

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
WENTWORTH CENTRAL AREA ASSEMBLY
HELD AT THE RAWMARSH LEISURE CENTRE
ON WEDNESDAY 26TH JUNE, 2002**

Present:-

Councillor K. Goulty	Ward 17 (Rawmarsh West) (in the Chair)
Mr. S. Abson	IDP Programme Manager, RMBC
Mrs. H. Anderson	Resident
Mr. P. Blunn	Resident
Mrs. E. Booth	Chair of Rawmarsh and Parkgate Community Action Group
Mr. T. Boulton	Resident
Mrs. H. Cahill	Rawmarsh and Parkgate Partnership
Ms. J. Curran	Community Planning Officer, RMBC
Mr. M. Durham	Rawmarsh and Parkgate Partnership
Mr. E. Frost	Resident and Rawmarsh Hall Sub-Group
Mr. A. Harston	Legal and Democratic Services, RMBC
Mr. C. Hawley	Resident
Mrs. J. Hawley	Resident
Mr. A. Langden	Resident
Mrs. L. Maltby	Resident
Mrs. S. Mason	Rawmarsh and Parkgate Partnership
Mr. R. Overton	Community Against Drugs Co-ordinator
Mrs. D. Roberts	Chief Executive's Office, RMBC
Mr. J. Robinson	Manor Farm Tenants and Residents Association
Councillor G. A. Russell	Ward 16 (Rawmarsh East)
Mr. A. Shaw	Area Assembly Officer, RMBC
Mrs. G. Sherratt	Resident
Mr. J. Staniforth	Resident
Mr. A. Stocks	Resident
Mrs. G. Stones	Resident
Miss L. Stones	Resident
Mr. C. Thomas	Chief Executive's Office, RMBC
Mr. C. Vines	Visitor
Mrs. M. Vines	Visitor
Councillor G. Whelbourn	Ward 17 (Rawmarsh West)
Mr. P. Woodcock	Resident
Councillor S. Wright	Ward 16 (Rawmarsh East)

Apologies:-

Mrs. M. Ball	Area Assembly Support, RMBC
Ms. R. Barley	Rawmarsh Against Tipping
Mr. G. Canby	Fitzwilliam (Wentworth) Estates
Councillor J. Carr	Ward 17 (Rawmarsh West)
Mr. B. Darby	Resident
Mr. W. Farrier	Manor Farm Tenants and Residents Association
Mr. D. Greenway	Wentworth Central Community Fund
Mrs. J. Greenwood	Neighbourhood Warden Manager
Mrs. M. Hayes	Education, Culture and Leisure Services, RMBC
Mrs. I. Schofield	Resident
Mr. M. Schofield	Resident
Councillor R. Stone	Ward 16 (Rawmarsh East)
Mr. V. Ward	Resident
Mr. B. Williams	Rawmarsh Allotments

14. INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

15. MINUTES OF THE AREA ASSEMBLY

Agreed:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 1st May, 2002 be approved as a correct record.

16. MATTERS ARISING**(i) RAWMARSH HALL SUB-GROUP UPDATE**

Ted Frost asked about the planting arrangements. The Chairman reported he had asked for what had been provided before and was assured that the flower bed would be planted but not the borders.

(ii) ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Jim Robinson asked about progress in responding to the consultation paper. The Chairman referred to the meeting of the anti-social behaviour sub-group and that the response would be based on the minutes of that meeting. It was accepted that this Assembly could not meet to finalise the response before the 12th July, 2002 deadline.

17. PERIODIC ELECTORAL REVIEW OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL'S ELECTORAL WARD ARRANGEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Dawn Roberts and Chris Thomas who, with the aid of a computerised display, gave a presentation describing the purpose of, and arrangements for, the period electoral review.

The presentation covered:-

- What is the Periodic Electoral Review? : a review of Council size, ward boundaries and ward names, last performed in 1978.
- What is the purpose of the review? : to ensure every Councillor represents a similar number of electors meaning that all electors have the same access to a Councillor and that Councillors have the same chance of being elected
- the current situation : 22 wards and 66 Councillors with wide variations in electoral size
- size of the Council : proposal to reduce size of the Council by 3 Councillors to 63
with 3 Councillors per ward, this means 21 wards

- 2006 electorate is predicted to be 195,772 resulting in each ward having a target electorate of 9322
- ward boundaries : 9,322 electors per ward (+ or – 10%) is the prime consideration
 - not party political
 - unable to change parish boundaries
 - try to represent natural communities and use real features, such as motorways and rivers
- ward names
- changes in Wentworth Central : plans submitted showing current variance from target electorate (-2,370) and proposed variances based on the submitted consultation proposal
- the Review Timetable:-
 - all comments to be received by the Borough Council by 26th July, 2002
 - Borough Council submits final preferred proposal to the Boundary Committee by 27th August, 2002
 - Boundary Committee for England publishes its draft recommendations on 11th February, 2003 and invites comments
 - comments to be returned to the Boundary Committee by 21st March, 2003
 - Boundary Committee publishes its final recommendations on 22nd July, 2003
 - 6th May, 2004 elections for all seats on the Borough Council
 - review of parliamentary constituency boundaries begins during 2005

Dawn concluded by stressing the importance of returning any comments to the Borough Council by 26th July, 2002 and indicating the various methods such comments could be submitted.

All present were provided with plans of the proposed new ward layout, a summary report of the review and a leaflet with which they could return their comments to the Borough Council. Everyone was also given the

opportunity to view large scale plans and computerised displays of the proposed new Ward layout.

The Chairman opened the debate by referring to the proposed new ward of Rawmarsh, indicating that Manor Farm, Parkgate and Kilnhurst were proposed for other wards. He stressed that every ward had to change as the Boundary Committee was only interested in numbers and that each Councillor should represent approximately 3,000 electors. He also stressed that this was only a consultative document and was here for the comments of any individual.

A lengthy question and answer session ensued and the following comments/issues were particularly covered:-

- changing the boundaries was pointless, it was more important to get people out to vote. The Chairman stressed that this exercise was unrelated to voter turnout
- views were expressed that the Council size should remain at 22 wards/66 Councillors
- concern was repeatedly expressed that Rawmarsh appeared to be reducing from 6 Councillors to 3 Councillors. The Chairman reiterated that the purpose was to have each Councillor representing the same number of electors and that the electorate would have equal access to a Councillor
- concern was expressed that Manor Farm, Kilnhurst and Parkgate no longer featured in the proposed new Rawmarsh Ward. The Chairman read out the adverse effect that inclusion of any of those areas in the ward would have on the target electorate figures
- concern was expressed that school catchment areas would be affected. The Chairman assured the Assembly that the ward boundary changes would have no impact at all on school catchment areas
- reference was made to the Integrated Development Plan in relation to Rawmarsh, Parkgate and Kilnhurst and also the Rawmarsh and Parkgate Partnership and concern was expressed at the impact of the ward boundary changes. The Chairman again referred to the changes being limited to electoral ward boundaries. Parish boundaries were not changing and therefore there should be no impact on the partnership boundaries. As an example, reference was made to the fact that the warden scheme, and its funding, should not be affected
- concern was expressed that information for some funding regimes was calculated on a ward by ward basis and what impact the new arrangements would have. Dawn Roberts indicated that statistics at ward level would be collected from the new ward areas. Information would be developed for natural communities

- further concerns were echoed stressing the need to ensure that inward funding for the area was not affected and specific reference was made to Objective 1 monies already being utilised in certain areas of the ward. The Chairman agreed that it was vital to preserve funding but indicated that the Boundary Committee had no interest in such considerations
- a specific concern was raised in respect of tenants on Manor Farm in that if they were no longer to be part of Rawmarsh would they have to use different housing offices which may not be as accessible. The Chairman stressed that housing offices do now transcend ward boundaries and Alan Shaw confirmed that the housing office network was such that rent could be paid by anybody at any housing office. It was stressed that this information should be widely advertised to allay fears, particularly of the elderly
- concern was expressed that, even based on the proposal to reduce the Council size to 21 wards/63 Councillors, the Council had considered four options and yet only one proposal was being subjected to public consultation. Specific reference was made to Plan B which showed hardly any variance. It was argued strongly that the public was being asked to comment on a proposal that could not be compared/contrasted with other options

The Chairman indicated that dozens of options were considered when the exercise began and that some maps equalised wards but bore no relevance to natural communities

- concerns were expressed at the very short timescales for consultation, particularly when the position had not been reviewed since 1978. Dawn Roberts elaborated on the consultation process and stressed that comments could be forwarded direct to the Boundary Commission rather than the Council, which did afford a little more time
- concerns were echoed about the limited timescales for consultation and it was held as ridiculous to suggest that individuals could draw up their own proposals for submission to the Boundary Commission

The debate concluded with requests from certain members of the Assembly as to whether the other three options referred to could be made available on the internet or on display in libraries. It was not felt that this would be possible.

The Chairman encouraged everyone to submit their comments via the methods identified.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) TELECOMMUNICATIONS MAST

Ted Frost referred to the mast on the former Rawmarsh Baths site and that the lease renewal would be considered shortly.

Agreed:- That the Officers and Cabinet Member for Economic and Development Services be reminded of this Assembly's views that the lease should not be renewed and the mast be removed.

19. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That the next scheduled meeting be held at the Kilnhurst Community Centre on Wednesday, 31st July, 2002 at 4.30 p.m.