

RURAL VOICES RURAL CHOICES

PARTNERSHIP MEETING NOTES

Thursday 20th November 2003

Present: Cllr Shirley James (Chair), Lewes District Council (SJ)
Dr Alex MacGillivray, Barcombe PC/LDALPC (AM)
Willie Edmonds, Rodmell (WE)
Sally Harper, Lewes District Council (SH)
Sgt Alan Leslie, Sussex Police (AL)
CI Bob Gough, Sussex Police (BG)
Pauline Lewis, Ringmer PC (PL)
Teresa Gittins, Action in Rural Sussex (TG)
Jemma Wray, Action in Rural Sussex (JW)
Cllr Sarah Osborne, Lewes District Council (SO)

1. Apologies

Cllr Liz Lee, LDC/Local Strategic Partnership PC Mark Cranley, Sussex Police; Paul Rideout, SDCVS; Roger Moore, LDC; Nick Wiseman, resident

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:

- 2 (i) Ruth Tahsin from LDC is establishing what rural youth groups exist.
4. Colin Anderson had extracted all the youth issues emerging from the parish action plans.

Cllrs Lee & James had attended a recent meeting of Lewes District Association of Local & Parish Councils to raise the profile of RVRC. SJ had requested a schedule of parish meetings so that she could continue to meet with parishes in the new year. AM offered his support.

6. SH reported that the Lewes District Transport Group (LDTG) has been formally accepted as the transport & traffic task group for the LSP. Therefore any issues that can't be dealt with by RVRC could be fed into this group via Tom Hawthorne who would be the RVRC's representative on the Group. LDTG is now focussing on developing an action plan that will be presented to the LSP in December.

SH continued to say that since the last meeting, there has been no progress on the project to purchase a community bus to service sheltered housing schemes and villages. The Manager of the sheltered schemes is still considering the way forward.

SJ reported that she had written several letters to officers in Sussex Police to raise the concerns that RVRC has with speeding traffic passing through the villages. With each letter she was referred to a different officer or department so as yet, there has not been a positive response.

Several of RVRC then gave local anecdotes regarding their villages highlighting concerns about speeding traffic, heavy vehicles and traffic outside schools. It was agreed by all that this is a priority issue for RVRC and should be dealt with collectively.

BG offered to speak to Nick Wilkinson from the Road Policing Unit regarding the Police's current policy on dealing with speeding traffic. He will also establish why SJ had not had an adequate response to her letters. He assured the group that he is keen to achieve results.

8. AM reported that he had attended the second wider partners' consultation regarding LDC's Comprehensive Performance Assessment programme. Although much of what was discussed had been covered at the Peer Review in August, it was clear that positive changes had been made based on what had been recommended. Namely Youth & Transport have been pulled out as the two main strategic issues of the Community Strategy and that consultation issues around implementing the Local Development Framework are being addressed.
9. TG had checked the AiRS Community Links page on its website and confirmed that parish councils' web addresses are now featured under the Lewes District sub heading. However, there is no mention of RVRC on this as yet.

SH to co-ordinate a meeting with TG & SJ to discuss the preferred content of the page. BG will also feed Police information into the main local voices website.

3. Parishes Workshop and future engagement

SJ and Liz Lee had mentioned the parish's workshop when they spoke at the recent Lewes & District Association of Local & Parish Councils.

TG and SH ran through the proposed agenda for the workshop.

It was agreed that the main outcome was to determine how parishes wanted to be engaged in RVRC, the LSP and therefore the community planning process.

SH had received few responses to date. SJ agreed to call each parish council to urge them to encourage attendance at the workshop. It was suggested that a second workshop be arranged in early 2004 for an evening to accommodate those parishes not able to make it to Westmeston.

4. Youth priorities list – progress & next steps

PL updated the group on the progress of purchasing a youth shelter. The siting of the shelter is proving contentious due to conflicting differences in the preferred choices of residents and young people. JW stressed that the correct siting is crucial and that if sited in an area that is not wanted by young people then the facility is unlikely to be used.

Ringmer PC will submit a bid to the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) for the 2004/05 allocation.

SH suggested that the youth priorities list should be expanded to include other emerging evidence of youth issues such as the results of the UK Youth Parliament Survey conducted in schools and issues arising from the parish action plans. JW, SH and Colin Anderson shall meet to achieve this.

JW referred to the Government's new Green Paper on children "Every Child Matters" and spoke of the potential to establish an Extended School in the rural areas. She will provide a report on the paper and its implications to RVRC at the next meeting.

5. RVRC projects for Crime & Disorder Partnership spend 04/05

AL circulated blank bid forms for potential projects to be included in the 2004/05 spend plan of the CDRP. Whilst it was agreed that the youth shelter for Ringmer form a bid, other bids proposed by RVRC should be considered by strategically looking at the group's priorities. For example, could a bid be made to fund the contracting out of RADAR to other villages?

AL had analysed the main calls received by the Police by some of the villages and highlighted the following trends:

Chailey – road traffic

Barcombe – no specific problems

Ringmer – youth/vehicle related incidents

Plumpton – minor thefts at Plumpton College

Newick – road traffic incidents

6. East Sussex Rural Regeneration Forum

AM expressed his concern with ESCC and its lack of engagement with parishes on strategic economic issues. Tony Bray shall be asked again to the next meeting to provide a broad update on East Sussex strategic economic issues relevant to the rural areas and not simply to focus on the Area Investment Framework.

7. Communication

SJ highlighted the problem with lack of robust communication channels between RVRC and the parishes. Clerks and Chairs should scrutinise the

issues emerging from RVRC/LSP and determine their own outcomes. However, they often don't have time to do this given the high quantity of paperwork that they receive.

The Parishes workshop should be able to pick up all these issues. Also notes of the RVRC meetings should be sent to all parishes.

8. Any Other Business

- AM raised the campaign to access Broadband in the rural areas. Each exchange area has been given a trigger figure to reach. Parishes are campaigning to persuade residents to register. Barcombe/Chailey has a trigger of 300
- BG is keen to know exactly what villages want in terms of policing and asked for the subject to be included at the parishes' workshop. Is it Police surgeries? Weekly mobiles? Bobbies on the beat? He stated that he has a commitment to the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and that he has two dedicated Community Safety Officers for the Lewes District.
- Willie announced that an affordable housing project has been completed and opened in Rodmell.

9. Next meeting – Thursday 29th January, 7pm Rodmell Village Hall