

MINUTES OF LOCAL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24 SEPTEMBER 2003

Local Committee for Mole Valley 26 November 2003

MINUTES: of the meeting of the Mole Valley Local Committee held at 08.00 on Wednesday 24 September 2003 at Charlwood Parish Hall

Surrey County Council Members

David Gollin - Chairman
Bob McKinley – Vice Chairman
Helyn Clack
Jim Smith
David Timms
Hazel Watson

[All references to Items refer to the Agenda for the meeting]

PART ONE - IN PUBLIC

74/03 The first part of this meeting consisted of an open public forum during which there was extensive discussion of issues of local interest or concern. A note of this session is appended to this minute.

PART TWO - IN PUBLIC

75/03 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 2]

No apologies for absence were received

76/03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

Declarations of interest were made by Hazel Watson, as Chairman of ProjX, and by Helyn Clack as a member of the Charlwood Players, both in respect of Item 12

77/03 PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS [Item 4]

No written public or Member questions were received

78/03 PETITIONS [Item 5]

No petitions were presented

79/03 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 May 2003 [Item 6]

The minutes were agreed as a true record and signed.

80/03 LIBRARIES ANNUAL REPORT [Item 7]

Sally Parker, Area Library Manager for Mid Surrey, presented her report to the Committee. She advised that although traditional book issues in static libraries had declined by about 5%, overall use, was generally holding steady, with Dorking on the increase. This is in line with the county trend of growth in large libraries and decline in smaller ones, and the service is making efforts to extend and retain its user base. Use of mobile libraries fell by 14% and most stops are only achieving issue levels well below target. The service is currently being reviewed for the first time in five years. Options for change will include introducing stops in more isolated urban areas and estates, even if within 2 miles of a static library, and other public points such as health clinics and stations.

The Committee were invited to comment and in particular to offer advice on improvements to the mobile library service. Officers were congratulated on the success of Dorking library

The subsequent discussion included the following points:

- Use of IT in libraries continues to be heavy, with queues at times,. There is now the potential to put internet access into mobiles too
- Some busy libraries, notably Bookham and Ashted, have now grown as much as they can within existing buildings and extended or additional services can only be introduced by removing bookspace. There may be scope at Dorking to convert the ground floor workroom for public use.
- Officers were encouraged to look at joint use of other vehicles, such as the ProjX van, which might be used for delivering other services during the day. It was also suggested that mobile services might be more actively promoted.
- The service is seeking to extend its work within the Self Reliance areas and is liaising with Richard Bailey, the North Leatherhead Partnership

worker, to over new initiatives for north Leatherhead, such as deposit book collections and the introduction of Bookcrawl (aimed at under 5's and their parents)

- Members were keen to discuss mobile services in greater detail and a meeting with the responsible Area manager, Chris Phillips, will be set up

The Committee

- I. Noted the range of service developments in Mole Valley.**
- II. Advised on the role of the Library Service in promoting self reliance.**
- III. Agreed to explore the opportunities offered by the Mobile Library Service, including use of IT and potential for Local Allocation support with the responsible Area Manager**

81/03 FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE REPORT [Item 8]

Stuart Gwilliam, Assistant Divisional Fire Officer (Fire Safety), introduced the report which showed that the Service' performance in the District had been among the most effective in Surrey during 2002/03, with a low incidence of fire and fire related injuries and a third consecutive year without a fatality. The role of the Fire and Rescue Service is being expanded to cover a wider community safety brief, including initiatives such as targeting abandoned vehicles, encouraging the fitting of smoke alarms and domestic sprinklers, and diversionary and educational activities with children and young people.

The officers were congratulated for their excellent performance record and discussed aspects of the report, including:

- Abandoned vehicles. Mr Gwilliam advised that the service were hoping to make a successful bid to central government funding for targeting abandoned vehicles. Mole Valley has a particular problem, especially in remoter areas such as Leith Hill. These are often burnt either to destroy evidence because they have been used for a crime, or because they are left too long and attract vandals.
- The District Council, as one of the few who still have considerable housing stock, is at the forefront of fitting smoke alarms. There are, however, a number of multi-occupant buildings, such as the Night Hostel which, in the officers' view, should be fitted with sprinkler systems. The Committee agreed that this might be an opportunity to work in partnership with District colleagues and agreed to take this up with them. The acting Local Director will also seek to identify other MVDC owned buildings with similar characteristics.
- Traffic calming measures do sometimes present difficulties for emergency vehicles and can add to their response times

The Committee

- I. Noted the service performance in Mole Valley.**
- II. Agreed in principle to financial support for fire prevention initiatives but would first discuss the potential for joint support with partners**

82/03 TRADING STANDARDS SERVICE REPORT [Item 9]

The Committee welcomed Richard Nowacki who presented the Trading Standards report. He advised the Committee that their work had a significant impact on community safety and Quality of Life and that, while there was no evidence of a particular problem with rogue trading, the service is planning a campaign on under age alcohol sales, particularly in the north of the District, starting in November. The service is working in partnership with adult services (jointly produced Think Twice video dealing with doorstep crime) and the police and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.

The Committee congratulated the service on the work being done and observed that much of this went unrecognised locally, although the Surrey team were seen as an exemplar nationally. They expressed concern that research had revealed that only 46% of the District's residents were aware of Trading Standards' work.

To combat this, members suggested a number of promotional options, including inclusion of TSD contacts in local community safety information directories, and greater publicity for the web-access to their complaints and advice services. Mr Nowacki advised that TSD had made an offer to staff the Community safety Vehicles from time to time

The Committee:

- I. Noted the report and recognised the Service's contribution to community safety in Mole Valley**
 - **In relation to doorstep crime and vulnerable people**
 - **In relation to underage sales**
- II. Agreed to use its influence to ensure that the Mole Valley Community Strategy and Community Safety Strategy better met the needs and concerns of Mole Valley consumers and businesses**

83/03 WASTE MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT [Item 10]

The Committee noted this report. Concern was registered about the low level of recycling in Mole Valley compared to the rest of Surrey which, it is hoped, the MRF will redress. The zero levels of glass recycling at the Ranmore Road and Randalls Road sites recorded in Annexe 4 were queried and subsequently found to be incorrect. The revised figures will be circulated at the next Committee meeting.

The Mailing Preference Service was welcomed but not thought to be widely known. It has since been clarified that leaflets are available through libraries

The Committee noted the report and

- I. Supported the County Council using financial incentives to Mole Valley DC whereby they will be encouraged to introduce and promote waste minimisation initiatives in their area.**
- II. Supported the County Council's aim to negotiate with SITA the continuation of the unique and successful landfill tax credits/SITA Surrey Partnership scheme.**
- III. Agreed to promote the use of the Mailing Preference Service within Mole Valley**

84/03 EMERGENCY PLANNING ANNUAL REPORT [Item 11]

This was noted. Members expressed concern that Mole Valley D C had not been represented on a number of the events noted in the report

85/03 MEMBERS' LOCAL ALLOCATION [Item 12]

A supplementary paper, detailing a number of additional bids for consideration was circulated at the meeting and is appended to this minute.

The Committee

- I. Approved the two bids in paragraphs 1 and 2**
- II. Noted the £962 already approved on two bids under the £500 threshold, as set out in Para 3**
- III. Approved the bid for £20,000 towards taxi vouchers set out in paragraph 1 of the supplementary paper, subject to a successful bid being made to the Countryside Agency**
- IV. Approved the four bids, totalling £14,100, set out in paragraphs 2 – 5 of the supplementary paper**
- V. Approved the allocation of £500 to the Charlwood Players bid set out in paragraph 6 of the supplementary paper and subsequently revised**
- VI. Noted the £1,500 already approved on three bids under the £500 threshold, as set out in paragraph 7 of the supplementary paper**

86/03 FORWARD PROGRAMME [Item 13]

This was noted.

[Meeting Ended: 10.25 pm]

Chairman

MOLE VALLEY LOCAL COMMITTEE, 24 September 2003.

Annexes:

1. Record of open public forum (Item 1)
2. Supplementary paper (Item 12)

1. Record of open public forum (Item 1)

- John Mell, headteacher of Charlwood Village Infant School, updated the meeting on the school's current activity and emphasised the importance of more children joining the school role. Historically children leaving the school go on to Horley schools and Charlwood is part of the Horley Learning Partnership. The school has been working with two or three Education Welfare Officers which can be a bit disjointed. The Partnership is looking forward to the imminent appointment of one EWO who would work with families across the whole range of support, and is also hoping to expand into Physical and Sensory Support, and work with traveller education. The County Council funds a project manager for the Horley Learning Partnership. This is currently Pam Wilson, who is retiring but will be replaced. The funding runs until March 2005. John invited community leaders to consider if there was any help or support they could give to the school.
- Hilary Sewill, of Charlwood Parish Council, also spoke to the meeting. She thanked the Local Committee for funding support for play equipment, especially new goalposts, but emphasised that both Charlwood play areas were reaching the end of their lives and a project to raise funds to renovate both was being launched. Other issues of local concern were:
 - petty vandalism, especially by 12 year olds and above. The village appreciates having a locally responsible police officer but he is based in Dorking and has a wide area to cover. The Community safety vehicle does come to the village but is under-used
 - traffic speed remains a big problem. The traffic calming measures introduced are not seen as having made enough of a difference and there is a strong local view that speed cameras should be introduced
- The general discussion included a number of topics, the main points of which were:
 - Bus services. It was clarified that smaller buses were not necessarily more economic to run than larger ones, though perhaps more versatile. The problem remains the uneconomic nature of rural bus services and limitations on the extent of subsidy that SCC can afford to maintain (£6m this year).

A number of options are being looked at by the East Surrey Rural Transport partnership. These include 'on-demand' buses (as already operate in north Dorking), which mix set routes with pick-ups by arrangement, taxi vouchers (for which funding was agreed later in the agenda), and moped rental for young people (though this was not met with great enthusiasm!).

The example of minibus use in Turkey was cited as an effective response to public transport needs. The north Dorking example – the Wasp bus – is a community bus funded with grant aid and operated by the Parish Councils. This could be done elsewhere but does require a lot of community support.

A Government funded review of community transport in Surrey is nearing completion

Traffic and roads. Hilary Sewill's comments were echoed by many of the audience, though there was some difference in opinion over the effectiveness of speed cameras. Radar traps were suggested as a more effective alternative since these are more random and would generate more income. It was pointed out however that the income goes to the Treasury and that signage needs to be checked to ensure it conforms exactly to the legal requirements if fines were going to be upheld.

There was a strong feeling against the 'cobblestones' that had been introduced into Charlwood as a speed management measure but which are seen locally as noisy and unsightly. One suggestion was made to use intermittent narrowing of the road, as has been used in Handcross. The village has also requested the installation of three mini-roundabouts and an offer was made for Helyn Clack to organise another meeting to discuss this. Members reminded the meeting that the law required lighting at roundabouts and that there had never been a majority of support for this option.

Speed is seen as the main problem in the village and enforcement of existing limits is seen as poor. Members pointed out that response to this was already underway with SCC funding mobile speed enforcement and the police appointing a Casualty Reduction Officer for Mole Valley who is targeting rural areas as a priority. The Community Safety Vehicle also has the equipment to do speed checks. The County Council and police have just agreed a speed strategy for the county

- Police responsiveness is set to improve with the introduction of satellite tracking of vehicles, to be introduced later this year and which will enable controllers to direct them individually rather than through broadcast messages as at present. The introduction of an improved phone contact process should also have made getting in touch with the police much more effective

It was pointed out that the Community Safety Vehicle is relatively under-subscribed in Charlwood and people were urged to spread the word. It requires two people to staff it and the first six months of operation will soon be reviewed. Longer visits may be an option.

- The County Council was thanked for its steadfast support in opposing the proposals for runway extension at Gatwick. It was emphasised that, quite apart from the environmental and community impact on the village, the proposed expansion would also bring a great deal more traffic onto the roads, exacerbating the problems already discussed. A booklet emphasising the concerns of the communities that would be affected by Gatwick expansion was circulated at the meeting with a message to send copies to anyone with influence.
- District Councillor Don Webb thanked the Local Committee for coming to the village and asked if there was scope for a one-stop shop to be developed to deliver a range of services locally, including Post office services since the village had recently lost its PO. It was noted that there is a Working in the Countryside Group currently looking at village shops, and also that electronic access to services from local shops was also being explored, though this did require a degree of IT skill from shop-keepers. With the lifting of restrictions on County Councils becoming involved with private partners there is more scope to support commercial ventures but the main obstacle to so doing remains the lack of suitable premises.
- Mrs King of Charlwood Players addressed the meeting to endorse the bid for funding towards the Christmas production that would later be considered (and agreed) by the Committee. She emphasised the community nature of the Players work and the wide range of people who took part.

2. Supplementary paper circulated at the meeting (Item 12)

MEMBERS' LOCAL ALLOCATION

SUPPLEMENTARY PAPER

KEY ISSUE:

To consider 9 further bids against the Members' Local Allocation in addition to those included in the agenda paper for Item 9

SUMMARY:

The 9 bids included in this supplementary paper have been reviewed and are presented for consideration by the committee. The total value of these bids is £36,600, which, if approved, would bring the total commitment to date to £61,089, or 57% of the available funding.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Local Committee

- (i) Approves the bid for £20,000 towards taxi vouchers set out in paragraph 1, subject to a successful bid being made to the Countryside Agency**
- (ii) Approves the five bids, totalling £15,100, set out in paragraphs 2 - 6**
- (iii) Notes the £1,500 already approved on three bids under the £500 threshold, as set out in paragraph 7**

OUTLINE OF BIDS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Taxi vouchers - £20,000 (Proposed by Hazel Watson and Helyn Clack)

This project is to enhance and extend the successful taxi voucher scheme that has been in operation in the Tandridge district for over 7 years. There is the potential for a combined bid with Charlwood Parish Council to the Countryside Agency's Parish Transport Grant for a two year project which will offer £140 worth of taxi vouchers to 144 people in the Mole Valley. The scheme would be open to people with mobility difficulties, mainly in rural areas, who are unable to use conventional bus services and do not have access to their own car. It will contribute towards a reduction in rural isolation and promote social inclusion amongst a percentage of the rural population who are unable to undertake activities that most of us accept as everyday. The project will complement the existing dial a ride services that operate in Mole Valley and will offer more choice to those who are eligible. It may well lead to the dial a ride having to make less journeys to remote locations, which can only benefit the overall operation of the dial a ride scheme.

Taxi voucher recipients will be able to make journeys that previously they had never considered, due to lack of appropriate transport. They are permitted to use their vouchers in the way that they will get maximum benefit from. Some will use the vouchers sparingly to travel every week into a nearby town to go shopping or to visit a friend. Others may wish to make longer journeys, perhaps to the coast two or three times a year. Studies of the travel diaries from the Tandridge scheme show that a large proportion of journeys are for medical or health appointments, where other transport is often unavailable.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Local Committee approves this funding subject to a successful bid being made to the Countryside Agency

2. BMX track in Dorking - £5,000 (Proposed by David Timms)

Some enterprising youngsters recently built themselves an "unofficial" BMX Track in woodland in eastern Dorking. This was stopped on safety grounds by Mole Valley District Council. However all concerned, including MVDC, are keen that a safe facility of this kind should be provided to meet the obvious demand. This funding would make a substantial contribution towards construction of a BMX Cycle Track for young people in the Dorking area. It will provide young people with a safe, properly constructed off-road facility for exercise, constructive activity and simply letting off steam.

3. Blackborough Club - £4,750 (Proposed by David Timms)

The Dorking Satellite of the Blackborough Club and Enterprise provides a drop-in club for people with mental health problems. If funding cannot be found, the Club will cease to operate in Dorking from December 2003. This funding would enable the club to continue to operate in Clarendon House, Dorking, beyond December 2003.

4. Harvest Church - £2,350 (Proposed by David Timms)

The Harvest Community Church on the Goodwyns Estate in Dorking hosts a weekly children's and youth club on its premises, open to all local young people, not just churchgoers. The club is so popular that the consequent heavy use has damaged the floor tiles, which are becoming unsafe. A heavy duty carpet has been advised as the best way of enabling the community youth use to continue in this area of relatively high deprivation, disadvantage and social problems. The funding would enable Burmatex "Classic" carpet to be supplied and fitted in the entrance hall area and main hall

5. ALDAG - £2,000 (Proposed by David Gollin)

ALDAG (Ashtead Learning Disabilities Action Group) are proposing to hold a two week peer group activity week during the long summer break for approximately 12 to 15 young adults with learning difficulties between the ages of 16 and 30. The group will be based in Ashtead, headed by two paid staff both experienced in Learning Disabilities, and supported by a team of volunteers. They will need a base for the in-house days and a mini bus for transport on days out. It is proposed that they shall have a total of 5 days in and 5 days out. Participants will be required to pay a fee for the two weeks plus any entrance costs, additional transport costs e.g. train fares.

The Local Committee supported a similar event last year which was a great success.

6. Charlwood Players - £1,000 (Proposed by Helyn Clack)*

Charlwood Players is a village community organisation incorporating all ages. The society has provided local entertainment for villagers for over 25 years and encourages the participation of anyone and everyone however small a contribution this may be. The average cost of a production is £3000 - £4000. We endeavour to keep ticket costs affordable to ensure the entertainment is available to all. There is generally a deficit of £1500 - £2000, which has to be achieved through fund raising. Funding is sought for a pantomime production to be presented in November 2003.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Local Committee approves the funding bids 2 – 6 as detailed above

7. The remaining three bids do not exceed the £500 limit and are presented for the Committee to note:

- a) **Contribution towards the construction of a path at St Pauls School, Dorking - £500 (Proposed by David Timms)**
- b) **Contribution towards the cost of roof repairs at St Martins Church, Dorking - £500 (Proposed by David Timms)**
- c) **Installation of a replacement gas pipe for Bookham & Effingham guides - £500 (Proposed by Jim Smith)**

Report by: Ian Dewar, Local Support Officer, 01372 363918

* nb: The committee were advised at the meeting that the Charlwood Players had been very successful in local fund-raising and that the amount requested was reduced to £500.