

These minutes will be presented to the next Melksham Area Seminar on 21 July 2005 for approval as a correct record

WEST WILTSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of: **MELKSHAM AREA SEMINAR**

Held on: **WEDNESDAY 18 JANUARY 2005**

Held at: **MELKSHAM TOWN HALL, MELKSHAM**

Present:

Councillors: Rosier (Chairman), Hames, While and Wiltshire

Also in attendance: Councillor Phillips OBE, Leader of WWDC

Richard Coward – Broughton Gifford Parish Council
Ian Bertram – Chairman Melksham 1st
Terri Welch – Mayor of Melksham Town Council
William Spires – Chairman of Melksham Without Council
Mike Mills – Chairman of Melksham Without Parish Council

Officers: Paul Mountford – Performance and Scrutiny Support Manager
Sue Bellamy – Community Development Officer (South)
Melanie Stimpson - Member Support Officer

10 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Oakman

11 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN 2004/05

Councillor Rosier was proposed and seconded and there being no further nominations, it was

RESOLVED: That Councillor Rosier be elected Chairman of the Melksham Area Seminar for the remainder of 2004/05.

12 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN 2004/05

Councillor Wiltshire was proposed and seconded and there being no further nominations it was

RESOLVED: That Councillor Wiltshire be elected Vice-Chairman of the Melksham Area Seminar for the remainder of 2004/05.

13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hames declared an interest as he is a Board member for South West RCTi

14 MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting held on 27 May 2004 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

15 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman wished that his disappointment be recorded in the lack of members attending the meeting and not sending their apologies

16 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Wiltshire reported that progress was being made by the Wilts and Berks Canal Partnership and, subject to planning permissions, restoration should begin within the next five years. The development project has been featured in 'Waterways 2005' a publication by British Waterways.

17 COMMUNITY AREA PARTNERSHIP

Ian Bertram, Chairman of Melksham 1st, gave a presentation on Melksham 1st Community Planning Partnership. He explained how the project started, progress to date and future plans. Melksham 1st Partnership was launched in 2001 with major support from Melksham Town Council, which enabled participation in MCTi pilot. In 2002 the Partnership produced the first Community Action Plan 'Moving Ahead' followed by publication of the Community Strategy for 2004 – 2014. The Community Strategy had been adopted by the Local Strategic Partnership to use with the rest of the district.

Ian Bertram explained that its four priorities had been identified for the Partnership, namely to; secure investment in the town centre; develop and implement an Integrated Economic Regeneration Strategy; ensure young people had access to the widest range of facilities, services and opportunities and to develop and Integrated Transport Network. Melksham 1st wanted to become a Developmental Trust, which were social enterprises that held assets for the community to generate wealth for the community.

Members were informed that the restoration of the Wilts and Berks Canal was a key economic development project for the region, which would restore 67 miles of Canal reconnecting the Kennet and Avon to the Thames and Severn and River Thames and is a 10 year phased restoration programme. Ian Bertram urged anyone to contact him with queries via email – ian@ibanda.biz or by visiting the office situated above the TIC office in Melksham.

The Chair commented that Smart Place would have a positive effect especially on those living in rural areas as it could provide opportunities for people to work from home, which would otherwise not be available to them, if they did not have IT knowledge.

Mike Mills felt that improvements to the approaches to Melksham Town Centre were greatly required to attract more visitors.

Councillor Hames asked how Melksham 1st compared to other developments. Sue Bellamy informed Members that other towns were not as advanced as they only had support one day a week and were not as well funded. However Westbury and Warminster were about to launch the first drafts of their plans.

Ian Bertram's PowerPoint presentational slides are available on request

18 CORPORATE STRATEGY

The Chair welcomed Councillor Phillips to the meeting who spoke to members about the past and current financial situation of the District Council. He explained that the Government in past years had not provided sufficient funding. In 2003 the Government withheld £710,000, in 2004 the Government withheld £830,000. However this year was slightly better as the District Council had been awarded 9% extra, although this would make marginal difference to the £2 million shortfalls the District Council has. Additionally there would be the annual staff salary increase and the provisions of the Licensing Act to fund, which comes into effect as of February. WWDC would issue licenses in place of the Magistrates court. The Council would also have to fund the additional staff required. Another new Act coming into effect shortly is the Environmental Bill again which the District Council will have to fund. Councillor Phillips also commented on the lean staff structure with which the District Council operated which resulted in extra stress on staff in situations of staff sickness, holiday etc.

Councillor While distributed a handout explaining the approach to Budget 2005-06, budget pressures and areas for improvement – see attached.

Paul Mountford, Scrutiny and Support Service Manager gave a presentation on the Corporate Plan 2005 – 2010. The Corporate Plan was produced as it sets out a vision for the Council focusing on key priorities for the next five years, helped to improve accountability to the public, acted as a contribution to the Community Strategy, linked service plans and forms a part of the modernising agenda and requirements of Government under CPA.

The six spotlight areas for focus were explained, as were the key tasks for achieving those areas. The Corporate Plan also set out how to achieve those spotlight areas and the required outcomes.

Terri Welch asked if the Council would be meeting its recycling targets. Councillor Wiltshire explained that in December 04 13.7% of waste had been withdrawn from the usual household refuse. The target for March 05 was 14% so it can be seen that the Council is on target. The target for March 06 is 21%.

Mike Mills commented that affordable housing means social housing and that there is equally a need for affordable housing for first time buyers.

Councillor Phillips said that he was on the Government working party, which was trying to address this, and that with the Private Finance Initiative schemes the right to buy will not apply

Paul Mountfords presentational slides of the Corporate Strategy are available on request.

19 ARRANGE DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting will be a date in June to be agreed by the Chair.

(7.05pm – 9.00pm)

These minutes were prepared by Melanie Stimpson, Member Support Officer
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DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Melksham Area Seminar - to be confirmed