rural Youth Project and County Youth Service had been invited to attend.

He said he had also invited Vicky Breeze, Community Development Officer of Somerset County Council to attend the Committee meeting to see how it worked as she would be responsible for organizing the County Area Panel meetings in the future.

74. Reports from Members (agenda item 7)

Councillor Sue Steele welcomed everyone to the new village hall in Ilton and thanked the Committee for their support in its construction.

Councillor Keith Ronaldson commended Somerton for being voted one of the cleanest public toilets in the district recently.

Councillor Ann Campbell noted the Committee's disappointment that the Waterlinks project had failed to reach the final stage of the Big Lottery £50million funding. She thanked the officers involved in compiling the bid for their passion and dedication to the projects, many of which would still go ahead with funding from other sources.

Councillor Sylvia Seal said she had requested a report from the Head of Countryside, Heritage and Tourism and the Head of Area Development (North) on those projects within the Waterlinks bid which were achievable, those possible and those which were not, within South Somerset.

Councillor Rupert Cox regretted that he would have to resign his representation on the Somerset Levels & Moors Leader + Programme as he had been unable to attend their meetings due to other commitments. A report requesting a new Member representative would be presented at the November meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Jo Roundell Green reported that she had recently attended a meeting of the Somerset Building Presentation Trust in Dunster where there had been a presentation on two building preservation projects in Dunster and Taunton. She asked Members to consider forwarding any suitable building preservation projects within South Somerset.

75. Annual Report Outlining the past year's work of the Countryside Service (agenda item 8)

The Head of Countryside, Heritage and Tourism advised that he would be reporting on the Tourism and Heritage services in January 2008. He said the Countryside service, particularly the Rights of Way, had a very successful year. He highlighted that:-

- Their BVPI indicator had risen to 74% from 63% two years ago
- The Parish Paths Stewardship Scheme was going from strength to strength
- Ham Hill Country Park had been awarded £160,000 lottery funding
- The Green Flag awards for both Yeovil and Ham Hill Country Parks had attained one of the highest ratings
- The Rights of Way service was provided by SSDC under a statutory agreement from SCC and this was due to be renegotiated shortly.
- He was still investigating the possibility of the Eastfields Nature Reserve at High Ham being taken over by voluntary parties in the future.
- The Somerset Tourism Partnership, involving all 5 District Councils and the County Council, had recently launched the Visit Somerset Website (www.visitsomerset.co.uk) and the Visit Somerset Brochure was due to be launched in November. He asked for Members feedback on both of these projects.
- Both the Yeovil and the Cartgate Tourist Information Centres (TIC's) had been shortlisted for Excellence Awards, to be announced on 29th October 2007 and Cartgate TIC was listed as one of the top 3 TIC's in the Southwest.

In response to questions from Members, the Head of Countryside, Heritage and Tourism replied that:-

- The main criteria for the Green Flag awards was assessed on access to sites, management plans and collaboration with community groups and volunteers.
- The Apprentice Rangers attended College at Kingston Maurwood near Dorchester and gained experience in the two Country Parks which assisted them in future countryside professions.
- He would progress the issue of a footpath diversion in Long Sutton with the District Rights Of Way Officer.
- The Parish Paths Stewardship Scheme encouraged Parishes to provide priority footpath and improvement lists. It also supported voluntary groups to provide some path maintenance, offering insurance, equipment and training.

The Chairman congratulated the Head of Countryside, Heritage and Tourism and his staff for their many achievements and awards.

RESOLVED: That the report be NOTED.

*David Julian, Head of Countryside, Heritage & Tourism - (01935) 462279
e-mail: david.julian@southsomerset.gov.uk*

76. Community Transport (agenda item 9)

The Transport Strategy Officer asked for Members comments on his report and particularly recommendations 2 to 5.

In response to questions from Members, the Transport Strategy Officer said that the Council had expressed grave concerns about the future costs of the Countywide Concessionary bus fares when the scheme went national in April 2008. This scheme would significantly affect rural authorities as the Government had set the average bus fare at £1.34 whereas the average single fare with First Bus in South Somerset was £2.04.

During discussion, Members expressed disquiet at the possible future effect of the national concessionary bus fare scheme and asked that the Transport Strategy Officer take forward the Committee's concerns to the Group Manager, Financial Services, and ask her to seek the opinions of other rural authorities with a view to jointly lobbying the Government on the fairness of the new system to rural authorities.

Members also asked the Transport Strategy Officer to investigate measures for improving the gaps in the bus network service within Area North.

The Chairman thanked the Transport Strategy Officer for his report and asked that he take forward the Committee's concerns.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

1. Note the contents of the report.
2. Request that the Transport Strategy Officer take forward the Committee's concerns at the future costs of the Countywide Concessionary bus fare scheme and ask the Group Manager, Financial Services, to seek the opinions of other rural authorities with a view to jointly lobbying the Government on the fairness of the system to rural authorities.
3. Support measures to reduce barriers to travel and in particular to investigate measures for improving rural transport within Area North and raise awareness of the services on offer by working with Transporting Somerset, the operators, local communities and other Key Stakeholders.
4. Instruct the Transport Strategy Officer to work with key Stakeholders to consider strategic and operational improvements to the Moped Loan Scheme to achieve long-term financial stability.
5. Instruct the Transport Strategy Officer to undertake further work to move forward the possible provision of low floor buses on Service 81 (South Petherton, and Stoke Sub Hamdon to Yeovil) in liaison with Transporting Somerset (SCC) and South West Coaches.

*Nigel Collins, Transport Strategy Officer - (01935) 462591
e-mail: nigel.collins@southsomerset.gov.uk*

77. Active Communities Programme (agenda item 10)

The Community Activity and Lifestyles Officer thanked the Committee and the Portfolio Holder for their support to the Active Communities Programme. She said that although they had concentrated on activities in Martock, Somerton and Langport, this was not exclusive and other interested villages would be assisted. She updated them on the various health activities which had taken place across Area North during 2006/07, including:-

- Health Fairs held in Somerton, Martock, Langport and Curry Rivel.
- The Health Walk promotion was progressing well including a new young parents and toddlers walk in Somerton.
- There were now 10 flexercise leaders in sheltered housing schemes.
- All activities set up in 2005/06 in Stoke-sub-Hamdon were still continuing and progressing.

The Portfolio Holder, Councillor Sylvia Seal, said that the Healthy Lifestyle Team had been recently assessed by the Institute for Sport, Parks and Leisure (ISPAL), formerly ILAM, and had achieved high accolade. She commended them for their enthusiasm in their work with communities.

Members were supportive of the scheme and made the following points:-

- Links could be made with the Rights of Way service to encourage people to take more walks.
- It was acknowledged that it was difficult to monitor children's activities due to child protection legislation
- Encouragement should be given to 15 to 25 year olds as once they had left school exercise was often a low priority.

The Chairman thanked the Community Activity and Lifestyles Officer for her enthusiasm and commitment.

RESOLVED: That the report be NOTED.

*Louise Bulmer, Community Activity & Lifestyles Officer - (01935) 462347
e-mail: louise.bulmer@southsomerset.gov.uk*

78. Community Grants – (Executive Decision) (agenda item 11)

The Community Development Officer outlined how the Village Artist Group had identified the need to improve facilities for their members by means of a hearing loop and loud speaker system and with the full support of the Parish Council and other user groups of the hall, they had reduced the amount of funding originally requested from the District Council from 50% of the total project to 34%.

Members were unanimous in their support for the project.

RESOLVED: That £1,107 be awarded from the Area North Community Grants Budget to the Village Artists Group, towards the installation of a hearing loop and public address system at Stoke-sub-Hamdon Village Hall, subject to the ownership and future maintenance of the Hearing Loop and the Public Address System to become the responsibility of the Village Hall Committee, and the standard conditions for community grants.

Reason: To contribute towards the installation of a hearing loop and public address system at Stoke-sub-Hamdon Village Hall

(Voting: Unanimous)

*Madelaine King-Oakley, Area Support Team Leader (North) - (01458) 257428
e-mail: madelaine.king-oakley@southsomerset.gov.uk*

79. South Somerset Association for Voluntary & Community Action Ltd – Appointment of a Member (agenda item 12)

The Chairman thanked Councillor Jill Beale for her many years representation on the South Somerset Association for Voluntary and Community Action Ltd and said that Councillor Keith Ronaldson had expressed an interest in representing SSDC on this organisation in future.

Members were in agreement with this.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Keith Ronaldson be appointed to the South Somerset Association for Voluntary & Community Action Ltd for the remainder of the 2007/08 Municipal Year.

(Voting: Unanimous)

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

80. Area Development Plan Monitoring (agenda item 13)

The Community Development Officer and the Area Support Team Leader (North) presented the report to Members and asked for Members comments.

During discussion, the following points were made:-

- The official opening of the Great Bow Yard would be 2nd November.
- The final proofs of the Market Town Interpretation boards would be signed off the following week.
- Consideration of a Community Hall in Langport could be part of planning gain discussions.
- Workshops were being arranged to encourage communities to progress their Parish Plan projects.
- SSDC officers attending Parish Council meetings to explain their service were well received.

- The proposed merger between South Somerset Homes and Arcadia could provide more affordable housing in the area.

RESOLVED: That the report be NOTED.

*Charlotte Jones, Head of Area Development (North) - (01458) 257401
e-mail: charlotte.jones@southsomerset.gov.uk*

81. Forward Plan – (For Information) (agenda item 14)

Councillor Rupert Cox requested that consideration be given to holding future informal meetings with officers and Members on the same day as the Area North Committee meetings to allow working Members to attend.

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*

82. Planning Appeals (agenda item 15)

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*

83. Planning Applications (agenda item 16)

Supplementary Report

The Chairman agreed to allow consideration of this item as a matter of urgency in accordance with Section 100B(4)(b) of Part VA of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) as funding options of the applicants may be compromised by any further delay.

07/01276/FUL - Erection of a single storey community village shop and café on Land adjacent Millennium Hall, Water Street, Seavington St Mary, Ilminster Somerset

The Development Control Deputy Team Leader advised that following the Committee's decision to grant permission for the community shop and café on 25th July 2007, subject to the applicants entering into a Section 106 Agreement to ensure the building was retained for community use, the Council's Solicitor had raised issues as to whether the Trustees of the Community Shop Association could in the future sell or let land no longer required for the charity's purpose. He therefore proposed that the Section 106 Agreement be amended to require that planning permission be revoked if the building ceased to operate as a community shop and café, or if the leasehold interest was sold or

assigned or if the applicants ceased to be registered as an Industrial and Provident Society. He said the applicants were content with this amendment.

Mr D Froome, speaking on behalf of the Seavington Community Shop and Services Association, confirmed that they were content with the proposed amendment.

The Planning Officer confirmed that if the building ceased to operate as a community shop and café, then its future would be reconsidered at that time.

Members briefly discussed the application and were in agreement that the proposed amendment was accepted.

RESOLVED: That the existing planning permission, granted on 25th July 2007 be amended to:-

That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to:-

1. That the applicant enters into a S106 Agreement requiring the planning permission to be surrendered and revoked if the applicant ceases to be registered as an Industrial and Provident Society or other similar corporate entity, or if its leasehold interest in the site is surrendered, assigned or forfeited or if the premises otherwise ceases to operate as a community shop and café.
2. The inclusion of appropriate conditions regarding:
 - The development to commence within 3 years
 - Materials to be submitted and agreed by the Development Control Unit
 - A suitable landscaping scheme to be agreed by the Development Control Unit

(Voting: 11 in favour, 1 abstention)

06/04122/COU – Retrospective planning application for the retention of extension to residential curtilage at Ashdown Farm, Witcombe Lane, Ash, Martock, Somerset TA12 6AJ

The Planning Assistant advised that this was a retrospective application for the change of use of the land to the north of the farmhouse. The pool and drive constructed on this land would be subject to a separate planning application. He noted one amendment to his report at Page 3, Considerations: that the applications for the swimming pool and carport had not been made retrospectively.

Mr D Davies spoke on behalf of the applicants. He said that neither the Parish Council or the Highway Authority had objected to the proposal, which the applicants had waited almost 12 months for a decision. The majority of the paddock was still stock grazing land and the residential curtilage applied for was in keeping with the size of the property. He said the applicants had planted native broadleaf trees to the front of the site and was willing to plant more and also to change the entrance gates if required.

One of the Ward Members, Councillor Patrick Palmer, regretted that the application had taken 11 months to be brought to Committee. He noted that there were no objectors to the application and the applicants had offered to accommodate the Planning Officers.

The other Ward Member, Councillor Ann Campbell, said she did not have any issue with the change of use of the land, but, the new gateway was not rural and she felt a five bar gate would be more in keeping.

During discussion, varying views were expressed, including:-

- The gate and colour of the driveway were out of keeping with the rural setting
- Dislike retrospective planning applications
- The application would be acceptable with strict conditions

The Planning Officer's recommendation to refuse the application was then proposed and seconded, however, on being put to the vote was declared lost (voting: 5 in favour, 6 against, 1 abstention).

Members then discussed applicable conditions for approval, which included removal of all permitted development rights for the whole site including sheds, outbuildings, walls, fencing, driveway and gates, the driveway materials to be agreed in writing and provision of a suitable landscaping scheme.

It was then proposed to grant permission, subject to these conditions and on being put to the vote, was carried. (Voting: 8 in favour, 1 against, 3 abstentions).

RESOLVED: That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to appropriate conditions, including:-

- removal of all permitted development rights for the whole site including sheds, outbuildings, walls, fencing, driveway and gates.
- driveway materials to be agreed in writing
- provision of a suitable landscaping scheme

(Voting: 8 in favour, 1 against, 3 abstentions)

07/03315/FUL – Erection of single storey side extension and two storey rear extension at 11 Beaufort Gardens, South Petherton, Somerset TA13 5HS

The Planning Officer advised that, following neighbours concerns regarding land stability in the area, he had consulted the Building Control Team Leader, who had visited the site but felt that there were unlikely to be any difficulties. He had said that if there were then these could be addressed through increased foundations. He noted one correction on his recommendation that should read 'northeast elevation' rather than 'southwest' on Recommendation Two.

Ms H Lazenby, agent for the applicants, thanked the Planning Officer for his supportive report. She said the existing house sat in a large plot of land and the overall height of the proposed extension would not be imposing. The extension would only overlook the roof of neighbouring houses and there would be no direct view into any habitable rooms or gardens of neighbours. Any issues with land stability would be addressed through Building Regulations and would be fully adhered to.

The Ward Member, Councillor Keith Ronaldson, said that although he noted the Parish Council's concerns, he felt that the surrounding 2 metre fencing and high hedge would conceal the extension from neighbours and on balance he agreed with the Planning Officer's recommendation to approve the application.

Members briefly discussed the application and were in agreement with the Ward Member that this was an acceptable development, subject to conditions proposed by the Planning Officer.

RESOLVED: That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to appropriate conditions, including:-

- The development to commence within 3 years
- No additional windows, including dormer windows, or other openings (including doors) shall be formed above ground floor level in the northeast elevation of the building, or other external alteration made without the prior express granting of planning permission

(Voting: 11 in favour, 1 abstention)

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

.....
Chairman