

# RURAL VOICES RURAL CHOICES

## PARTNERSHIP MEETING NOTES

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2004

**Present:** Cllr Shirley James (Chair), Lewes District Council  
Dr Alex MacGillivray, Barcombe PC/LDALPC  
Willie Edmonds, Rodmell PC  
Sally Harper, Lewes District Council  
Sgt Jeff Woodall, Sussex Police  
Sgt Richard Mitchell, Sussex Police  
Jill Harrison, Southease Parish Meeting  
Alan Cook, ESCC Transport Strategy  
Melanie Cutress, Falmer PC  
Tom Carr, Falmer PC  
Tom Hawthorne, RDH Services  
Tom Jones, Ditchling PC  
Colin Scott, Wivelsfield PC  
John Cornwell, Barcombe PC  
Christine Arbenz, Barcombe PC  
Veronica Humphrey, Ringmer PC  
Pauline Lewis, Ringmer PC  
Terry Squires, Hamsey PC  
Teresa Gittins, Action in rural Sussex  
Paul Rideout, South Downs CVS  
Brenda Watson, Plumpton PC

All were welcomed to the meeting and introduced themselves.

### 1. Apologies

Roger Moore, LDC Housing; Jemma Wary, AirS; Tony Gedge, Streat PM; John Crabb, Kingston PC; Ian Chisnall, Churches Together/Lewes District LSP

### 2. Notes of the last meeting & matters arising

The notes of the last meeting were discussed. Matters arising that were not covered on the agenda:

- **Police** - Sgt Mitchell is based at Lewes Police Station and can be contacted on his mobile on 07887626118. Alex mentioned that the Police surgery at Barcombe currently operates at set times which means that not all villagers can access the service. Also villagers are not bothering to report crime and have become disillusioned with the service.

It was proposed that incidents could be reported to the Parish Clerk to be passed on to the Police but where possible, people should be encouraged to report directly to the Police.

If crimes aren't reported then the Police can not respond. The surgeries in Ringmer, Newick and Plumpton are reasonably successful although they could be advertised more widely perhaps in the parish magazines.

The forthcoming District Support Vehicle will provide a high visibility presence and may resolve some of the feelings of lack of police presence in the villages (*see CDRP update later*).

**Pathways to Prosperity** – Both AirS and ESCC have European funding to improve footpaths and to signpost people to local tourism related businesses en route. AirS are identifying businesses in Barcombe, Newick, Chailey and Ditchling that want to be involved. ESCC are concentrating on the villages north of Lewes and there is already a project running in the south of the town.

It was stated that the farm shop at Falmer could benefit from being included in this project.

**Action: Teresa Gittins will ask the AirS officers involved in the project to speak to the parishes involved to discuss the findings of the work so far**

**Action: ESCC and AirS will be asked at the next LSP meeting to ensure that they liaise directly with each other on this project**

### **3. Feedback on Parishes workshop and future engagement**

The Parishes workshop held at Cooksbridge was attended by 4 parishes, which coupled with attendances from the previous workshop means that 10 parishes have now been represented at the workshops out of a possible 23 (excluding towns).

The format for the workshop was similar to the first and began by providing the context or RVRC. Presentations were made on the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), the Community Strategy, RVRC, the Lewes District Association of Local & Parish Councils focussing on how it all fits together.

Attendees also heard how a parish plan may be useful in representing villagers' views which was illustrated by Pauline Lewis from Ringmer PC who spoke of Ringmer's experiences in developing its plan.

Feedback was generally positive with attendees finding the presentations, the opportunity to network and to find out more about the LSP and its context as being the most useful elements. There were no negative comments but one attendee felt that it was a shame that there wasn't more time available on the night.

**Action: All felt that structure diagram would be useful to illustrate the different organisations and group that are represented in the LSP network**

### **4. C7 7 miles 7 villages project progress**

Alan Cook spoke of ESCC's 5 year Transport Plan 2001-2005 which contains many schemes. At the moment, 38 of these are being worked on in the west of the county.

Alan has to outline schemes for the rest of the county, which will include the Lewes District. The C7 junction at the Ring Road in Newhaven will be included in the Newhaven strategy but not the rest of the Ouse Valley.

He thanked Willie Edmonds for the "C7 7 miles 7 villages" paper and stated that the scheme seems straight forward. Bids will be invited for new schemes from 2005 as there will be no new investment now until 2006.

**Action: In the meantime, Alan would like to meet with the key person involved in the project to run through the main issues and bottle necks**

Alan explained that schemes could relate to many different transport themes including motorised vehicles (parking, accident blackspots, hazards, speeding/traffic calming, public transport, buses, school issues etc), walking, cycling, horseriding, freight travel etc.

Consultation with local people will need to happen. It was agreed that finding the right groups of people to consult with was hard so Alan requested that RVRC be the rural vehicle for feeding schemes into the strategy. Businesses will also be included in any consultation and Alan has spoken to the Chair of the Chamber of Commerce.

This raised the issue of how the priorities already identified in parish plans can be incorporated in strategic district issues such as this. It is clear that a structure needs to be in place to allow this to happen. It was also recognised that parishes are at different stages of developing plans and those that have plans completed, such as Ringmer, shouldn't be held back in feeding priorities in separately at this stage.

**Action: Pauline Lewis to send Alan a Ringer Parish Plan**

**Action: Parish Plans be a standing agenda item at RVRC meetings**

**Action: Ieuan Sherwood from AirS, to be asked to propose how generic issues could be extracted from the plans on an on-going basis for the purposes of RVRC picking up collectively or to feed into strategic documents**

## **5. Roles of Lewes District Association of Local & Parish Councils and RVRC**

Alex MacGillivray compared the roles of the District Association and that of RVRC. He explained that the District Association meets 3 times a year covering similar topics to RVRC. There have been concerns raised from parishes about possible duplication and that a merger of the bodies should result.

After much discussion at two District Association meetings, it was decided that the status quo should be maintained at present, as there are sufficient differences between the bodies. In addition, as many parishes as possible should be encouraged to attend RVRC.

Alex referred to David Paine from the Government Office of the South East (GOSE), who has stated that issues in Parish Plans will need to be included in the Local

Development Framework (LDF). He also referred to a letter sent by Cllr Neil Commin (Lead Councillor for Planning at Lewes District Council) which explains how LDF's will consider parish plans.

It is felt that further guidance from GOSE is needed.

## **6. Terms of Reference for RVRC**

Paul Rideout introduced himself as Director of South Downs Council for Voluntary Service (SDCVS). He explained that SDCVS has assisted some of the other area partnerships to establish and that there are various models that could be chosen for a framework for working for RVRC.

Paul suggested that the most suitable model would be for RVRC to become a Company Limited by Guarantee and registered as a charity.

He has already spoken to an outside facilitator who would be available to help with the process, namely Graham Allen who worked with the other area partnerships and the LSP itself. Graham costs £300 per day. Sally Harper agreed that Lewes District Council cover the fee for two days as it did with the other partnerships.

Paul pointed out that if one of the main aims of formally structuring RVRC is to attract funding, then that structure should suit any potential bids.

**Action: Paul to ask Graham to organise two x two hour workshop sessions in May (prior to the next RVRC meeting) and to identify who to attend**

## **7. Falmer Parish Issues e.g. parking**

Falmer has a major problem of cars being parked around the village and pond during the day, which is generally caused by students attending the University of Sussex. Melanie Cutress reported that there are 340 parking spaces at the University but there had been 1500 applications for them. This has resulted in this local beauty spot being congested with cars thus discouraging any tourists to appreciate the village and pond area.

The Parish Council has approached ESCC for a solution but were told that it would cost £67,000 to implement a parking scheme. The Parish has asked the University if it is willing to fund such a scheme.

The Parish is also concerned about the further potential impact on parking if a football stadium is built in Falmer.

Alan Cook explained that there is no possible way to fast track schemes as there are so many waiting to be done in Sussex.

**Action: The LSP be asked to write to the University to support Falmer in its cause**

## **8. Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership update**

Sgt Richard Mitchell spoke of a new District Support Vehicle which will provide a mobile unit for the villages in time. Before it can be deployed the most suitable times and venues for each village need to be established.

**Action: Sally Harper to send out a proforma to parishes with the notes of the meeting. Sgt Mitchell to supply proforma.**

- Community Support Officers - There will be six Community Support Officers in place by late spring/early summer, who will work in the rural areas of the district.
- Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) – Sgt Mitchell stated that the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) has a pot of money to allocate to parishes to contribute to the purchase of SID's. Sally Harper questioned the accuracy of this information.

Neighbouring Parish Councils could share the cost and work together but need to inform the Police if a SID is needed. Ditchling PC stated that it would be putting in a bid. Other parishes stated that the cost is too high.

**Action: Parishes to determine if they want to link with a neighbouring parish to purchase a SID and to inform the Police at the next RVRC meeting**

- High Visibility Policing – The District Commander, CI Bob Gough would like to have a Memorandum of Understanding which will be a code of practice to make parishes aware of Sussex Police's commitment to high visibility policing in villages.

Sgt Mitchell will approach the Lewes District Association of Local & Parish Councils to ascertain views on this issue.

## **9. RVRC transport/traffic issues & Lewes District Transport Group progress**

Tom Hawthorne reported on the progress made on several of the youth priorities:

- Bus services that come into school after extra curricular activities - Contact has been made with Chailey School and the 121 Lewes–Newick can call into the school a couple of times at these times. This will begin as a trial in April until the end of the summer term
- Trips to places like Chessington – this may not be feasible as although the transport could be provided, the personnel to supervise young people may not be available. Tom will speak to Chailey & Ringmer Schools

The Country links bus is going well but more parishes need to be engaged. It needs to be re-advertised. Some people have complained to RDH that they cannot reach Newick from Barcombe.

ESCC has circulated its consultation paper on funded bus services in the Lewes areas. Tom urges parishes to be involved as it is a chance to affect decisions.

Lewes District Transport Group has developed themes for a matrix of issues concerning all the area partnerships and RVRC's issues are well represented. An action plan is being written.

ESCC is re-promoting School Travel Plans and is encouraging schools to bid for capital funding available to them (£5k primary, £10k secondary).

There was some frustration that key consultation papers are not being sent to the correct people in the parishes. ESCC has sent papers to the local district councillor or parish councillors and not to the Parish Clerk.

**Action: Clarify to ESCC at the LSP that papers should also be sent to Parish Clerks**

### **10. Declaration of Interest**

All declarations of interest should be made at the start of every RVRC meeting.

### **11. Any Other Business**

The question of cross-boundary working between LSP's was raised and the importance of being informed about issues that neighbouring parishes and areas are working on.

**Action: A representative from Mid Sussex LSP will be invited to a future RVRC meeting to share issues**

### **12. Meeting dates for the year and venue/agenda for the next meeting**

Thursday May 20 – Newick, The Church Barn 7pm (to be confirmed)

Thursday July 15 – Westmeston Village Hall (to be confirmed)

Thursday September 16

Thursday November 11