

MINUTES: of the extraordinary meeting of the Tandridge Local Committee held at 7.00pm on Wednesday 7th May 2008 in the Meridian Dining Hall, Oxted School, Bluehouse Lane, Oxted.

County Council Members

- * Mr David Hodge - Chairman
- * Marian Myland - Vice-Chairman
Mr Peter Langham
- * Mrs Sally Ann B Marks
- * Mr Ken Rimington
- * Mr N W Skellett

District Council Members

- Cllr Richard Allen
- * Cllr Martin Fisher
- * Cllr Alan Jones
- * Cllr Eric Morgan
Cllr Brian Perkins
Cllr Jeremy Pursehouse

* = Present

[NOTE: The office bearers for the Local Committees were announced at Surrey County Council's Annual General Meeting on 6th May 2008 and, as this resulted in a change to the existing Committee, the meeting was opened by the proper officer, Mrs Lynne Martin, Area Director (East) who introduced the new chairman, Mr David Hodge, and handed over the chair to him. Mr Hodge took the opportunity to remind members of the public that this was not a public meeting but a meeting held in public and that, with the exception of formal questions and petitions, only members and attending officers would be permitted to speak.]

14/08 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Mr Peter Langham, District Councillor Brian Perkins, (District Councillor Barry Compton substituting), Richard Allen, (District Councillor Gordon Keymer substituting) and Jeremy Pursehouse, (District Councillor Lisa Bangs substituting).

[NOTE: The recent District Council elections resulted in two members of the Local Committee no longer being District Councillors and, as the new office bearers for the District Council had not yet been announced, substitutions were accepted for this extraordinary meeting called by the Chairman of the Local Committee.]

15/08 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 MARCH 2008 [Item 2]

Were postponed until 20 June 2008 [under Paras 7.2 and 7.3 of Part 4 of the Constitution (Standing Orders)].

16/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

Mrs Sally Ann Marks declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest due to her position on Woldingham Parish Council. There were no other declarations of interest.

17/08 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS** [Item 4]

Mrs Angela Muscio asked the following question on behalf of the residents of Chalk Pit Lane.

"Bearing in mind that the Leader of Surrey County Council has previously stated that he agrees that the current situation is intolerable to local residents of Oxted, we would like to remind Members that there are strong concerns for the safety of 2,500 local children, many of whom walk to school along the route taken by the HGVs as they exit from the quarry and drive through the centre of Oxted up to the A25 and, without wishing to pre-empt the outcome of the report, would ask that Councillors undertake a comprehensive review of the licences and permits issued to the quarry operator to ensure that the proper environmental impact assessments were carried out and to take whatever appropriate action is open to them to enforce any legal requirements that will reduce the impact of quarry operations on the local community. Will they do so?"

The Chairman thanked her for reading her question and responded that he had passed on her concerns to the Environment Agency.

18/08 **PETITIONS** [Item 5]

The following petition, with over 1200 signatures, was presented by Mr Keith Newell on behalf of the Wolding Action Group.

We, the undersigned residents of Chelsham & Farleigh, Godstone, Limsfield, Oxted, Tatsfield, Titsey, Warlingham, Whyteleafe and Woldingham request that the members of the SCC's Tandridge Local Committee reject any proposal that will increase the number of heavy goods vehicles on The Ridge. An increase in HGV traffic will pose a serious threat the safety of those using roads in and around our village and particularly to children attending local schools.

We feel strongly that the established historic route* for access and egress to and from the Quarry be enforced by the appropriate legislation.

**The route referred to being from the A25 roundabout at its junction with Barrow Green Road and passing along that road to its junction with Chalkpit Lane and thus to the Quarry. Vehicles leaving the Quarry will retrace their inward route to return to the A25. Residents' safety will be further enhanced by the introduction of a 20 mph speed limit.*

The Chairman accepted the petition and allowed Mr Newell three minutes to present his case. He then adjudged that the content of the petition would be addressed in a report coming to committee on 20 June and deferred a formal response until that time.

19/08 **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS** [Item 6]

There were none.

20/08 **CHALKPIT LANE AND OXTED QUARRY TRAFFIC** [Item 7]

This report called on Members to consider the possibilities for amelioration of the problems being caused by traffic accessing Oxted Quarry, situated off Chalkpit Lane in Oxted. A

petition presented to the last meeting of the Local Committee requested action to alleviate the problems and suggested a one-way system northbound in Chalkpit Lane.

The report was introduced by the Chairman who established that all Members of the Committee were familiar with the content and then opened the recommendations for debate.

As the recommendations did not specifically refer to the one-way option, District Councillor Gordon Keymer moved an amendment to recommendation (ii) as follows:

“A scheme for HGV amelioration measures in Oxted, including a detailed feasibility study for introducing a one-way system in Chalk Pit Lane north of the quarry, be considered for prioritisation with other integrated transport schemes in Tandridge and included in a [future (*deleted*)] report to the Local Committee on utilisation of the Local Transport Plan and Local Allocation budget at the next meeting of the Local Committee in June. Also that officers are charged with identifying other possible sources of funds for these measures.”

District Councillor Martin Fisher seconded the motion to amend recommendation (ii). After representations by Members to the amendment, the Chairman put the amendment to the vote.

It was RESOLVED that the amendment be moved and adopted by seven votes in favour; to two votes against and one abstention.

The Chairman formally adopted the amendment as the substantive recommendation (ii).

For the benefit of the public he went on to explain that Highways priorities for funding for the current financial year were due to be debated at the next ordinary meeting of the Local Committee and that, if funding was agreed for a feasibility study for a one-way system, or indeed any other option, that this would necessarily adversely affect other proposed schemes so the decision could not be taken until that time. He then opened the recommendations up for debate.

Mrs Sally Ann Marks was not in favour of either recommendation and she took the Committee through the report in some detail, raising a number of concerns. District Councillor Lisa Bangs then called into question the adequacy of the report content. The Chairman called on Alan Stones, Development Control Team Manager, to respond as he was particularly well placed to respond to a number of technical points and to describe the progress being made on the potential planning application from the operator in respect of the proposed haul route.

District Councillor Martin Fisher, who favoured the one-way system, then went through the report giving his view and in summary contended that some of the options presented in the report lacked imagination and might not be viable. He reiterated that his primary concern was the safety of local school children.

Mr Nick Skellett made clear his preference for the haul route option but said he would back the one-way system should his preferred option founder.

He commented that debating the fine detail detracted from the larger picture and fed what was already a highly emotionally charged issue with the potential to split the community. He regretted that the local committee was not best placed to make a ruling as the Members round the table were all extremely passionate about furthering the interests of the local residents in their own divisions and that the Committee composition on the evening did not reflect a balanced geographical representation.

However, if the planning application for a haul road went ahead, the decision would not be taken by the Local Committee but by the Planning and Regulation Committee at County Hall

and, if this did not come to fruition, the one-way option was likely to be unresolved and therefore would have to go to a public enquiry, in which case that decision, too, would be taken outside of the Local Committee.

He concluded by saying that, regardless of the outcome of either recommendation, the individual Members of the Local Committee would continue to make the case in the strongest possible terms in favour of their local communities and, in the meantime, he had not lost sight of the fact that the Committee and the community found themselves in this situation because of a decision taken at a distance by a Government department which clearly had no understanding of its impact.

Mr Skellett indicated that, in his role as Leader of Surrey County Council, he had asked the County solicitors to look at the roles of the Environment Agency and the County and District Councils to see how the planning process could be influenced to take into account impact on local communities. For example, by taking the decisions incrementally and looking at them on a yearly, rather than daily basis, government officers would be more aware of the accumulation of pressures and, while continuing to further the interests of commerce and industry, would be less likely to mistake legitimate concerns for nimbyism when taking decisions that would have a long term impact on local communities.

The Chairman drew the debate to a close by reading the recommendations and asking for a show of hands. Both recommendations were carried by seven votes for; two votes against and one abstention.

It was, therefore, RESOLVED that:

- (i) the County Council continue to encourage the submission of a planning application for a new haul road within the quarry site, and that
- (ii) a scheme for HGV amelioration measures in Oxted, including a detailed feasibility study for introducing a one-way system in Chalk Pit Lane north of the quarry, be considered for prioritisation with other integrated transport schemes in Tandridge and included in a report to the Local Committee on utilisation of the Local Transport Plan and Local Allocation budget at the next meeting of the Local Committee in June. Also that officers be charged with identifying other possible sources of funds for these measures.

The Chairman then asked Highways officers to include all aspects in the next report.

[Meeting Ended: 8.41 pm]

Chairman