

**PARISH LIAISON
TUESDAY, 28TH OCTOBER, 2008**

Present:- Councillor Gerald Smith, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Development Services (in the Chair), and Councillor D. Pickering, Chair of the Planning Board.

Mr. M. Gazur, Anston Parish Council Representative
Mr. E. Cooper, Aston-cum-Aughton Parish Council Representative
Mr. A. Hodkin, Aston-cum-Aughton Parish Council Representative
Mrs. P. Wade, Aston-cum-Aughton Parish Council Representative
Councillor D. Hughes, Catcliffe Parish Council Representative
Mr. B. Jolly, Catcliffe Parish Council Representative
Mrs. B. Jolly, Catcliffe Parish Council Representative
Mr. G. McIntosh, Catcliffe Parish Council Representative
Mrs. J. McIntosh, Catcliffe Parish Council Representative
Mrs. S. Lewis, Dalton Parish Council Representative
C. G. Malico, Dalton Parish Council Representative
P. Sludden, Dalton Parish Council Representative
D. Barker, Dinnington Town Council Representative
P. A. Davies, Dinnington Town Council Representative
A. Currie, Maltby Town Council Representative
Mr. K. Stringer, Maltby Town Council Representative
Mr. D. Rowley, Ravenfield Parish Council Representative
Mr. R. Swann, Woodsetts Parish Council Representative
Mrs. E. Cockayne, Woodsetts Parish Council Representative

Also in attendance:-

Mr. P. Gill, Green Spaces Manager, Culture and Leisure, Environment and Development Services
Mr. S. Savage, Senior Engineer, Environment and Development Services
Mr. C. Johnston, Development Control Officer, Environment and Development Services

Apologies were received from:-

Councillor Sheila Walker
Councillor I. St. John, Anston Parish Council
Laughton Parish Council
Todwick Parish Council
Wales Parish Council

17. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

The Chairman introduced those present and welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained its purpose.

18. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th February, 2008 were agreed as a correct record.

19. MATTERS ARISING

With regards to Minute No. 14(a) it was confirmed that the roadworks on the A631 could be contributing to the problem with traffic at Aughton crossroads.

A further survey was to be undertaken, but once the roadworks were completed to Whiston crossroads it would hopefully improve the situation.

20. ROTHERHAM PLAY PATHFINDER

Phil Gill, Green Spaces Manager, gave a presentation on the Rotherham Play Pathfinder, which was a Department for Children, Schools and Families' Play Pathfinder programme who had awarded approximately £2.6 million to Rotherham. This was to be administered through the Council, with a number of Parish Councils being beneficiaries of funding for renewed play areas. This was based purely on an assessment which looked at existing play facility condition, catchment area, green space audit information and major gaps in provision. The Council's 'Play Team' hoped to work very closely with Parish Councils in order to ensure that they were comfortable with proposals and would want to involve them as fully as possible in the consultation for the new play facilities.

The presentation, therefore, drew specific attention to:-

- The two year Capital Programme to deliver area based play facilities.
- 28 area based play facilities.
- Design Guide developed by Play England.
- Land Ownership – Years 1 and 2.
- Project Board overseeing delivery process.
- Working in partnership.

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

- Support and technical guidance to Parish Councils who were willing to refurbish existing facilities and bring them up to standard.
- Raising awareness with Parish Councils about this Project as this had not filtered through.
- Importance of such a project and the pleasure it would bring to the Borough's young people.
- Age range of proposed facilities.
- The plans for the destination plan facility in Clifton Park.
- Responsibility, supervision and management of the play facilities once they had been provided.

- Agreed:- (1) That Phil Gill be thanked for his informative presentation.
- (2) That further information be provided to Parish Councils in due course.

21. **GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT**

Phil Gill, Green Spaces Manager, gave an update on behalf of Streetpride on the current Grounds Maintenance Contract and the standards of service currently being provided.

It was acknowledged that the current Grounds Maintenance Control was not up to the normal standard the Council would like. It had deteriorated over the last two years, the main reason for which was the budget and how it had failed to keep up with the job that was required. A number of issues had added to the costs to deliver the service relating to cost of labour, plant hire, fuel and landfill tax. The level of service previously experienced could, therefore, not be sustained.

Currently the service, delivered through Ringway, was run as an "At Cost" Contract, with little profit being made on an open book basis. The Council was working in partnership with the contractor to ensure the delivery of the service and working closely with Parish Councils..

As of 1st April, 2008, grass was being cut on a three weekly cycle and seasonal bedding had been reduced. In reality standards were therefore, reduced due to the reduction in the frequency of grass cutting and as a result of the inclement weather during the summer.

In spite of the difficulties the number of complaints received by Streetpride had reduced, but Streetpride were making every effort to limit the impact of this reduced service in the borough.

Whilst the situation was far from ideal, consideration needed to be given as how best to resolve this. An improved budget position would achieve a better standard of service and the budget process was ongoing at the moment.

The contract with Ringway was due to expire in October, 2009. There were provisions in the contract for this to be extended until 2011, but the Council needed to consider all its options before making any decision.

Work was ongoing and it was envisaged that the Council would embark on a period of consultation looking at ways to reach Parish Councils and other consultees shortly.

Various Parish Councils made comment on the current Grounds Maintenance Service and raised questions relating to:-

- The Rotherham Charter with Parish Councils and if any budget could be devolved to those with Quality Parish Council status to undertake

- their own maintenance programme.
- In the short term, the Council is undertaking a review of its grounds maintenance contract. In the medium term a review of how this is to be delivered, which may include devolvement of services to other organisations such as Parish Council will be considered.

Whether it was an option to bring the Grounds Maintenance Contract back "in house" by the Council:-

- This option is to be considered as part of the short term review of the current service contract.
- Whether consideration should be given to using bark or mulch along hedgerows to prevent the grass from growing.
- Every opportunity to provide a sustainable approach to how areas are maintained is made. The use of mulch as weed depressant is undertaken in certain areas. The use in hedgerows will be considered.

Three week cutting cycle and the unsuitability of this frequency in rural areas:-

- The current budget available only permits a frequency of cutting once every three weeks. At times of rapid growth rate and when inclement weather and poor ground conditions occur it is evident that cutting once every three weeks is not adequate. Requests for further funding for the grounds maintenance service for 2009/10 have been submitted and will be considered by members along with other priorities.

Agreed:- (1) That Phil Gill be thanked for his report.

(2) That appropriate feedback be reported to Parish Councils in due course.

22. ITEMS SUBMITTED BY PARISH COUNCILS

Discussion took place on the following local issues, which were reported by representatives of the Parish and Town Councils:-

(a) Waverley New Community Planning Application

Representatives from Catcliffe Parish Council expressed their concerns about the planning application for the new Waverley Community. The Parish Council had sent a letter out to every resident in Catcliffe asking them to comment, with responses received relating to traffic, risk of flooding, the traffic assessment and the promotion of the new development by Atisreal.

The Parish Council also queried whether a presentation was anticipated on the new planning application at the Area Assembly.

Chris Johnston, Development Control Officer, gave an update on the current situation and confirmed that the planning application was submitted in late August. The consultation period of six weeks expired on the 17th October for comments. A series of public meetings were now envisaged during late November/early December in Catcliffe, Orgreave and Treeton.

It was confirmed that a traffic assessment had been submitted with the planning application and formed part of the Environmental Impact Assessment and was based on forecasted trends of traffic generation.

As part of the planning application it was proposed that the B6066 Highfield Lane would be reinforced and updated prior to any significant development being provided.

Staff at the Rother Valley West would be contacted regarding presentations regarding the planning application at the Area Assembly.

(b) Road Safety and Speeding through Woodsetts Village

Further to Minute No. 13(a) of the meeting of the Parish Liaison held on 26th February, 2008, representatives from Woodsetts Parish Council gave a further update on the situation through Woodsetts Village. Safety signs were replaced during July, 2008, with very little liaison with the Parish Council as to their location. In their current location they did little to reduce speed.

A traffic survey was to be undertaken and information was to be taken from the vehicle activation signs, but this was not currently available for downloading.

Stuart Savage, Senior Engineer, gave an update on the current position and the proposals to undertake a Pedestrian and Vehicle count to be carried out near the crossroads in Woodsetts to determine whether the site met the criteria for a crossing. This count was to be carried out on a Monday as requested by Councillor Darren Hughes and agreed with Councillor Gerald Smith.

Every effort was made to download speed data from the two Vehicle Activated Signs from either end of Woodsetts Village. Unfortunately, it was not possible to retrieve any information due to a connection problem, but this would be revisited shortly.

The survey information undertaken by Councillor Darren Hughes had not been received, but would be followed up immediately.

Every effort would be made to look at possible alternative locations for the speed activation signs, but they were only activated by using a 100 metre stretch of road.

Alternative road safety methods would be looked into and fed back to the Parish Council in due course.

23. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) A representative from Ravenfield Parish Council made reference to the new swimming pool at Aston and asked if there were any plans for further parking.

The Chairman confirmed that a dilapidated building on the site was to make way for further parking.

- (b) A representative from Ravenfield Parish Council asked for an update on the global speed limit review across the Borough.

Stuart Savage, Senior Engineer, confirmed that all Highway Authorities were required by 2011 to conduct a review of speed limits on their A and B class roads, which would, of course, include the road through Ravenfield. A Speed Management Strategy had been put together with colleagues in the other South Yorkshire districts and South Yorkshire Police to assist with the review.

- (c) A representative from Woodsetts Parish Council asked for an update on the A57 Bypass.

The Chairman reported the planning consent previously granted had now expired and a new application had to be submitted.

- (d) A representative from Catcliffe Parish Council asked if there were provision for disabled swimmers to enter the water in the new swimming pools.

The Chairman confirmed that the pool at Aston did, in fact, have a hoist type facility to assist disabled swimmers into the water. As far as he was aware the pools were completely inclusive and did not exclude anyone who wanted to use them.

24. CLOSING REMARKS

Councillor Smith thanked the Parish Councils' representatives for their attendance and closed the meeting at 7.30 p.m.