

Meeting AN 10M 10/11
Date 26.01.11

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Area North Committee** held in the Village Hall,
Norton Sub Hamdon on **Wednesday 26 January 2011**.

(2.00pm – 4.45pm)

Present:

Members: Patrick Palmer (Chairman)

Jill Beale	Roy Mills	Jo Roundell Greene
Ann Campbell	Derek Nelson	Sylvia Seal
Tony Carvin	Paull Robathan	Sue Steele (to 4.35pm)
Rupert Cox	Keith Ronaldson	Derek Yeomans

Officers:

Charlotte Jones	Area Development Manager (North)
Teresa Oulds	Community Regeneration Officer (North)
Alice Knight	Third Sector & Partnerships Manager
Jo Morgan	Community Cohesion Officer
Dominic Heath-Coleman	Planning Assistant
Adrian Noon	Area Lead North/East (Development Control)
Amy Cater	Solicitor
Becky Sanders	Committee Administrator

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

117. Minutes (Agenda item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2010, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

118. Apologies for Absence (Agenda item 2)

There were no apologies for absence as all members were present.

119. Declarations of Interest (Agenda item 3)

The Chairman and Councillor Ann Campbell informed members that they had sought advice from the Monitoring Officer and he had advised that they did not need to declare any interests regarding item 8 on the agenda, Martock Youth Project, as the applicant was the Martock Youth Centre Management Committee.

Councillor Sue Steele declared a personal and prejudicial interest in planning application 10/04567/LBC, as she was the applicant. She confirmed she would like to address the committee before leaving the room for discussion of the item.

120. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda item 4)

The Chairman reminded members that the next meeting of the Area North Committee would be held on Wednesday 23 February 2011 at the Village Hall, Chilthorne Domer.

121. Public Question Time (Agenda item 5)

The Chairman of Martock Parish Council informed members that the NatWest Bank had recently reduced the opening hours of the branch in Martock. The parish council had been notified of the changes but not consulted, and there was concern locally that the branch may close in the future. He explained that Martock Parish Council had written a response to the NatWest Bank in objection to the changes. He asked if the Area North Committee would also write a letter in support of the Martock Parish Council protest.

In response, after a short and lively discussion, the majority of members agreed that a letter should be sent to the NatWest Bank expressing the concern of the Area North Committee about the lack of consultation, disappointment at reduction in opening hours, but to acknowledge that there are alternative ways of banking, and to enquire if the reduction in hours is part of a national strategy.

RESOLVED: That a letter be written to the NatWest Bank expressing the concern of the Area North Committee about the decision to reduce opening hours at the Martock branch.

(Voting: 12 in favour, 1 abstention)

122. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda item 6)

The Chairman informed members that a tour of the new South Petherton Hospital would be arranged for March if sufficient members were interested, to which six responded positively.

He also mentioned that the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) town and parish council event – Local Services in a Changing Landscape would be held on 3 February. In response the Chairman of the LSP informed members that very few spaces were remaining and recommended anyone wishing to attend to contact the LSP Co-ordinator as soon as possible.

123. Reports from Members (Agenda item 7)

Councillor Sue Steele informed members that the Ilton Post Office would close on 3 February and that aspirations to host a service in the Village Hall had not come to fruition. Curry Mallet Post Office had also reduced opening hours to mornings only. She asked members to keep their knowledge up to date regarding local private and public community transport schemes.

She also noted that she understood Business Link would be going. Councillor Rupert Cox responded and explained that the information was correct and the service would be replaced with primarily web-based support.

Councillor Rupert Cox commented that members that cricket equipment had been stolen from the Long Sutton Cricket Club. He acknowledged the support received from Langport and Huish Cricket Club. He also noted the completion of the roundabout in Huish Episcopi and thanked fellow councillors for their support, particularly Councillor Derek Yeomans.

124. Area North Community Grants – Martock Youth Project (Agenda item 8) (Executive Decision)

The Community Regeneration Officer (North) explained that all information was contained within the agenda report and noted this was the third year of the three year Service Level Agreement. She emphasised that the project was not as a result of reductions in youth provision by the county council.

She introduced Roger Powell – Chairman of Martock Parish Council and Claire Cruwys - Youth Development Officer (Martock Parish Council) and explained that they were in attendance to give a brief presentation on the Youth Project and to answer any questions.

The Youth Development Officer commented that young people had taken ownership of the Youth Club and there were many good success stories of what had been achieved. She gave a brief presentation to highlight some of the outcomes of the project including:

- Cycle schemes and Saturday Clubs
- Healthy eating advice
- Gold Star Awards – winner for Young Volunteer of the Year
- Message to young drivers - role play of vehicle accident with the emergency services
- Stone mason project – artwork in situ in the precinct
- Day trips
- Independent living skills for young people aged 16+

The Chairman of Martock Parish Council noted that the project had started long before the Somerset County Council cuts had been proposed. Discussions were now taking place with neighbouring parishes to see what could be delivered to try and preserve youth services in the local area, as more could be gained by working together. In response to a query about the future of the existing Youth Centre, he explained that there were aspirations to find another venue or building for a dedicated Youth Centre, as the existing building was constantly requiring maintenance and a drain on resources, but in the medium term the building had to be kept going.

In response to queries from members, the Area Development Manager (North) confirmed that there were no similar projects running in Area North and Martock had been the only example with a Service Level Agreement. She also noted that Area North was not currently providing direct revenue funding to other youth clubs (other than Business Rate relief), although from time to time grants had been awarded to one-off projects.

Members were unanimously supportive of the work achieved by the Martock Youth Project. The Chairman thanked the Parish Council Chairman and the Youth Development Officer for their informative presentation and attending to answer questions, and commended the Youth Development Officer for her enthusiasm and commitment.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That a grant of £3,000 allocated from the Area North Community Grants budget 2010-11 be awarded to Martock Parish Council and Martock Youth Centre Management Committee towards the Martock Youth Project, as third payment of the three year service level agreement, subject to the South Somerset District Council standard conditions for Community Grants and the fulfilment of the performance plan.
 2. That the further discussions underway, led by the Martock Youth Project, with neighbouring parishes which are considering how the project could be developed across the area be noted and endorsed.

Reason: To approve the award of funding for the third part of a three-year Service Level Agreement.

(Voting: Unanimous in favour)

*Teresa Oulds, Community Regeneration Officer (North)
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125. Equalities Update Report (Agenda item 9)

Councillor Ann Campbell, Theme Adviser for Social Inclusion and Equalities introduced Jo Morgan Community Cohesion Officer who is the lead role for the Council in ensuring corporate compliance with all government legislation and promoting equality and diversity throughout the district. Councillor Campbell explained that in the 18 months since Jo had joined SSDC, equalities work within the authority had moved on a great deal. She congratulated her on all the hard work undertaken to provide equality through our services and how this role provided an excellent contact point for the local people.

The Community Cohesion Officer then presented the report and with the aid of slides highlighted to members:

- the statutory duties and responsibilities referring to the Single Equality Scheme written in regard to the Equality Act 2011
- Equality Impact Assessments to ensure all services meet the necessary requirements
- the role of Equality Champions - representatives from all key services
- training in July 2011 for newly elected members with invite extended to long standing members should they require it
- examples in practice to help the community including a clipboard with hearing loop and RADAR keys

The Community Cohesion Officer also explained to members the various projects and support undertaken throughout the district. This included schemes that benefit everyone in the community:

- Accessible village halls

- Actiontrack project – Stoke Sub Hamdon Priory
- Gold Star Awards – good equalities in practice
- Gypsy and Traveller Forum – two way communication
- Community offices and information centres – local access to services
- A one-day event that brought religion and beliefs together in South Somerset
- New 2 Somerset film project - a DVD produced to explore what it was like to be new to an area. The police had used the DVD for induction training as had Yeovil District Hospital.

She also explained the role of the Council's Community Link Worker, based in Chard, and funded from a levy paid by workers and students from A8 Countries. This was part of a project together with the Midwest European Communities Association (MECA) to provide a link between migrant communities and public/private/voluntary sectors. She also circulated details of various dates and times of the support surgeries for migrant communities that take place throughout the district.

Portfolio Holder, Councillor Jo Roundell Greene noted that equalities was embedded in everything SSSC do and suggested that all councillors should attend the training in July, not just those who were newly elected.

Members raised several comments including:

- Equalities should apply to everything including planning legislation
- There will always be anomalies, it's about doing what we can
- Equalities is important and is not the same as respecting peoples differences

In response to questions from members the Community Cohesion Officer explained that: She was still working her way through the specific details of the Equality Act 2010 and that a specific brief would be available about using public procurement to improve equality and also a guide for private clubs and other associations.

The Chairman thanked the Community Cohesion Officer for her informative report and presentation.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted

*Jo Morgan, Community Cohesion Officer
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126. Area North – Asset Management (Agenda item 10)

The Area Development Manager (North) introduced the report and commented that the Third Sector and Partnerships Manager was present as her role included dealing with asset transfers to community groups. It was explained that there were over 90 pieces of land or property in Area North and that the report gave details of the Asset Transfer Policy. The Area Development Manager (North) circulated copies of the asset register and explained that it did not form part of the report but was information for members to take away and look at in detail. Specific concerns or proposals could then be discussed with her, the Third Sector and Partnerships Manager or the Senior Land and Property Officer.

The Third Sector and Partnerships Manager informed members that the policy had been adopted in 2007 and recently refreshed. Crowshute House in Chard was given as an example of a recent asset transfer.

During the short, ensuing discussion members raised various comments including:

- All ward members should look at the list of assets and see if there were any that may be of wider benefit if transferred
- Could the small areas of retained land from the housing stock transfer be utilised for residents parking
- Querying the current position with ownership of Burlingham Barn
- Some land assets within housing areas needed to be retained for amenity value

The Chairman thanked the officers for their report.

RESOLVED: It was resolved that:

- 1) The report be noted, and that key areas of interest were highlighted to assist with the preparation of the revised Asset Management Strategy.
- 2) The guidance on the SSDC Asset Transfer policy be noted.

*Donna Parham, Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services)
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Alice Knight, Third Sector and Partnership Manager
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127. Area North Committee Forward Plan (Agenda item 11)

There were no updates to the forward plan.

RESOLVED: That the Area North Committee Forward Plan be noted.

*Becky Sanders, Committee Administrator
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128. Planning Appeals (Agenda item 12)

Councillors noted the details contained in the agenda report, which informed members of planning appeals that were lodged, dismissed or allowed.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

*David Norris, Development Manager (01935) 462382
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129. Planning Applications (Agenda item 13)

The Committee considered the applications set out in the schedule attached to the agenda and the planning officer gave further information at the meeting and, where appropriate, advised members of letters received as a result of consultations since the agenda had been prepared.

(Copies of all letters reported may be inspected in the planning applications files, which constitute the background papers for this item).

10/02333/FUL – Alterations and the erection of two storey extension to dwellinghouse and the formation of a new vehicular access at The Beeches, The Hill, Langport. Applicant: Miss Anne Cook

The Planning Assistant introduced the application as shown in the agenda report and commented that a number of objections had been received. There had been queries raised as to the validity of some of the objections, but this was a process issue and not a planning consideration. He updated members that since the agenda had been published further letters had been received, in objection and in support, but none had raised any additional points to those already included in the agenda report.

He showed members a number of slides to indicate the location, existing and proposed elevations, the proposed new access and photographs of the existing dwelling and site. He also explained that the applicant had submitted some images which gave a 3D perspective of the proposals, these were shown to members as part of the officer's presentation but it was noted they were for illustrative purposes only. The officer noted that the plans indicated that overlooking on the neighbouring property would be minimal but acknowledged there would be some impact due to the proximity to the boundary, but it was not considered enough to recommend refusal.

It was noted that applicants had had extensive pre-application discussions and conservation officers were content with the proposed application and that the new access was an acceptable compromise. Key considerations were deemed to be impact on:

- The character and setting of the listed building
- The setting of nearby listed buildings
- The character of the conservation area
- Highway Safety
- Residential amenity

The planning officer commented that issues raised by the neighbour objection regarding residential amenity being affected by overbearing and shadowing was shown in the agenda report.

Mr D Davies, representing the occupiers of Old School House, neighbours to The Beeches, spoke in objection to the application. He noted that the Old School House and The Beeches together were one listed building. He commented that the scale, height and design of the proposals would destroy architectural features and the integrity of the listed building. The proposals were very prominent and would cause afternoon and evening shadowing. He further commented that the site was near to the Grade 1 listed Hanging Chapel and that the proposal would not enhance the area.

Mr B Winetrobe, objector, commented that he would support repairs and work to the dwelling if it enhanced the listed building, but the scale and footprint of the proposal was so large that it could almost be considered to be a new building not an extension. He reminded members that a recent application for a new access in a stone wall at a nearby property had been refused by the committee and asked for there to be consistency in decisions.

Mrs P Clarke, spoke in objection to the application and commented that she was concerned about highway issues. Although the proposal was within a 20mph limit, the speed was frequently breached, and the road was used as a popular short cut. She was also concerned about the proximity to the Hanging Chapel as the photographs didn't accurately indicate the scale. She also asked for consistency following members decision about the nearby application that had recently been refused.

In response to the public statements, the Area Lead reminded members that the recent application referred to was at Gateway Cottage and the application had been for access and parking only. On that application the officer had recommended approval but committee had taken the decision to refuse.

Miss D Frankpitt, spoke on behalf of the applicant's agent and read his statement. The proposal was not considered to be intensive development and had been designed to follow the same form as the existing building and was at a lower level. Restrictions in glazing and the design would minimise any overlooking, and it was too far away to impact on the setting of the Hanging Chapel. Regarding access, the proposal was to reinstate the original school access, and close up the unsafe access via Bonds Pool.

Miss A Cook, applicant, commented that they were aware the site was in a special area of Langport, and had sought the advice of planning and conservation officers at an early stage. She noted that they had tried to be open and responsive in the planning process and had attended meetings, amended plans and held an open day. She commented that the proposal would not alter the existing dwelling layout.

Ward Member, Councillor Roy Mills, commented that he had concerns about the application but acknowledged the applicant had made concessions. Regarding highway safety he noted that upon close inspection of the boundary wall it was possible to see that an old opening had been blocked up.

During the ensuing discussion members made varying comments including:

- habitable listed buildings would always be subject to change
- the junction of Bonds Pool with The Hill was poor
- the design of the proposal was interesting and innovative, and would hardly be seen from the road
- concern about materials and the proposal not sitting comfortably with the existing house.
- boundary wall was low and fairly insignificant
- access differed from that of the Gateway application for height.

It was proposed and seconded to accept the officer's recommendation to approve the application subject to the conditions stated in the agenda report, and on being put to the vote was carried.

RESOLVED: That application 10/2333/FUL be APPROVED subject to the conditions stated in the agenda report.

(Voting: 10 in favour, 3 against, 0 abstentions)

10/02334/LBC – Alterations and the erection of two storey extension to dwellinghouse and the formation of a new vehicular access at The Beeches, The Hill, Langport. Applicant: Miss Anne Cook

This application was discussed in conjunction with the previous application 10/02333/FUL and comments made on that application also refer to this application.

It was proposed and seconded to accept the officers recommendation to approve the application subject to the conditions stated in the agenda report, and on being put to the vote was carried.

RESOLVED: That application 10/2334/LBC be APPROVED subject to the conditions stated in the agenda report.

(Voting: 10 in favour, 3 against, 0 abstentions)

10/04567/LBC – Demolition and rebuilding of unsafe west gable end wall at Colliers, Blind Lane, Isle Abbotts. Applicant: Mrs S Steele.

(Councillor Sue Steele declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this application, as she was the applicant. She addressed committee before leaving the room prior to the officer's presentation and discussion of the application.)

The applicant, Councillor Sue Steele, commented that the gable wall was known to have been moving for about 150 years, but the harsh weather of winter 2009/2010 had made the situation much worse. Dumpy bags were now protecting the wall. She was very concerned about the structural damage and wished to remedy it as soon as possible. *(Councillor Sue Steele then left the meeting).*

The Planning Officer introduced the application and explained that the only reason that the application was before committee was because the applicant was an SSDC Councillor. Slides were shown indicating the location and the elevation plans, plus photographs of the existing damaged gable end wall. He commented that the Conservation Officer recommended an additional condition requiring a detailed specification of works to be submitted prior to commencement of works to cater for any minor changes required due to Building Regulations.

There was a very brief discussion in which members expressed unanimous support to approve the application as per the officer recommendation.

RESOLVED: That application 10/04567/LBC be APPROVED subject to the conditions stated in the agenda report and the additional condition:

No works shall commence until a detailed specification of works has been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic interests of the listed building.

(Voting: Unanimous in favour)

*David Norris, Development Manager
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Chairman