

RURAL VOICES RURAL CHOICES

PARTNERSHIP MEETING NOTES

Thursday 20th May 2004

Present: Cllr Shirley James (Chair), Lewes District Council
Dr Alex MacGillivray, Barcombe PC/LDALPC
Willie Edmonds, Rodmell PC
Sally Harper, Lewes District Council
Debbie Portchmouth, Lewes District Council
Sgt Richard Mitchell, Sussex Police
Melanie Cutress, Falmer PC
Tom Jones, Ditchling PC
Colin Scott, Wivelsfield PC
John Cornwell, Barcombe PC
Christine Arbenz, Barcombe PC
Veronica Humphrey, Ringmer PC
Pauline Lewis, Ringmer PC
Rebecca Meitlis, Hamsey PC
Jemma Wray, Action in rural Sussex
Brenda Watson, Plumpton PC
Jill Holmes, Ditchling PC
David Lloyd, Barcombe PC
Jackie Cornwell, Barcombe PC
Iris Rook, Village Elders Care Afternoon
Dilys Skan, Barcombe PC
Cllr Sarah Osborne, Lewes DC/East Chiltington/St John/Plumpton
Ian Chisnall, Churches Together in Sussex

All were welcomed to the meeting and introduced themselves.

1. Apologies

Roger Moore, LDC Housing; Teresa Gittins, AirS; Ieuan Sherwood, AirS; Paul Rideout, SD CVS; Sgt Jeff Woodall, Sussex Police; PC Mark Cranley, Sussex Police

2. Notes of the last meeting & matters arising

The notes of the last meeting were agreed.

The Chair also made it clear that only one representative from each parish was entitled to vote on any issue at the meeting.

Melanie Cutress reported that The University of Brighton had agreed to contribute £6,500 to implement parking controls. The village is also being included in the ESCC plans for decriminalisation of parking.

At the last LSP, Shirley James had raised the issue of the joint work needed between AirS & ESCC on the Pathways to Prosperity programme and the need for ESCC to ensure that it corresponds with parish councils as well as district councillors on key programmes & documents. Cllr Bob Tidy will report back to Shirley at the next LSP.

3. Local Development Framework

Debbie Portchmouth, Senior Planning Officer at Lewes District Council, made a presentation on the new Local Development Framework (appended) and its links to RVRC.

She reported that the new Planning Act gained royal Assent in May, which means that the LDF can now be rolled out across the district.

There will be a series of "Open Houses" during week 20th-24th July in the towns and at Newick where members of the public can participate in consultations on the LDF.

There were several questions put to Debbie who gave the following additional information:

- If an identified site for housing is over a particular threshold (15) then a parish council can stipulate that 25% of it can be affordable or exception sites
- There are very few sites in the rural areas identified in the Urban Capacity Study. Available sites that have been pin pointed include Baxters Print Works, Weyban Smith Joinery which needs to be relocated and Newhaven Port & Beech Road
- Further clarification is needed on where there are gaps in the provision of Green Spaces & play areas in the parishes as PMP consultants, who are undertaking the research work, are reporting that provision is adequate
- If the district gets an increase in its housing allocation, it may need to look at Greenfield space.
- A stronger link is needed to housing need e.g. to prevent young people outwardly migrating as they can't afford to get on the property ladder, or that unoccupied/empty houses are taken into account

Action: For RVRC members that want to look more in depth at the Urban Capacity Study there is a web link to it from the Lewes District Local Plan webpage on www.lewes.gov.uk

4. Parish Plans

Sally Harper reported on behalf of Ieuan Sherwood from AirS who had tabled a paper on the current progress of parish plans in the district and the commitment that AirS can give to developing them. In particular it is trying to provide support now that the Countyside Agency has closed its Vital Villages programme to new applicants.

His full report is appended for information.

Pauline Lewis was concerned that the planning element in the Ringmer Parish Plan may be ignored in the new Local Development Framework. Debbie confirmed that the LDF doesn't have to adhere to the recommendations of parish plans but obviously consideration would be given to them within the rules of the new system.

5. Terms of Reference for RVRC

Sally Harper reported that she had met with a consultant, Graham Allen, together with Paul Rideout from South Downs CVS, to scope out the piece of work to write the terms of reference for the partnership.

The next step was to convene a small sub group to discuss the likely contents in order to provide Graham with the details to write the draft document. The sub-group shall comprise Alex, Shirley, Sally plus Tom Carr and Paul Rideout having input via email.

Action: Graham Allen to convene the meeting and to produce a draft to discuss at the next RVRC meeting

6. Children & Young People's Working Group

Sally Harper reported on behalf of the Children & Young People's Working Group (the sub group of the LSP). The Youth Development Service (ESCC) had agreed to take on the responsibility for the running of the group and has employed a part-time Co-ordinator for that purpose. Lloyd Russell-Moyle will work 5 hours a week and will begin by mapping partnerships in the Lewes District relating to children & young people.

Plumpton & Barcombe parish reps reported that there seem to be a rising number of incidents of anti-social behaviour in the villages. Sally suggested that the incidents be reported to the new Community Wardens employed by the District Council or to the Anti-Social Behaviour Worker, again based at the District Council. Young people are also arriving from neighbouring villages to meet.

The Special Constables are working well in Ringmer with the youth workers.

7. Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership update

As Shirley James had not been able to attend the last Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership meeting she was not able to provide an update report. She agreed to provide a full report at the next meeting in July.

Sgt Richard Mitchell reported that the Lewes District (South Downs Division) had the highest levels of crime detection amongst all the divisions in Sussex Police for April.

He thanked Sally Harper for her support in writing to parishes asking about the potential placement of the Mobile Police Unit and will consider the responses soon.

Little progress has been made on finalising the Memorandum of Understanding between the Police and the parish councils. He circulated a draft document for Ringmer and agreed to meet with all parish councils to discuss their own documents.

He reported that the Police are working well with the District Council on tackling levels of anti-social behaviour and referred to a pilot project happening in Seaford.

Parishioners from Wivelsfield are not convinced that systems are working as there appears to be a chaotic way of dealing with incidents there. Sgt Mitchell explained that this is being addressed and a new police communication system is in place to better record crimes.

Alex Macgillivray voiced concerns that the sudden recent enforcement by police of parking restrictions in the main street in Barcombe was resulting in very limited parking spaces being available to residents and parents on the school run.

He requested a multi agency meeting take place to include the police & the parish council. Sgt Mitchell agreed to liaise with PC Mark Cranley to progress this.

Action: Sgt Richard Mitchell to meet with parish councils re Memo of Understanding, to progress the work on the mobile unit & to speak with PC Cranley re Barcombe parking issues

Action: Speed Indicator Devices – parishes now need to take action and commit if they want to jointly own a SID. Willie Edmonds, Rodmell may co-ordinate

8. RVRC transport/traffic issues & Lewes District Transport Group progress

Tom Hawthorne the RVRC transport representative on the Lewes District Transport Group, was not in attendance so there was no progress report available.

It was reported that some buses serving the villages can operate as taxis and be diverted off route to pick passengers up.

9. Barcombe Parish Issues

Alex MacGillivray made a comprehensive report on issues concerning Barcombe parish:

- Broadband – live from 26th May
- Village Shop – a vacant shop in the village will soon sell shoes
- Village Hall – group been established to look at project for a new hall
- Railway Bridge – cracks need attention
- Flooding – concerns that Barcombe Mills seems to be exempt from the flood defence work programme of Lewes & Uckfield
- Surgery closure – much local resistance to the closure by the Primary Care Trust of the village surgery. Complaints that the decision seemed to be made in a most undemocratic manner. The PCT has semi apologised but there is a strong feeling that it needs to consult better in the future. Transport to alternative sources of health care at Chailey & Newick does not seem sufficient although there is the Country Links bus and a car lift system in operation. The Parish Council are also disgusted at the response received from the Manager at Newick Health Centre to a letter sent re the apparent lack of medics in the area.

Action: Shirley James to raise the issue at the next LSP meeting

10. Any Other Business

- A request was made for Shirley James to seek a response from the District Council about its plans to address the parking problems in Lewes.

Action: Shirley will speak to LDC Officers to ascertain parking plans

- Cllr Sarah Osborne voiced her concern over the practice of landowners selling off large areas of land and then on selling it for development.
- Pauline Lewis urged all present to make comments to the District Council on the Urban Capacity Project by the deadline of 25th June. Ringmer has drafted a response.
- Alex MacGillivray mentioned that travellers and gypsies tend to move on from site to site and there should be more joined up action taken to regulate it.

11. Agenda for the next meeting

All agenda items to Shirley James.

Thursday July 15 – St Mary's Newick Church Barn Centre, Newick 7pm

Thursday September 16

Thursday November 11