



Minutes of the Local Committee for Woking  
General Agenda  
Meeting held at 7.30 pm on 1 March 2004  
at  
the Mosque, Oriental Road, Woking.

Members present:

Mr David Rousell - Chairman  
Mr Geoff Marlow – Vice-Chairman  
Mrs Elizabeth Compton

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**Part One – In Public**

[All references to items refer to the agenda for the meeting]

17/04 **Apologies for absence** [Item 1]

Mrs Val Tinney gave her apologies for absence.

18/04 **Minutes of last meeting held on 28 January 2004** [Item 2]

Confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

19/04 **Declarations of interests** [Item 3]

No declarations of interest in accordance with Standing Order 58 were made.

20/04 **Petitions** [Item 4]

No petitions in accordance with Standing Order 62 were received.

21/04 **Written Public Questions** [Item 5]

There were no written public questions.

22/04 **Written Members' Questions** [Item 6]

There were no written member questions.

**Executive Functions**

23/04 **Youth Council Proposal for Members' Allocation** [Item 7]

Tristram Smith, the Treasurer of the Youth Council, presented a report which was tabled at the meeting on the Youth Council's proposal for spending the £5,000 allocated to them.

The proposal was to organise a youth festival in August 2004 that will offer young people and their families an opportunity to take part in activities and to access youth related information.

In response to questions regarding the event, Tristram explained that there are no plans to charge for the event, and most services that will have stalls are providing their services free of charge. The main aim is to raise the profile of the Youth Council rather than to raise funds.

**RESOLVED**

Members agreed the allocation of £5000 to the Youth Council for this purpose.

24/04 **Local Educational Attainment Report for Woking (2002/03)**  
[Item 8]

Mick Michell presented the report which described school and educational attainment in Woking as well as key issues for the future, including the review of primary school and secondary school places. The slight drop in achievement at key stage 3 is a national issue, and the Government is putting money in to improve the progress of children at this stage.

Mr Marlow stated that the report should focus on children in Woking, rather than Woking schools. Officers replied that this would become easier in the future when all pupils will be given an individual number. As this was not possible at the moment, they agreed to circulate to Mr Marlow data for Fullbrook School, which the majority of children in the east of the borough attend.

In response to a question regarding truancy, officers said that a large proportion of children stopped on the truancy patrols are in the company of their parents. Many schools are now not authorising absence during term time.

Members noted the report and thanked the officers for attending.

**25/04 Surrey Children's Service – Services for Children with Special Needs** [Item 9]

Paula Evans introduced the report which described educational support services for children and schools.

Before the Multi-Professional Teams (MPT) were established, if a school was concerned about a pupil, then they would have to contact all the support services separately. Now they just contact the MPT, which sorts out an action plan for the child. This results in an increased efficiency in dealing with cases.

Mr Marlow stated that the report should focus on Woking pupils rather than Woking schools, or at least contain information on schools that Woking children attend.

In response to a question from Mrs Compton regarding support for children making decisions on what to do when they leave school, officers explained that each school has a Connexions Personal Advisor to help with this. In addition the Youth Service is working closely with a number of children.

In response to a question from Mr Rousell regarding feedback from parents on the MPT, officers explained that the only difference parents should see is the speed that their child is dealt with. They still see the personal interaction with the individual elements of the MPT.

Members noted the report and thanked the officers for attending.

**26/04 Discussion of Key Issues within the Community** [Item 10]

The Committee agreed to adjourn the meeting to enable open discussion with members of the community. Annex 1 sets out details of these discussions.

**27/04 Outcomes of discussions with community** [Item 11]

The meeting was formally reconvened and officers were instructed to reply to questions raised during discussions where no answer had been given at the time.

28/04 **Exclusion of the Press and Public** [Item 12]

There was no business that required the public to be excluded from the meeting under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972.

[The meeting ended at 9.20 pm]

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Chairman

## **Summary of issues raised by Maybury and Sheerwater Residents**

### **Education:**

- i. A member of the community said that there should be opportunities for children to develop a technical skill if they are not interested in mainstream education. Officers explained that since September 2003 the Government has relaxed the National Curriculum for children over 14. Most schools have started work related study for appropriate students where the standard National Curriculum is not appropriate. Children can spend up to 1-2 days in a work place, 1-2 days at a technical college and 1-2 days at school. Individual packages are put together to cater for individual needs.
- ii. Vulnerable children who may be at risk of criminal behaviour are monitored, some through the Community Incident Action Group.
- iii. Regarding the spread of special needs students in Woking secondary schools, officers said that there is an even spread across mainstream schools. Bishop David Brown and Woking High have a higher proportion of children with English as an additional language.
- iv. Reasons why there is a drop in achievement at Key Stage 3 include:
  - a. Children become physically/sexually mature
  - b. Change from primary to secondary school and the loss of the close support network
  - c. Difference in size of primary and secondary schools.As well as Surrey, the Government is seeking to address these issues nationally.
- v. The Government has included value added scores to school league tables to give a more accurate picture of school achievement. It is likely that the attainment information will still be produced as it is highly sought after by parents.
- vi. It was stated by a member of the community that some schools are discriminatory over who they admit. Officers said that all Surrey schools must have an equal opportunities policy and that if anyone believes a school is being discriminatory, they should report it to the Local Education Officer.
- vii. Children from the local community often take extended leave to go back to Pakistan. Issues arising from this include:
  - a. The child's place is funded as if they are on extended leave therefore the school may not get funding for that place
  - b. There are no educational packs available for children to take with them. Other areas of the country provide these.It was agreed that officers would take these points back and see what can be done.
- viii. A questioner challenged the fact that schools charge children who want to take exams early. Officers said that it was up to the school governors whether the school or the parents pay.

- ix. A questioner said that adults who want to take exams are referred to Bristol or Cardiff. Officers suggested that he should contact Brooklands College, which is the most local place to Woking.
- x. In response to a question on the timing of the primary school review, it was noted that informal discussions with head teachers and governors are on going. It is envisaged that a consultation document will be available this summer.
- xi. A questioner asked why teachers with qualifications from Europe have less bureaucratic hurdles than teachers with qualifications from Africa. Officers said that Surrey County Council and Surrey schools must obey Government guidance, and offered to find out where the questioner should address criticisms of Government policy.

### **Public Transport**

- i. A member of the community said that public transport was too expensive for people and families (particularly buses) in and around Woking. Officers said that people rarely made an accurate comparison between the cost of running a car and the operational cost of running buses and or trains. The usual comparison people made is only between fares and petrol prices, they ignore the cost of purchasing the vehicle, depreciation, servicing, insurance, road tax, replacement parts and then the cost per mile of petrol. Officers thanked the contributor for raising the issue of price and accepted there was probably a need to demonstrate the true cost of owning and running a car. Therefore, the Local Transportation Service would seek to incorporate this into future information related to public transport

### **Leisure Facilities**

- i. Several people said that there is not enough open space in Maybury, and asked for the playing fields on Alpha Road to be kept available for the community to use. The Chairman pointed out that Woking Borough Council is the planning authority, and therefore makes the decision whether the use of the land can be changed to housing. He added that in general he feels it is important that children's education includes team sports.

### **Housing Grants**

- i. A member of the community asked who set the criteria for eligibility for housing repair grants, which do not reflect the high cost of housing locally. Christine Holloway agreed to find out.