

MEETING AW.12:0708  
DATE 16:04:08

## **South Somerset District Council**

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Area West Committee** held in Merriott Village Hall, Merriott on **Wednesday, 16th April 2008.**

(5.30 p.m. – 6.25 p.m.)

**Present:**

**Members:**                    Kim Turner                    (In the Chair)

Simon Bending  
Michael Best  
David Bulmer  
Geoff Clarke  
Robin Munday

Ric Pallister  
Ros Roderigo (from 5.45 p.m.)  
Andrew Turpin  
Linda Vijeh (from 5.45 p.m. until 6.15 p.m.)  
Martin Wale

**Officers:**

Andrew Gillespie	Head of Area Development (West)
Zoe Harris	Community Regeneration Officer
Fiona Tame	Community Development Officer
David Norris	Planning Team Leader (North/West)
Andrew Blackburn	Committee Administrator

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

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, members held a minute's silence as a mark of respect and in remembrance of Cllr. Jean Smith who had died suddenly on 20th March 2008.

### **155. Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 19th March 2008, and of the Area West Community Forum (Chard) Sub-Committee held on 12th March 2008, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as correct records, were signed by the Chairman.

### **156. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Nicci Court, Nigel Mermagen, Dan Shortland and Angie Singleton.

### **157. Declarations of Interest**

The following members declared a personal interest in respect of the consideration of grant applications from various local organisations (agenda item 6 – Area Development Grants) as they had been appointed by the Council to serve on those organisations:-

Cllr. Geoffrey Clarke  
Cllr. Linda Vijeh

Crewkerne Leisure Management (Aqua Centre)  
Chard and District Museum  
Chard Young People's Centre

Cllr. Mike Best declared a personal interest in the application for discretionary rate relief submitted by Crewkerne Leisure Management (Aqua Centre) (agenda item 6 – Area Development Grants) because he was a director of that organisation.

Cllr. Geoffrey Clarke declared a personal interest in the application for grant submitted by Crewkerne Heritage Centre (agenda item 6 – Area Development Grants) because he was Chairman of the Trustees.

Cllr. Martin Wale declared a personal interest in the application for grant submitted by Crowshute House, Chard as, arising from his position as Mayor of Chard, he was president of that organisation. He also declared a personal interest in the application for discretionary rate relief submitted by CRESTA because he had been appointed by Chard Town Council to serve on the management committee of that organisation.

Cllr. Ros Roderigo declared a personal interest in the application for grant submitted by Crowshute House, Chard because she served on the management committee of that organisation.

The above members indicated that they would have a prejudicial interest and leave the meeting if any discussion took place on the relative merits of the applications and the amount of grant to be awarded to individual organisations, which had an impact on or involved the group in respect of which they had a personal interest.

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## **158. Public Question Time**

No questions or comments were raised by members of the public, representatives of parish/town councils or county councillors.

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## **159. Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman thanked members for attending the Area West members' workshop that was held on Wednesday, 2nd April 2008.

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## **160. Area Development Grants (Agenda item 6) (Executive Decision)**

Reference was made to the agenda report and the Committee considered applications received by the Council from local organisations within Area West requesting financial assistance for the financial year 2008/09. The report also informed members of changes that had been made to the Council's Community Grants Policy.

Reference was also made to the supplementary report of the Head of Area Development (West), which was circulated to those present at the meeting. The report contained further information regarding the application for grant submitted by Chard Young People's Centre and explained the reasons for the recommendation to award a grant of £4,905. Members were also presented with an amended summary table of the grant applications, which took account of the recommended award to Chard Young People's Centre. The Committee was asked to approve the award of grants in the total sum of £51,566.

The Committee noted the comments of Mr. B. Dillon, Chairman of Chard Museum, who spoke in support of the organisation's application for grant.

During the ensuing discussion, a member referred to the copy of the Community Grants Assessment Form attached to the agenda and suggested that copies of the completed assessment forms in respect of each grant application should be included in the agenda report for members' information when considering the award of grants in the future.

Reference was also made to the position whereby, in the case of some organisations, the Council awarded grants to cover the payment of rent for premises owned by the District Council and it was suggested that it may be preferable for those organisations to have full repairing leases at a peppercorn rent in respect of the building they occupied thereby removing the dependency on District Council funding. Members were of the view that the Scrutiny Committee should be requested to review best practice for funding the use of Council buildings by voluntary and community organisations.

The Committee noted the comments of a member who referred to the differences in the level of contributions made by Town Councils, particular reference being made to Chard Town Council from whom no funding had been committed to the local organisations applying for a grant from the District Council. He did not feel that this situation was acceptable and was of the view that the Committee would have to look at this issue in the future.

Members considered the applications for grant as listed in the agenda en bloc and were agreed by the Committee.

**RESOLVED:** (1) that the changes that have been made to the SSDC Community Grants Policy be noted;

(2) that the Head of Area Development (West) be authorised to develop Service Legal Agreements with the organisations listed below to ensure that they remain eligible for core funding for 2009/10;

(3) that financial assistance be awarded as indicated below subject to the standard grant conditions:-

Ile Youth Centre, Ilminster	£3,772
West One Youth and Community Centre, Crewkerne	£3,468
Crewkerne Heritage Centre	£3,914
Crewkerne Aqua Centre	£9,129
Chard Museum	£9,500
Crowshute House, Chard	£11,875
CRESTA	£5,003
Chard Young People's Centre	£4,905

(4) that Scrutiny Committee be requested to review best practice for funding the use of Council buildings by voluntary and community organisations.

**Reason:** To determine applications received by the Council for financial assistance.

(10 in favour, 0 against).

*(Zoe Harris, Community Regeneration Officer – (01460) 260423)*  
*(zoe.harris@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

**161. Report on Opportunity Chard held on Wednesday, 12th March 2008 (Agenda item 7)**

The Community Development Officer summarised the agenda report, which updated the Committee on the outcome of Opportunity Chard, the community forum event that took place at the Guildhall, Chard on 12th March 2008.

During the ensuing discussion, the Committee noted the comments of a member who referred to the large number of people who were not able to gain access to the main hall to hear the presentations because it had reached its full capacity and spoke of the need to look at accommodating those people aged 60 and over who may have to rely on public transport. Another member commented that the largest venue in Chard had been used. In referring to the counting of the votes, a member suggested that it may be better to use some form of grid system to make counting easier.

Comment was expressed that the evening had been very positive and had brought the community together. The Chairman congratulated the officers for their work in organising the event.

The update on the outcome of the Opportunity Chard event was noted.

**NOTED.**

*(Fiona Tame, Community Development Officer – (01460) 260359)  
(fiona.tame@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

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**162. Reports from Members on Outside Organisations (Agenda item 8)**

No reports were made by members who represented the Council on outside organisations.

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**163. Feedback on Planning Applications Referred to the Regulation Committee (Agenda item 9)**

There was no feedback to report as there were no planning applications that had been referred recently to the Regulation Committee.

**NOTED.**

*(David Norris, Planning Team Leader (North/West) – (01935) 462382)  
(david.norris@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

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**164. Planning Appeals (Agenda item 10)**

The Committee noted the details contained in the agenda report, which informed members of planning appeals lodged and dismissed.

**NOTED.**

*(David Norris, Planning Team Leader (North/West) – (01935) 462382)  
(david.norris@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

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## 165. Venue for Next Meeting (Agenda item 11)

The Committee noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Committee would be held at the Shrubbery Hotel, Station Road, Ilminster on Wednesday, 21st May 2008 at 5.30 p.m.

**NOTED.**

*(Andrew Blackburn, Committee Administrator – (01460) 260441)  
(andrew.blackburn@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

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## 166. Confidential Item

**RESOLVED:** that the following item be considered in closed session by virtue of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, i.e. information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) as it is considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption from the Access to Information Rules outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

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## 167. Conversion of Buildings into 39 Units and Erection of 13 New Dwellings – Land at Tail Mill, Merriott (App. No. 07/02775/FUL) (Agenda item 12)

Reference was made to the confidential agenda report and the Planning Team Leader reported that the Committee, at its meeting on the 16th January 2008, had asked for an independent assessment to be made of this scheme to assess whether there was a clear justification for the increase in numbers of dwellings and whether there would be sufficient profit for the Council to require planning contributions.

The Planning Team Leader reported that he had referred the scheme to the District Valuer who had robustly assessed the financial details submitted by the applicant and used their own experience of the housing market and construction costs in order to make an informed recommendation. The District Valuer had also given an opinion as to the reasonableness of the applicant making a developer's profit from the site.

The Planning Team Leader further reported that the suggestion regarding the potential to claw back any further profit from the developer had also been discussed with the District Valuer who was of the view that this would be extremely difficult to achieve and would be a further potential risk for any lender.

Details of the conclusions of the District Valuer in respect of these matters were reported to the Committee. Having regard to those conclusions, the Planning Team Leader recommended that no planning contributions be sought from the applicant other than for highway works already agreed.

Members, having noted the District Valuer's assessment of the financial details submitted by the applicant, indicated that they were satisfied with the conclusions reached and agreed that no planning contributions should be sought from the applicant other than for highway works already agreed.

On a separate issue relating to the conditions that were to be imposed in respect of flooding, the Planning Team Leader reported that discussions had taken place and it was considered that the conditions proposed were acceptable, however, they should be supplemented by additional conditions from the previous approval.

**RESOLVED:** that having noted the District Valuer's assessment of the financial details submitted by the applicant in respect of planning application no. 07/02775/FUL, no planning contributions be sought from the applicant other than for highway works already agreed.

(9 in favour, 0 against)

*(David Norris, Planning Team Leader (North & West) – (01935) 462382)*  
*(david.norris@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

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Chairman