

WENTWORTH CENTRAL AREA ASSEMBLY
held at the Parkgate Library
on Wednesday 8th January, 2003

Present:-

Councillor K. Goulty	Ward 17 (Rawmarsh West) (in the Chair)
Mr. S. Abson	IDP Programme Manager, RMBC
Mrs. H. Anderson	Resident
Mrs. M. Ball	Area Assembly Support Officer, RMBC
Mr. A. Barnfield	Manor Farm Tenants and Residents Association
Mr. G. Beverley	Resident
Mrs. E. Booth	Chair, Rawmarsh and Parkgate Community Action Group
Mrs. A. Brown	Rawmarsh Youth Centre
Mrs. D. Brown	Resident
Mr. P. Brown	Resident
Mr. A. Crowley	Housing Services, RMBC
Ms. J. Curran	Community Planning Officer, RMBC
Mr. M. Durham	Chair, Rawmarsh and Parkgate Partnership
Mr. W. Farrier	Manor Farm Tenants and Resident Association
Mrs. M. Frith	Resident
Mr. P. Frith	Resident
Mr. E. Frost	Resident and Rawmarsh Hall Sub-Group
Miss L. Gaimster	The A Team, Young People's Action Group
Mr. D. Greenway	Chair, Wentworth Central Community Fund
Mrs. J. Greenwood	Neighbourhood Warden Manager
A. Hackett	Culture, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Service, RMBC
Mr. A. Harston	Legal and Democratic Services, RMBC
Mrs. J. Hawley	Resident
Miss. P. Moss	The A Team, Young People's Action Group
Mrs. N. Platt	Parkgate Youth Centre
Mrs. E. Read	Resident
Mrs. R. Reavey	Young People's Services, RMBC
Mr. J. Robinson	Manor Farm Tenants and Residents Association
Councillor G. A. Russell	Ward 16 (Rawmarsh East)
Mrs. C. Searby	Rotherham Primary Care Trust (Wentworth Locality)
Mr. A. Shaw	Area Assembly Officer, RMBC
Mr. D. Shaw	Resident
Mr. J. Staniforth	Resident
Mrs. R. Tootill	Rawmarsh Library
Mr. D. Toy	Resident
Mrs. B. Turner	Resident
Mr. C. Vines	Visitor
Mrs. M. Vines	Visitor
Mr. N. Westby	South Yorkshire Times
Councillor G. Whelbourn	Ward 17 (Rawmarsh West)
Mr. T. Williams	Resident

Mrs. P. Woodcock Resident

Apologies:-

Ms. R. Barley	Rawmarsh Against Tipping
Mrs. W. Billups	Housing Services Panel
Mr. M. Brown	Chair, Rawmarsh Hall Sub-Group
Mrs. H. Cahill	Rawmarsh and Parkgate Partnership
Mr. G. Canby	Fitzwilliam (Wentworth) Estates
Mr. A. Smith	Rawmarsh Against Tipping
Councillor R. Stone	Ward 16 (Rawmarsh East)
Mrs. G. Stones	Resident
Miss L. Stones	Resident
Mr. V. Ward	Resident

55. INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman, in welcoming everyone to the meeting, wished everybody a happy new year. Roxie Reavey (Youth Officer, Young People's Services) introduced herself to the meeting, indicating that she had replaced Tim Powell as the Service's representative.

56. MINUTES OF THE AREA ASSEMBLY

Agreed:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 6th November, 2002 be approved as a correct record, subject to it being made clear in item 45 (Youth Update) that the young people using the Parkgate Youth Centre were happy with their current facilities and building in Parkgate.

57. MATTERS ARISING

(i) TELECOMMUNICATIONS MAST/RAWMARSH BATHS SITE

Ted Frost, in requesting whether or not any progress had been made, indicated that he had met Phil Rodgers and Phil Gill on site and asked for a report, but had been told nothing could be done pending clarification of CISWO's position in respect of the site.

The Chairman read out correspondence from Stuart Thurlbeck (Planning Services) indicating that planning permission had been refused for two applications on the site relating to a replacement mast and the siting of ten cabins and extension to a compound. It was also noted that there was a moratorium on further telecommunications masts and equipment on Council owned property. The site was within the Council's property portfolio and would be subject to an options appraisal in the near future. The Council's Property Board would, in the light of that appraisal, make a decision on the future of the site. At present, a potential CISWO legal interest in the site was being investigated.

The existing mast was on an annually renewable lease arrangement that could be terminated by the Council with a year's notice. However, such action was open to legal challenge and would only be successful if it was coordinated with the future use of the site.

(ii) ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Councillor Whelbourn undertook to ascertain the progress regarding the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel's review of anti-social behaviour and keep this Assembly's representatives on the review (Jim Robinson and Wilf Farrier) informed.

(iii) YELLOW LINES ON BELLOWS ROAD

Ted Frost confirmed he was referring to yellow lines on the shopping centre side of Bellows Road not the other side as referred to by the Engineering Service.

Agreed:- That Alan Shaw and the Chairman pursue this matter.

(iv) RAWMARSH SHOPPING CENTRE

The Chairman reported he had been unable to ascertain any further information regarding ownership of the shopping centre.

(v) THE OLD RECTORY, RAWMARSH HILL

The Chairman, in response to Ted Frost, reported he was unaware of any proposal by the Council to buy the building and doubted very much the Council would have any interest in such an acquisition. As far as he was concerned, the position was as reported to the last meeting.

(vi) YOUTH UPDATE

Liz Booth and Janet Greenwood, in response to Nora Platt, clarified that the recent visit by the Junior Minister for Education and Young People had not been a public visit but had been arranged through the Rawmarsh and Parkgate Community Action Group via an approach to John Healey, M.P. Despite his title, the Junior Minister was in fact visiting the area in relation to street crime. Janet did however confirm that he had taken away the young people's survey and had promised to look at it.

It was suggested that any further requests for a visit be channelled through John Healey, M.P.

(vii) WENTWORTH CENTRAL COMMUNITY FUND

Dennis Greenway thanked the Assembly for the kind remarks and undertook to pass them on to the rest of the Grants Panel.

(viii) ASYLUM SEEKERS

The Chairman introduced Andrew Crowley, Team Leader, Asylum Project Team, who attended to address questions and concerns that had been raised at the last meeting.

Andrew indicated he had been given several questions which he would address, in addition to any others raised and offered to provide a full presentation at a future meeting if the Assembly wished.

Andrew reported:-

- that the scheme was funded by the Home Office
- in addition to the Council, there were two private companies and one housing association each with contracts with the Home Office in respect of asylum seekers
- there were between 75 and 90 asylum seekers within the Area Assembly area and a further 660 in the rest of the borough
- location criteria had to be taken into account such as must be sited within three miles of the crown post office and be close to basic services
- comparative figures for Barnsley, Doncaster and Sheffield
- 298 houses were utilised out of a stock of 107,000 public and private houses. Currently there were 4,000 empty properties in Rotherham
- comparative numbers of asylum seekers per head of population with other countries had us ranked only tenth. The top of the league being Slovenia with three times as many asylum seekers as the U.K.
- the known breakdown figures of 500 people (excluding private providers) were 121 children 105 women and 274 men
- the Home Office would not inform of rehousing details because there was a privacy issue and that a refugee could indeed choose to live anywhere
- it was important to differentiate between asylum seekers, refugees and economic migrants
- asylum seekers awaiting a status decision became refugees if that decision on their stay in this country was positive

A question and answer session ensued and the following issues were raised:-

- source of comparison figures : reference was made to European Commission figures per head of population placing the U.K. fourth in the league table
- refugee status and accommodation priority : Andrew indicated that priority depended on vulnerability and confirmed that some people made their own arrangements and some left the area
- does Rotherham get more asylum seekers because there are more empty properties? Andrew confirmed that there were already enough properties for asylum seekers and that if they receive a decision to stay they could work and move anywhere in or out of the borough
- why Britain ? Andrew indicated that people saw Britain as a fair place. He stressed that asylum seekers were not given mobile phones and large amounts of money. Many were highly skilled and professional people who wanted to work and were a bonus for the area with their particular skills

Andrew concluded by stressing the importance of integrating asylum seekers and refugees into the communities of Rotherham.

The Chairman thanked Andrew for an informative and interesting report.

58. YOUTH UPDATE

Linzi Gaimster and Precious Moss wished everyone a happy new year and then presented their youth update.

A visit had been made to the Parkgate Youth Centre, informing members there of the involvement with the Area Assembly and offering them the opportunity to participate in bringing issues that were relevant to them and the Youth Centre. It was hoped to set up a Rawmarsh and Parkgate Young People's Group that would meet, discuss and bring issues to the Area Assembly. Further contact was awaited.

With regard to the Graffiti Group and the request to graffiti art the subway between Netto and the Church, a response had been received indicating that a programme to deal with all underpasses in Rotherham was currently in operation.

Although disappointed, the Group was to continue their art work on boards which could be displayed anywhere. The Group had been offered the use of a garage to produce their work under the watchful eye of a professional and in a safe environment.

The A Team was pleased to report that the Church Hall was currently being decorated through the Probation Service. Thanks were reported to the Parochial Church Council for their efforts in improving the Church Hall.

The Chairman thanked the A Team for their report and indicated that consideration was still being given to setting up a young persons area assembly that could report back to this meeting.

General concerns were expressed regarding facilities for the younger people and Nora Platt referred to the closure of the junior group at the Parkgate Youth Centre. Roxie Reavey shared the concerns, confirming that the Government was clear about concentrating on 13 to 19 year olds. Roxie indicated that the Young People's Service would do its best to work with other, more appropriate, providers to find support for Junior Clubs.

59. HERITAGE EDUCATION PROJECT

The Chairman introduced Abi Hackett, Heritage Education Assistant, who presented briefly the submitted report on the above.

Abi indicated that this was an outreach project run by Friends of Clifton Park Museum and was funded by the Basic Skills Agency. The Project had been running for six months and Abi had been in post for four of them. Funding was in place until March, 2004.

Abi indicated that workshops were being run around the borough to train people to record their spoken history, memories of life in Rotherham across the twentieth century. Temporary exhibitions of the themes would be displayed across the borough. The oral reminiscences would be recorded on cassette or mini disc, stored as a permanent record and made available for people to listen to. They would also appear on the Web and form part of future exhibitions at Clifton Park Museum. Brief extracts from two such cassette recordings were played to the Assembly.

In the near future, workshops were to be arranged in day care centres and libraries and a specific workshop on family history was being arranged for March, 2003.

Abi stressed that workshops could be organised for groups. The project was a 'fluid' project and any ideas, interests etc., were welcome. To attract involvement, assistance could be given regarding transport, child care, translation services including braille. The underlying aim was to attract as many people as possible and encourage them to use museum services in the long term.

The Chairman thanked Abi for her interesting and informative presentation.

Anyone interested in participating in the project should contact Abi Hackett, Clifton Park Museum, Clifton Lane, Rotherham, S65 2AA

Telephone contact : Rotherham (01709) 823635

e-mail: abigail.hackett@rotherham.gov.uk

60. INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Chairman introduced Steve Abson, IDP Programme Manager, who gave a quick résumé of his job. Steve indicated that there were 32 different measures utilised to draw down funding from Objective 1 and that he dealt only with Measure 23 relating to economic regeneration in steel and coalfield areas.

The funding covered geographical boundaries only and, as far as this area assembly was concerned, Parkgate and Kilnhurst were covered for funding, but Rawmarsh depended where you lived.

Steve referred to the aims of the Plan and highlighted the following :-

- new business start ups : the emphasis was being concentrated on sustainability
- sites and premises survey : consultants had been engaged to carry out and present the information in the proper format which was a requirement of Objective 1 to release monies.

Areas being looked at included derelict land and buildings with examples being quoted as the CRODA site in Kilnhurst and the CORUS area.

- a minimum of 35,000 sq ft of office space or managed workspace was to be developed and 2 hectares of land to be redeveloped for industrial/commercial use
- environmental improvements : looking at public land, parks and derelict 'bits and pieces'
- efforts were being made to set up a business forum and encourage a supply chain for local spending
- first phase of the plan to be completed by the end of 2004
- second phase of the plan from 2005 to 2008

A question and answer session ensued and the following issues were discussed:-

- appointment of consultants
- cost of appointing consultants
- anticipated outcomes of site survey
- outcomes from previous surveys

Steve explained that the appointed consultants were a consortium comprising four separate consultancies based in Leeds who would be carrying out survey work from 7th January to May, 2003.

In acknowledging the high cost of appointing consultants, Steve again stressed the requirements of Objective 1 funding and that this was the only way that monies could be released. Steve stressed the need to ensure there were positive outcomes.

The Assembly shared the concerns expressed regarding the consultancy costs and indicated it was vital to achieve positive outcomes and not end up with another report gathering dust on the shelves.

Steve was thanked for his presentation.

61. RAWMARSH AND PARKGATE PARTNERSHIP

Mel Durham reported :-

- the Christmas Fair had been very successful with 23 out of 24 stalls in use. Over 150 had visited Santa's Grotto and, supported by other fundraising activities, all monies raised had been donated to the charities helping with the event
- a part-time development worker was now in post
- the new Partnership Development Officer was starting shortly and it was hoped to be divorced from the Borough Council by the end of 2004
- a decision was still awaited on the bid to the New Opportunities Fund regarding the development of Rosehill/Victoria Park
- 4 park wardens had already been approved and a further 3, together with a supervisor, were being sought
- the next open meeting for Friends of the Park was to be held at the Titanic Club on Monday 13th February, 2003 at 7.00 p.m. Everyone was welcome and information/feedback could be sought from Mel Durham
- the Equipment Coop would hopefully be up and running in April, hiring out tools at a modest cost. It was hoped that further IDP monies would be forthcoming for the scheme.

62. NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN SCHEME

The Assembly noted the submitted report outlining the complaints running totals up to and including 13th December, 2002.

Janet Greenwood reported :-

- the introduction of a lost key service whereby a special keyring, incorporating serial number and telephone number, could be obtained and if lost could be handed back in to the Warden Office for a £25 reward. An example keyring was circulated
- that a sustainability report was being prepared for Cabinet in the hope of avoiding the need to look continually for funding for the service
- that match funding had been found for the received £95,000. The Rawmarsh and Parkgate Partnership had endorsed in principle the sponsoring of the match funding through SRB6. Any comments from the Area Assembly and the wider community were welcome
- there would be a presentation on the 'American Tour' at next Wednesday's Rawmarsh and Parkgate Community Action Group meeting
- that an order had been placed for the graffiti busting machine

Jim Robinson wished to place on record his thanks to the RAT team and neighbourhood wardens for the funding to provide additional litter and dog fouling bins on the Manor Farm Estate.

63. ROTHERHAM REACHOUT – FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY OF PANEL MEMBERS

The Assembly noted the submitted report covering the findings for this area from the latest survey of panel members. Covered in the findings were Green Spaces, Cemeteries and Crematoria, Health, IT Facilities, Taxis and Standards in Care.

64. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

AREA ASSEMBLY OFFICE

Alan Shaw referred to the submitted information pack and drew attention to the fact that, as from next week, the Area Assembly Office was returning to the Dale Road People's Centre.

65. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That the next scheduled meeting be held at the Kilnhurst Community Centre on Wednesday 12th February, 2003 at 2.30 p.m.

