



West/Central Area Committee

(City Councillors for Castle, Market and Newnham Wards)



30 April 2009 7.30pm – 11.20pm

The University Centre, Mill Lane, Cambridge

Minutes & Actions

Present: City Councillors: Simon Kightley (Chair), John Hipkin, Tania Zmura (Castle Ward), Tim Bick, Mike Dixon, Colin Rosenstiel, (Market Ward), Rod Cantrill, Sian Reid, Julie Smith (Newnham)

County Councillors: Reid (Newnham), White (Castle Ward)

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Members of the City Council have individual email addresses which are listed on the City Council website: www.cambridge.gov.uk/councillors/members.htm
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09/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from County Councillor Griffiths.

09/18 MINUTES

With slight spelling corrections, the Minutes of 8 January and 5 March 2009 were approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

09/19 MATTERS ARISING

09/13 Open Forum: waste and dog bins

As the Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services was unable to attend this meeting and the question had not been forwarded on in a timely fashion, the issue was still being investigating. However, officers had confirmed that no requests had been received for bins at Auckland Road or Parsonage Street. Five dog bins were currently in place at Midsummer Common.

Councillor Rosenstiel agreed to feedback any further information to a future meeting.

**Cllr
Rosenstiel**

09/20 OPEN FORUM

ACTION

As a number of questions related directly to items already on the agenda the Chair suggested that these be raised during the appropriate section.

Q1) Parking in Warwick Road at the beginning and end of the school day has been a matter for concern for many years, as it constitutes a hazard for people, particularly children, crossing the road to get to Mayfield School. There are two particular problems. The first problem is that people park in the turning area. This forces any drivers who cannot find a parking space to reverse back up the road, in the space between parked (and often double parked) cars on either side of the road, while looking out for a space. This is very dangerous for younger children who cross the road, many of whom are shorter than the lower edge of the rear windscreen of the reversing cars, as it is difficult for the reversing driver to see them. The second problem is parked cars along the area marked in blue on the diagram. Children living in Warwick Road or Lingholme Close, or children traveling by car and parking opposite the school, all have to cross the road and get on to the footpath in this area. Because it is so busy, drivers tend to park very close together, making it impossible to get out of the space without reversing.

This then endangers pedestrians who are trying to get between the parked cars to get to the school, as the drivers often fail to notice people (again, especially small children) who are walking through the small gap between their car and the one behind. I take my children across this road every school day, and we have experienced a number of very frightening near misses, and I see many more families having similar experiences on a regular basis. The solution to these problems is to make the two areas marked red and blue “No Stopping” between 8.30 and 9.15 am and 2.45 and 3.30 pm, and continue with regular patrols of the area by the local PCSO or traffic wardens. Double yellow lines are not sufficient, as they do not prevent drivers stopping to drop off passengers. Similarly, zigzag lines are advisory markings and not an enforceable parking restriction. The drivers who park in these areas will only change their behaviour if there is a tangible deterrent, specifically a fine.

A) Councillor White confirmed that this had been an ongoing issue for a number of years and that parking enforcement could be beneficial. The Highway Authority would be responsible for taking this forward.

The Committee suggested that the County Council Officer present note this issue and take back for investigation.

**Head of
Network
Management**

The Police Sergeant agreed to take this issue to the next Neighbourhood Action Group Meeting and feedback to a future Area Committee.

Q2) How is money allocated for the Environmental Budget? A number of road schemes are listed but I would expect the County to pay for these. If not, I wish to press for tree planting schemes to get funding.

A) Councillor S Reid confirmed that highways are the responsibility of the County Council but there were limitations on their spending. Therefore schemes that the City Council considers under their Environmental Improvements Programme (EIP) would not be those generally prioritised by the County Council.

Councillor A Reid confirmed that the County Council's policy is to concentrate on those areas with clear accident records or congestion problems.

09/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hipkin Declared a personal interest in relation to the Environmental Improvement Item as a resident of Oxford Road

09/22 SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS

ACTION

Members were informed that an Area Committee Chair's meeting was planned for 13th May to discuss the future development of the Safer Neighbourhoods item. Ideas should be forwarded through the Chair.

The Police Sergeant presented a report on crime and policing for the three wards and made a recommendation of targeting the following for prioritisation in the forthcoming period:

- ASB in Castle
- ASB by Vehicles in City Centre

Q) Prostitution outside the Co-Op on Histon Road is becoming a problem. The Police have been informed on two occasions but no action has been taken.

A) The Police Sergeant agreed to look into this issue.

Councillor Smith informed Members that after similar problems in Edinburgh, the Police contacted kerb crawlers at home and this proved a good deterrent.

Q) There have been ASB problems and vandalism recently at the Diana Memorial Garden. We have had good support from PCSO's but this needs to happen more regularly.

A) Councillor Smith confirmed that a recent site visit had taken place and CCTV cameras had been suggested to help deter ASB and vandalism. The Police Sergeant confirmed that the issue would continue to be looked into.

Q) Congratulations to Alicia Parker for her hard work with the Police and City Rangers in the Castle Area. The problem seems to be low gates that are easy for burglars to scale – does raised gating help?

A) The Strategy Officer (Community Safety) confirmed that any increase in security is advisable and would work as a deterrent.

Q) Burglary is a City wide priority but the figures are still of concern . More information on preventative measures and a clear statement highlighting to residents what help and assistance is available would be beneficial.

A) The Strategy Officer (Community Safety) agreed to produce some information and circulate to Members for feedback to the public at the next Meeting.

**Paul
Griffin**

The following website provided some useful information on crime prevention and a free voucher for B&Q:

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/secureyourhome

Q) People regularly exceeding the 20mph speed limit on Emmanuel Road is becoming a problem.

A) The Police Sergeant confirmed that unfortunately their current equipment could not enforce anything under 30mph – but this was being looked into.

Q) Drivers jumping the lights on East Road roundabout is a big issue and is putting cyclists at risk. There seems to be no Police enforcement.

A) The Police Sergeant confirmed that this was being looked into, along with all other ASB of vehicles.

Members approved the following as priorities for the next reporting period:

- **ASB in Castle**
- **ASB by Vehicles in City Centre**

And asked that the following also be added:

- **Prostitution on Histon Road:**
- **Enforcement of 20mph speed limit within the City**

CHANGE OF AGENDA ORDER

The Chair proposed a change to the order of the agenda to take the planning item next. Members agreed with the proposal.

09/23 APPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

- 1 APPLICATION NO:** 09/0141/FUL
SITE: 139 Huntingdon Road
PROPOSAL: Change of use from hotel (C1) to hotel (C1) or student accommodation (sui generis) in the alternative.
OFFICER RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE subject to conditions
APPLICANT: Hill Residential/ CATS Cambridge, C/O Januarys Consultant Surveyors 7 Dukes Court, 54-62 Newmarket Road Cambridge CB5 8DZ
PUBLIC SPEAKERS: Mr Levine (Objector)
DECISION: **APPROVED as Agenda (by 8 votes to 1)** subject to the following amendment to condition 3 to read as follows:

Condition 3 - A resident manager shall be retained in the building during any use for student accommodation.

Reason - as Agenda

And subject to the following additional informative:

In the interests of good neighbourliness the applicant is requested to carry out maintenance to the garden area of the building and to continue such maintenance to provide for a good standard of amenity for future residents and residents of adjacent dwellings.

09/24 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME ACTION
2008/09

The Principal Landscape Architect gave an update on the following approved schemes as highlighted in the report::

- Canterbury Street traffic calming
- Histon Road Recreation Ground supplementary planting
- Marlowe Road and Eitisley Avenue Junction
- Manor Street/King Street cycle parking
- Round Church Street
- Lammas Land Pavilion
- Mount Pleasant mobility crossing

The Principal Landscape Architect introduced the following approved schemes requiring decision as highlighted in the report:

Oxford Road additional traffic calming

Decision: APPROVED (unanimously) to support the proposal to introduce an additional speed hump in Oxford Road and the introduction of a 20mph speed limit covering all of Oxford Road and Windsor Road.

Round Church grounds

A member of the public commented that the church grounds were a lovely amenity space for local residents and visitors. Concern was raised that restoring the railings would make it uninviting.

The Chair agreed with this in principle but highlighted the high level of ASB associated with the church grounds after dark and the need to tackle this.

Members felt that the current back log of schemes should take priority and concern was raised about going out to public consultation if the scheme is not in a position to move forward in a timely fashion.

Decision: Refused (by 8 votes to 1) to agree to public consultation for the proposal to re-instate the railings atop the Round Church boundary wall.

The Principal Landscape Architect then highlighted the following new schemes that required consideration and prioritisation:

Traffic calming feature on Grantchester Road, Newnham

A Member strongly supported this scheme due to the speed of traffic coming from out of the City into a 30mph residential area.

A series of mobility crossing in Newnham

Members raised concern over the apparent high cost of this scheme.

Fencing on path from Gough Way to Cranmer Road

Members suggested that joint funding should also be sought from the landowners.

Tree planting on Midsummer Common, Jesus Green and New Square

The Principal Landscape Architect informed Members that this was only a concept idea at the moment and the first step would be to move to full public consultation.

In response to a Members question the Principal Landscape Architect confirmed that as funding was expected for 2010/11 the scheme could be covered in instalments.

Members welcomed tree planting in principle but highlighted the need for in-depth consultation prior to any scheme being implemented. Drainage on Jesus Green was also raised as an issue.

Members felt that sources of external funding could be investigated by officers and it was suggested that the other Area Committees (whose residents benefited from Midsummer Common, Jesus Green and New Square) could be approached for joint funding.

It was also felt important that a holistic approach was taken to any planting on open spaces.

Q) What will be the scope, nature and timescale of the public consultation on the Tree Officer's proposals?

A) The scope and nature of the consultation would be extensive with all stakeholders fully involved. It was important that there was open debate with the public and that ideas started from a blank canvas.

Q) When will the Tree Protocol come into force and how will public consultation work?

A) The Tree Protocol was out to consultation and would be adopted at the Environment Scrutiny Committee.

Q) Who will have the casting vote?

A) Different Executive Councillors would have the final say depending on which area it was covering.

Q) Is it correct to say that when selecting sub-contractors, the Tree Officer's are obliged to accept the lowest quote without regard to quality, (which in my own experience in our own street has led to problems with under-skilled contractors.) This is an important question affecting work on Jesus Green.

A) The lowest quote was normally accepted but all City Council contractors were vetted extensively and highly skilled in their field.

Q) It was not made clear that no decisions would be made at this meeting tonight. Decisions such as this have been made before at Area Committees – why not on this occasion? Decisions should be made by Councillors and not officers, so that it's fully accountable.

A) Area Committees had made decisions on this in the past but as a Tree Protocol was shortly to be in place in place any suggested felling would have to go through this process.

Q) No funding should be approved prior to consultation and more detail is needed in the plans included in the officer's report.

A) Funding needs to be set aside for this project now otherwise there is a fear it will be spent elsewhere.

Q) The Conservation Plan for Midsummer Common states that a tree programme is needed – but this was published 8 years ago. The Management Plan will hopefully be finalised soon and the ‘Friends of Midsummer Common’ are meeting with the Council next week to discuss.

A recent press report and radio programme highlighted the loss of orchards from the British landscape. The National Trust and Natural England put Cambridge as the 2nd worst offender with an 80% loss over the last half century. There were once orchards in what are now residential areas around Midsummer Common. It might be time to reverse this loss. There is a small pound on the edge of Midsummer Common. It is a very neglected area which is used as a temporary holding place for grazing cattle when there are events on the main Common (there is a larger pound for their use at the east end of the Common once it is fully fenced).

In their draft Management Plan for Midsummer Common 2009-2014, the Wildlife Trust set the City Council 7 main objectives. One of these is to enhance the Pound through the creation of a community orchard. Friends of Midsummer Common support this proposal. Others have suggested planting apricot, peach, quince, mulberry, cherry, bramley apple and old pear varieties which require minimum maintenance. Or a nut orchard. Apart from restoring something typical of the area, an orchard would enhance the overall habitat diversity of the Common. Being a community orchard, it could be maintained by local volunteers and the fruit could be taken by local residents. It could also incorporate a family barbeque area similar to those found in woodland areas overseas. This might help resolve the current problem of illegal bonfires being lit on the Common but changes to the local byelaws will be necessary

before this can be done. Creating the orchard and barbeque area will need resources. If the planned redevelopment by Berkeley Homes on the Regional College site goes ahead, there will be considerable s.106 funds made available to the Council for environmental improvements. Discussions have been held with Berkeley Homes and they are well disposed to their money being used for an orchard in the pound adjacent to their site. Ongoing maintenance would be the responsibility of volunteers.

What do Members think?

A) Members of the Committee and the public voiced their support for this idea.

Q) The planting needs to be done strategically and not in a 'bits and pieces' way through different funding streams. A designated tree-planting budget is needed as suggested in the report.

A) Ideally this would be the case but it was a time of budgetary constraint for the Council.

Riverside/Abbey Road junction conflict reduction scheme - to provisionally allocate an estimated budget of £81,700.

The Principal Landscape Architect informed Members that this scheme is geographically in the East Area but was used by the residents of both North and West/Central Areas. A joint contribution was therefore suggested and North and East had already agreed in principle to this. This scheme had already gone to public consultation and been well received - Members attention was drawn to appendix 4 of the officer's report.

Members questioned whether the allocation should be split equally as West/Central only had 70% of the funds compared to North and East (due to having 3 Ward areas instead of 4).

After further discussion Members agreed prioritisation and funding for the following new schemes:

Decision: APPROVE (unanimously):

1. Traffic calming feature on Grantchester Road, Newnham – allocation of £15,000
2. A series of mobility crossing in Newnham – allocation of £20,000
3. Fencing on path from Gough Way to Cranmer Road – allocation of £5,000 (with the landowners to match the funding)
4. Tree planting on Midsummer Common, Jesus Green and New Square – allocation of £50,000 over a two year period (with officer's to pursue addition sources of funding as discussed)

Decision: APPROVE (7 votes to 0):

5. Riverside/Abbey Road junction conflict reduction scheme – allocation of £40,000

09/25 PRO-ACTIVE CONSERVATION

The Historic Environment Manager briefly introduced the following Draft Suburbs and Approaches Studies:

- Huntingdon Road and Howes Place
- Madingly Road
- Barton Road and Barton Close

These would be sent to local Resident Associations for factual accuracy and would be going to the Environment Scrutiny Committee in June 2009. Members were asked to feedback any further comments within the next 4 weeks.

Members thanked the Historic Environment Manager for all the hard work on this project and invited him back to give a full presentation at the next meeting.

09/26 ADDITIONAL ITEM: Use of Midsummer Common by Strawberry Fair in 2009

The Chair ruled that under 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 the 'Use of Midsummer Common by Strawberry Fair in 2009' Report be considered despite not being made publicly available five clear working days prior to the meeting.

The report could not be brought to the next meeting as this was the last opportunity for the Committee to comment prior to the next Strawberry Fair event.

The Green Space Manager apologised for the late circulation and briefly introduced the report.

A member of the public asked that Walnut Tree Avenue and Brunswick Street be policed (instead of just suspending parking) in order to stop entry of vehicles. The Green Space Manager and the Police Sergeant agreed with the suggestion and agreed to action.

Councillors and the public thanked officers and the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation for all their hard work and progress on this issue.

It was confirmed that a full report to review this year's event would be brought back to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair of the Strawberry Fair Committee confirmed that a great deal of work had been done with Councillors and local Residents Associations. It was hoped that all the issues raised as a result of last year's event had now been addressed.

09/27 DATES OF MEETINGS FOR 2009/10

Members agreed the following Meeting dates for 2009/10:

- **18 June 2009**
- **20 August 2009**
- **15 October 2009**
- **10 December 2009**
- **4 February 2010**
- **8 April 2010**

It was suggested that future meetings start at 7pm and Members agreed to discuss this in detail on 18 June.

The meeting ended at 11.20pm

Chair