

**WENTWORTH CENTRAL AREA ASSEMBLY**  
**held at the Manor Farm Community Centre**  
**on Wednesday, 26th March, 2003**

**Present:-**

Councillor K. Goulty	Ward 17 (Rawmarsh West) (in the Chair)
Mrs. H. Anderson	Resident
Mrs. M. Ball	Area Assembly Support Officer, RMBC
Mrs. A. Birks	Resident
Mrs. E. Booth	Chair, Rawmarsh and Parkgate Community Action Group
Mrs. A. Brown	Rawmarsh Youth Centre
Mrs. D. Brown	Resident
Mr. M. Brown	Chair, Rawmarsh Hall Sub-Group
Mr. P. Brown	Resident
B. Childs	Youth Area Representative
Mr. R. Evans	Resident
Mr. W. Farrier	Manor Farm Tenants and Residents Association
Mrs. M. Frith	Resident
Mr. P. Frith	Resident
Miss L. Gaimster	Youth Area Representative
Mrs. G. Gibson	Resident
Mr. A. Harston	Legal and Democratic Services, RMBC
Mrs. J. Hawley	Resident
Mr. M. Heeley	Chairman, Manor Farm Community Centre
Mrs. O. Heeley	Trustee, Manor Farm Community Centre
Captain A. Hockley	Salvation Army
Mr. D. Jackson	Resident
Mrs. J. Jones	Neighbourhood Housing Manager, RMBC
Mrs. L. Main	Housing Needs Unit, RMBC
Mrs. L. Maltby	Resident
Mr. D. Marsh	Resident
Mrs. A. McLoughlan	Resident
Mrs. S. McLoughlan	Resident
Miss P. Moss	Youth Area Representative
Mr. R. Newman	Rush House Project
Mr. R. Overton	CAD
Mrs. S. Oxer	Resident
Mr. E. Parkin	Resident
Mrs. E. Parkin	Resident
Mr. J. Parks	Neighbourhood Warden Supervisor
Mrs. E. Read	Resident
Mr. C. Rooks	Resident
Mr. P. Rowe	Voluntary Action Rotherham Community Development Worker
Ms. C. Searby	Rotherham Primary Care Trust (Wentworth Locality)
Mr. A. Shaw	Area Assembly Officer, RMBC
Mrs. G. Sherratt	Resident/ROPES
Mr. D. Stacey	Resident

Mrs. F. Stacey	Resident/Rawmarsh Townswomen's Guild
Mr. J. Stevens	Rush House Project
Mrs. G. Thrustle	Resident
M. Thompson	Resident
Mrs. B. Turner	Resident
Mrs. C. Webster	Rush House Project
Mr. N. Westby	South Yorkshire Times
Councillor G. Whelbourn	Ward 17 (Rawmarsh West)
Mrs. P. Wilson	Resident
Mr. P. Wragg	Resident
Councillor S. Wright	Ward 16 (Rawmarsh East)
Mrs. N. Yarrow	Rotherham Disability Information Service

Apologies :-

Ms. R. Barley	Rawmarsh Against Tipping
Mr. A. Barnfield	Manor Farm Tenants and Residents Association
Mr. K. Boughen	Rotherham Primary Care Trust (Wentworth Locality)
Mr. T. Boulton	Resident
Mrs. H. Cahill	Rawmarsh and Parkgate Partnership
Mr. G. Canby	Fitzwilliam (Wentworth) Estates
Councillor J. Carr	Ward 17 (Rawmarsh West)
Ms. J. Curran	Community Planning Officer, RMBC
Mr. M. Durham	Chair, Rawmarsh and Parkgate Partnership
Mr. D. Greenway	Wentworth Central Community Fund
Mrs. N. Platt	Pargate Youth Centre
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)
Mr. J. Staniforth	Resident
Councillor R. Stone	Ward 16 (Rawmarsh East)
Mrs. G. Stones	Resident
Miss L. Stones	Resident
Mr. D. Toy	Resident
Mr. R. Twynham	Resident
Mr. V. Ward	Resident
Mr. B. Williams	Rawmarsh Allotments

## **75. INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chairman, in welcoming everyone to the meeting, apologised for the change in start time of the meeting and explained why this had been necessary and Mr. Paul Rowe (Voluntary Action Rotherham, Community Development Worker) introduced himself.

## **76. MINUTES OF THE AREA ASSEMBLY**

Agreed:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 12th February, 2003 be approved as a correct record.

## **77. MATTERS ARISING**

### **(i) Anti-Social Behaviour**

Wilf Farrier reported that, along with Jim Robinson, he had attended a meeting on 19th February, 2003 at the Town Hall in relation to the above, the notes of which were being processed.

A further meeting had also taken place on 24th February, 2003 with representatives from other area assemblies but, as yet, he had received no feedback. He undertook to keep the area assembly informed.

### **(ii) The Old Rectory, Rawmarsh Hill**

In response to a query from Wilf Farrier regarding any progress, Alan Shaw indicated there was nothing further to report since the last meeting. A letter was expected in April and Alan undertook to report to the May meeting.

### **(iii) Litter, Haugh Road and Monkwood Road**

In response to a query from Wilf Farrier regarding any progress, Alan Shaw indicated that a working group had been established, comprising Environmental Wardens, Janet Greenwood, Liz Booth and Malcolm Brown and they had already met on two sites with plans in progress for improving the Sandhill area.

With regard to the above problem, it was proposed to meet with the headteacher in April so that it could be made clear to the youngsters that if they were caught "littering" by the environmental wardens they would be fined. It was noted that 11 of the 200 fines issued so far related to young people.

Liz Booth referred to problems in the shopping centre of youngsters causing nuisance by using pop bottles to make water bombs and spraying goods and that everybody was getting a bad name because of the minority.

It was hoped that the meeting with the headteacher would get the message through and alleviate the problems.

### **(iv) Goodwin Avenue/Goodwin Crescent**

Liz Booth referred to a couple of weeks ago when on three consecutive nights the Police and Fire Service were called out to the site. The site had become a congregation point for 8 to 12 year olds.

Liz referred to the hard work done by Housing Services in clearing up the site and it was unfair that they were landed with the bill for such work. Liz

indicated that she had arranged a meeting with the Executive Director of Housing and Environmental Services in April.

Alan Shaw referred to the future use of the site and that it was being plugged as an ideal site for the Rotherham Primary Care Trust's new build proposals in the constituency area.

Agreed:- That this Area Assembly supports the view that it is unfair that Housing Services are landed with the clean up bill for the site following all their hard work and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services be advised accordingly.

## **78. RUSH HOUSE PROJECT**

Following certain concerns raised at the last meeting of the Area Assembly regarding the letting of properties, the Chairman welcomed representatives from the Rush House Project and invited them to explain to the meeting the nature of the project.

The project was represented by Jim Stevens, Carole Webster and Roger Newman. Also in attendance was Linda Main from the Housing Needs Unit.

Jim Stevens outlined the background to, and work of, the Rush House Project indicating that the voluntary sector organisation was now a registered charity and had been operating in Rotherham since 1982.

The Project worked with single homeless people between the ages of 16 and 21 and held principles of :-

- valuing young people
- young people's right to independence
- young people's right to be heard and be involved in decisions
- respecting ability to change lives
- taking positive action against discrimination
- best value

Jim reported that Rush House had its own management committee and that they acted as managing agents for South Yorkshire Housing.

On the operational side, Jim reported that they had had a house in Rawmarsh for eleven years. The Project was a Rotherham based facility with 95% of clients being from Rotherham and 10% of those being from Rawmarsh and Parkgate. The Project had properties throughout Rotherham.

He reported that the young single homeless were helped in three stages of accommodation:-

- Direct Access : a short term facility with 6 bed space

- Bedsit : of which there were 9 with 24 hour cover and support
- Supported Housing : with 32 spaces in 16 houses usually occupied for one year

Jim reported that, since 1985, 2000 young people had been provided with support. Referrals were from all agencies with approximately 35% from the local authority.

Each individual undergoes a very detailed risk and need assessment to decide if it is appropriate to offer accommodation. Approval is only given where needs can be supported, individuals are not set up to fail.

If accepted, there is access to services such as advice, information, advocacy and it is expected that they embark on an independent living skills programme.

The Project :

- has a primary health care worker based at the Centre
- works in partnership with Education and the Youth Service
- organises residential weekends
- works towards local authority and housing association long term tenancies

It was stressed that individuals had to be able to sustain tenancies and relationships with neighbours was a vital key to such success. Some properties from the Council had been used for a long time, others were new in the area, but there was a very good record of working with neighbours. Any complaints were always treated seriously.

Carol Webster elaborated on the Independent Living Skills Programme indicating that homeless young people face many barriers to acquiring and maintaining true independence. The Independent Living Skills Programme, supported by SRB 3 funding, was designed to address those barriers. The programme was accredited by the Open College Network.

The programme, details of which were submitted, covered four main areas:-

- independent living skills
- healthy lifestyles
- personal development through Education, Training and Employment
- speaking and listening

The programme was flexible and thorough and involved continuous work with other agencies. Of the 21 residents in supported housing schemes it was noted that 3 were from Rawmarsh. Six were in employment, seven were in Education, one was on a government training scheme and seven were unemployed.

Linda Main, Housing Needs Co-ordinator, explained briefly the local authority's legal obligations under the Housing Act and the more recent Homelessness legislation. Linda indicated that investigations were carried out, assessments were done and, if the criteria in the Act was met, the local authority had a duty to find temporary accommodation and subsequently obtain secure accommodation. The Act had extended the range of duties to include 16 and 17 year olds, any young people in care, ex-offenders and people with an institutional background (e.g. the forces). The local authority worked closely with Rush House.

A lengthy discussion ensued and the following issues were covered:-

- Liz Booth in applauding the project, stressed the need for integration of the youngsters into the community. Unfortunately not enough people knew about the scheme. Her one concern was that certain properties in Rawmarsh had been renovated by South Yorkshire Housing for Rush House youngsters but in run down areas, increasing the risk of resentment from local residents and decreasing the chance of integration into the community
- concerns were expressed about specific lets and rumours that the tenants would be drug users. The Chairman indicated that there had been a perception that undesirables were being dumped into an area, this was not the case and it was felt people deserved a chance. The Chairman accepted that people had had misinformation
- concerns were expressed that the Assembly was only being told of youngsters that were homeless. What other problems were associated with homelessness, why were they homeless, how many were drug users and what other problems existed

Jim Stevens acknowledged that, with over 2,000 clients, he could not claim that there had been no drug problems or ex-offenders. He pointed out that Dearne Valley College was a leading referral unit and they didn't have accommodation for students. That is one reason why accommodation was sought in Rawmarsh and Parkgate.

Jim stressed that nobody with a known problem, not addressed, would be moved into accommodation. Where problems had developed and there was a willingness to change, individuals were kept at the core project. Whenever offered a tenancy it was because they had a very good chance of sustaining that tenancy.

Anyone upsetting neighbours would be dealt with. Regarding the property used in Rawmarsh for 11 years, there had been more complaints about neighbours than vice-versa. Individuals would not be placed into a more vulnerable situation.

- the possibility of a 16 year old being placed in a two bedroom flat. It was pointed out that this would be very rare, the lets were not age orientated but based on the ability to live.
- concerns were expressed that the presentation had dwelt on the successes of the project, but what of the failures.

Jim Stevens acknowledged there had been quite a few. As well as the initial risk and needs assessment, it was an ongoing process. Every individual was allocated a key worker. There was a weekly three hour team meeting. Progress was reviewed and, on occasion, behaviour was such that some people had to leave the project. People are given a chance and only a few are told that the project cannot work with them. Jim stressed again that individuals were not set up to fail. They were not put into situations that could not be sustained.

Whilst not wanting to give specific examples, Jim indicated that there were several reasons why youngsters found themselves homeless. In some cases there were horrific backgrounds of abuse, in others some youngsters simply had nowhere to live. It was pointed out that the single main reason for a youngster being homeless was due to a relationship breakdown at home (e.g. where a mum or dad may have a new partner and it just doesn't work out with the youngster).

In concluding, the Chairman thanked the Rush House representatives for their presentation and hoped that people now had a better understanding of the Rush House Project even if not everyone's concerns had been allayed.

## **79. YOUTH UPDATE**

Linzi Gaimster, Precious Moss and Ben Childs presented their youth update.

The update is set out below :-

"Good afternoon, we have no real issues to report about the Youth Centre at St. Mary's Church Hall, but there is one matter we would like to raise with you. Recently we had visitors into the school from Leeds. They were there on behalf of RMBC, to do a survey to ask young people what they would like to see in Rotherham in the Year 2020? The young people were chosen randomly and I was one of these. I found that the two women who did the questioning were **1.** Their manner was extremely condescending and patronising. **2.** That they didn't know how to address young people. **3.** The questions that were asked were irrelevant to the matter. **4.** The way they were asked was insulting to my level of intelligence.

I would like to ask how much this survey cost to conduct, also what is the relevance of it, and will we who took part in the survey receive feedback?

This links into another matter of importance. You all know by now that we as young people are 100% committed to making life better for people our age. To progress in this, we would now like to be involved in other issues, not just our own. This has been brought up before by you as an Assembly, so from now on we wish you to feel free to ask questions, or just to gain our opinions on certain matters. The young people's opinion counts, and we firmly believe that it should be put into good use.

One more thing, it is very difficult for us to get time out during lesson times to attend the Area Assembly, the school have been very good in the last two instances, but it would be better for us if the meetings were held as before.

Thank you for listening.

The Area Representatives for Youth.

Lindsey Gaimster.

Precious Moss.

Ben Childs"

The Chairman thanked the Area Representatives for Youth for their update. He indicated he was not aware of the survey but would check out the cost, relevance and feedback issues. The Chairman apologised for the required earlier start times of the previous two meetings and confirmed the next meeting was back to the normal 4.30 p.m. start time.

The Assembly welcomed the opportunity to discuss issues other than just relating to their own agenda. A brief question and answer session covered issues relating to the Rush House Project, integrating nuisance youth into youth clubs and involvement in the working group meeting with the school headteacher regarding the previously discussed littering problems.

Agreed:- That Alan Shaw liaise with Ann Brown regarding potential involvement in the working group's forthcoming meeting with the school headteacher on littering issues.

## **80. LEAFLET – MyWAYS**

The Chairman welcomed Natalie Yarrow who introduced the MyWays project outlining the background to, and funding of, the project.

Rather than compete with other projects, the aim was to bridge a gap in provision with an open and inclusive project based on self referral and advertised throughout communities.

Whilst the project could still receive referrals from doctors, professionals, agencies, etc., the ethos was that each person could choose their own



path and make a decision for themselves based on their own perception of disability. The project was about self determination, accepting impairment without necessarily being registered disabled.

Natalie submitted a leaflet explaining the project which was to be widely circulated and stressed that she wanted to create as wide an awareness as possible of the project.

Natalie confirmed she had spoken to primary care localities making as many professional as possible aware of the project. She was trying not to miss anybody out and wanted people to spread the word.

The project had been established since last August and there had been over 150 beneficiaries of the project some of which were from self referral. The Centre was based on Rawmarsh Road with a small IT suite and accessible facilities. It was stressed that the project could go out to the community and people did not have to attend the Centre.

Natalie indicated that Library Services saw MyWays as a provider and there was funding for IT equipment specific to the project. Equipment was used in libraries with training through MyWays and could even be used in people's own homes.

Natalie referred to Paul Morris, Community Tutor, who could provide basic IT skills training to groups or on a one to one basis at the Centre or in the community.

Natalie stressed that, at MyWays, you make the decision what you learn, how you learn, when you learn.

Natalie outlined briefly some of the training, learning and modules available which were explained more fully in the leaflet.

Natalie explained the contact details namely :-

- Sharon Helliwell for support and guidance
- Paul Morris, Community Tutor
- Wendy Williams, Disability Equalities Co-ordinator

Natalie stressed that MyWays was a new and diverse developing project for anyone over the age of 16 and free to people with a disability. There was a budget to assist with travel and carer costs and work was ongoing with people to look at how best MyWays could be accessed. Clare Searby undertook to report back to the Primary Care Trust in an effort to ensure awareness amongst professionals.

Agreed:- (1) That Natalie Yarrow be thanked for an interesting and informative presentation.

(2) That the MyWays Project be welcomed and everyone be encouraged to spread the word regarding the project.

## **81. NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN SCHEME**

The Assembly noted the submitted report outlining the complaints running totals up to and including 7th March, 2003.

John Parks reported briefly on updated figures as at the week ending 14th March, 2003. He pointed out that wardens had been directly and indirectly involved, since becoming operational, in the clearing and removal of :-

- 100 flytipping sites
- 100 abandoned vehicles
- 500 syringes

Also 100 street lighting repairs

The graffiti busting equipment was due to be delivered in the week commencing 7th April, 2003 and should be in use, following training, towards the end of April, 2003.

It was noted that wardens had apprehended six youths playing football on the bowling green at Rosehill Victoria Park, causing damage to the surface. Details had been passed to the Police.

John also reported that Janet Greenwood, Neighbourhood Warden Manager was leaving the Unit tomorrow. Liz Booth reported that Janet had secured a permanent post with the Council and would be a great loss to the Warden Service. Liz expressed concerns regarding what would happen in the interim and that it was important answers were provided for John and the rest of the Warden Team. Rawmarsh had pioneered the service without proper recognition and it was vital that a replacement manager was appointed as soon as possible.

Agreed:- That this Area Assembly acknowledges the excellent work of the Neighbourhood Warden Service and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Environmental Services be advised of this Assembly's support for the appointment of a replacement Manager as a matter of urgency.

## **82. PERIODICE ELECTORAL REVIEW : BOUNDARY CHANGES**

The Chairman reported briefly that the Council's recommendations in respect of the above had been accepted broadly by the Boundary Committee. Anyone could still comment on/object to proposals but this had to be done directly to the Boundary Committee before the deadline of 7th April, 2003. An information pack explaining how to make representations was available. A plan showing the effect of the boundary changes was on display.

The Chairman reiterated that the purpose of the changes was to equalise the number of electors per Councillor with a 10% variance. He indicated that all 63 Council seats would be up for election in 2004.

Liz Booth questioned if the changes would affect funding coming into the area. The Chairman undertook to look into the matter but did not think that there would be any answers at this stage.

### **83. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **(i) Netto Supermarket**

Liz Booth referred to rumours that the supermarket was not to be allowed to open due to traffic problems.

Agreed:- That Alan Shaw look into this matter.

#### **(ii) Rawmarsh Shopping Centre**

##### **(a) Insurance**

Liz Booth referred to complaints from local shopkeepers who had been presented with vastly increased insurance bills and that the Agent would not give a breakdown of the figures.

Agreed:- That Alan Shaw pursue this matter and write to the Agent, involving John Healey, M.P. and the Insurance Ombudsman if appropriate.

##### **(b) Condition of the structure of the building**

Alan Shaw reported that representatives from the Dangerous Structures Section had carried out a thorough investigation and indicated that it was not a dangerous structure. However reference had been made to specific legislation that could provide some scope for action.

It was noted that Compulsory Purchase Order was discussed during the visit by the Leader and Chief Executive and this was being investigated.

Agreed:- That Alan Shaw pursue any scope for action and report back accordingly.

#### **(iii) Bottle Bank Provision**

A request was made for the provision of a bottle back at Retail World.

Agreed:- That Alan Shaw pursue this matter.

#### **(iv) Police Forum – Rawmarsh Leisure Centre – Wednesday, 21st May, 2003 at 7.00 p.m.**

The Assembly was notified of the above meeting.

Further reference was made to motorcycle nuisance, this time at Hill 60 (football ground). The Chairman referred to new laws that were being processed. It was felt that the above meeting would be an opportunity to raise such issues.

**84. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

Agreed:- That the next scheduled meeting be held at the Dale Road People's Centre on Wednesday, 21st May, 2003 at 4.30 p.m.

**85. FUTURE MEETINGS**

It was pointed out that the meeting scheduled for Wednesday 6th August, 2003 had been brought forward to Wednesday, 23rd July, 2003.