

WEST WILTSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of the: **MELKSHAM AREA SEMINAR**

Held on: **3 NOVEMBER 2005**

Held in: **MELKSHAM ASSEMBLY HALL
MELKSHAM**

Present:

West Wiltshire District Council Representatives: Cllrs Rosier (Chairman), Hames (part), Mudge, Oakman and Wiltshire

County Council Representatives: None

Melksham Town Council Representative: Sheila Wilkinson

Parish Council Representatives: Mike Mills – Melksham Without
Rolf Brindle - Melksham Without

Parish Cluster Representative

Community Area Partnership Representative: Caroline Beale

Also in attendance: David Richards – Melksham 1st

Officers: Jacky Nicholas - Community Development Officer
Melanie Stimpson – Member Support Officer

31 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cox and While

32 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. Dissatisfaction was expressed on minute 29 ii, a request to Cabinet, which had not been progressed by the Planning Committee.

33 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

34 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Melksham Railway

The Chairman announced, following his attendance at a recent Railway Development Group meeting that Melksham was in danger of losing its railway, mainly by default due to the franchises. Unfortunately the meeting was not well attended by the local community, which made it increasingly difficult to oppose plans. An announcement would be made in December as to the future of Melksham railway under the franchises, and it was suggested that this be an item on the next Melksham Area Seminar.

Members referred to the new housing development being constructed, in Melksham, next to the Leekes store. They noted that within the development, space had been provided for a railway and an interchange.

It was thought that Wessex Trains were satisfied with the passenger usage on the Swindon to Southampton route, however owing to the new developments being constructed in Melksham, there was a need to preserve this route that was in danger of being closed.

Melksham Town Council Development Committee had discussed the issue of poor signage and access roads to the Town Centre, but was reluctant to spend money on additional signage until after the announcement in December.

The current railway service in operation is not very convenient. The new public records centre in Chippenham is supposed to be accessible to all; however there is no direct route from Melksham to Chippenham.

As Melksham is ever increasing in size, attention should be drawn to the fact that there is a greater chance of the railway network from Melksham being used by newcomers.

RESOLVED - TO THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT:

That the Planning Department be asked to provide details to Members of Melksham Area Seminar of the S106 Agreement for the GEC Site and what it would deliver

35 UPDATES

Contractual Problems – Melksham 1st Funding

Cllr Hames, as a member of the seminar and Policy Coordination Portfolio Holder, updated Members on the progress with this issue since the last Melksham Area Seminar on 7 July.

Melksham Area Seminar asked Cabinet to give serious consideration to the issues raised in the Melksham Community Area Action Plan with regards the contractual problems mentioned by David Richards, at the last meeting, and discussed further with Cllr Duncan Hames.

At the meeting of Cabinet, it was resolved that: -

1. Cabinet note that the Portfolio Holder for Policy Coordination will explore with Officers options to strengthen the Council's financial commitment within its 3 year funding agreements with a view to extending the current 3 month notice period.
2. Cabinet agree to explore with Officers the possibility of 3 year financial security for the 5 Community Area Partnerships within the District.

Since the meeting of Cabinet, the equity of funding support from the District Council across all five community area partnerships (CAP's) was noted as a concern. A service bid was being prepared to request an additional £10,000 to support CAP's in order for all five CAP's to receive a fair level of support (£6,000 each).

Following Cabinet's resolution, not to commit (at this stage) to 3 year funding agreements, without a withdrawal clause, opting instead for further investigation on how the Council can strengthen its agreements, Officers and the Portfolio Holder do not have a mandate to fully commit funds beyond 1 year at this stage. Further discussion is yet to take place and a report regarding this clause will be going to Cabinet.

Further discussions are taking place with Melksham 1st and other funding partners to explore if a funding agreement for Melksham 1st, beyond 1 year can be formed, within the current constraints.

Both David Richards and Cllr Hames felt the meetings they had, had been helpful and constructive.

David Richards informed Members that following a recent Funders' meeting, it had been agreed to ask the legal representatives for Melksham Area Community Development Trust Ltd (MACDT) to draft a simple document that incorporated Heads of agreement and relevant appendices and was felt that this was the basis to move forward with.

Jacky Nicholas gave recognition to the time and effort that had been invested voluntarily to make Melksham 1st a success and raise the vast amount of money it had.

Primary Care Trust (PCT)

Melksham Area Seminar recommended that Cabinet consults with the PCT on the need to provide adequate medical and dental facilities and personnel before full planning permission for large housing developments is granted.

At the meeting of Cabinet on 31 August, Cabinet resolved that:

1. Cabinet note that Planning Committee will be considering the provision of medical and dental facilities at Melksham when it determines the East Melksham planning application at a future date
2. Cabinet recommend to Planning Committee that the local planning authority should consult with the PCT, as a matter of procedure, on any planning application for the development of major housing sites.

Cllr Mudge informed members that St Damiens Surgery in Melksham and St Margarets in Bradford on Avon had joined to provide a service for the residents of the East of Melksham Development.

Members were still unhappy with this issue, especially as it was felt that at the last Planning Committee meeting, the PCT issue had not been given proper consideration.

It was felt that the PCT were not cooperative or financially able and when the PCT had attended a District Council meeting, their attendance had failed to be productive. When feedback is received from the PCT concerning the lack of adequate medical and dental facilities in new developments the response received is that there is enough medical cover therefore it should not be an issue. Members felt that it was very important that planning looks at the role of the PCT in any large development.

The PCT had approached MACDT to act as the go between for the public and the PCT and to conduct negotiations. MACDT was prepared to do this, however when the question of how this would be financed was posed to the PCT there was no response.

RESOLVED:

TO THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Melksham Area Seminar express there concern at the continuing failure to consider medical and dental facilities for large housing developments, e.g., Trowbridge and Clacker's Brook

TO LEADER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Melksham Area Seminar ask the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive to write to the appropriate authority, such as the ODPM, and ask that consideration is given to the vital parts of the community and infrastructure and to be provided for in the planning process and that the letter is copied to the Portfolio Holder, Cllr Osborn and the Chairman of the Planning Committee, Cllr Newbury.

MELSKHAM 1st

Melksham Area Seminar encourage Melksham 1st to investigate the possibilities of funding/establishing a surgery or a venue to accommodate and encompass a surgery, citizen advice bureau etc, within the East of Melksham Development

Melksham Community Area Action Plan

At the meeting of Melksham Area Seminar on 7 July 2005 Cabinet was asked to give serious consideration to the issues raised in the Melksham Community Area Action Plan. On 31 August, Cabinet resolved: -

1. To note receipt of the five community area plans.
2. To note the resolutions as brought forward by each of the five Area Seminars in.
3. To agree that community area plans should form a key part of the evidence base for the design and delivery of council services through the service and resource planning process.

Gwilym Gibbons, Community Initiatives Manager, prepared a report for Members illustrating how WWDC activities have begun to be directly linked to the community plans.

The Community Initiatives Manager has been meeting with Service Managers to explore how the Community Area Plans can impact and support service delivery and design. The initial response has been very encouraging with examples already emerging of service areas that are using Community Area Plans to inform change.

Jacky Nicholas, Community Development Officer, informed Members that Melksham 1st had agreed to administer the 'small grants' fund (which was previously administered by the District Council Area Committees). Members were asked to encourage groups or organisations to submit applications for grants. The best way of promoting the grants available was being discussed. It was agreed one of the best ways to promote the funds was via an event when an award was granted. The quarterly Community Area Partnership meeting would be used for this.

36 MELKSHAM 1ST (MACDT - MELKSHAM AREA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRUST LTD)

David Richards informed the committee that MACDT had received 2 grants from the South West Regional Development Agency and that MACDT had launched a new project - the community minibus scheme. The scheme, which was targeted mainly at those who would not otherwise be able to get out of their homes, had been running for 6 months but was experiencing some difficulties. There was great support for the scheme as it was a door to door service, but the service was not being utilised as it should be. This was felt to be because people using the scheme were not able to use concessionary bus passes. Members did express the concern raised by some of the local businesses that custom was actually being taken out of the town to neighbouring towns, when it should be contained within Melksham.

MACDT want the service to be a self sustaining operation and not to be reliant on a grant. MACDT also want to apply for a Capital Funding grant to fund a replacement mini bus. To be able to access the funds, donations from neighbouring Parish Councils that are only within their community area boundaries must be received. If the rule was changed and parish councils outside of the community area boundary were able to contribute, accessing of the Capital Fund grant would be much easier.

Cllr Mudge was asked to chair a Community Safety Group meeting on behalf of MACDT. It was very well attended by local businesses, with the main topic of

discussion being anti social behaviour. The Group have been issued a grant to promote validate cards. Unfortunately there had been insufficient take up of the validate cards to render them as acceptable identification. It was felt that if George Ward Technology College was more supportive in promoting take up, this might change. To date the school had not, although invited, attended a meeting. To try to improve relations, the Town Council would be writing to the school.

RESOLVED:

TO FINANCE OFFICER AND PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Melksham Area Seminar urges the Finance Officer and Portfolio Holder to resolve the issue of concessionary fares and to investigate if a decision can be made before May 2006

The Chairman asked that District Council Members allocate themselves, as a representative, to each of the six themed areas of Melksham Community Area Action Plan.

	Themed Area	District Council Representative
1.	Town Centre	Cllr Oakman
2.	Economic Regeneration	Cllr Wiltshire
3.	Young People	Cllr Mudge
4.	Transport	Cllr Rosier
5.	Parishes	Cllr While and Cllr Wiltshire
6.	Community Safety	Cllr Mudge

37 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership

Cllr Wiltshire, on behalf on Cllr Cox, updated members. The Partnership is likely to have to find a new Chairman after the recent illness of Doreen Darby. Doreen Darby continues to recover but is not likely to return as Chairman.

The Living Landmarks Lottery bid is due by January 2006 and it was hoped that support is continued with procuring funds to ensure the post of Project Officer remains.

Over the past year achievements have included: -

- BW reclassifying the canal as national Priority 2 status

- several canal projects have been successfully completed and others of the verge of finishing
- there has been an opening ceremony of Wootton Bassett Lock
- good development work at Melksham has enabled the Canal scheme to be submitted to the West Wilts Plan
- preparation work is in place to start work at the Thames and Abingdon Junction
- Flagship1, the Partnership have approved a bid to Living Landmarks lottery for £15 - £20,000,000 for Flagship 2, the Swindon Cricklade – Upper Thames corridor. If successful it would fund the delivery of two canal schemes, a steam railway, country parks, forestry, wildlife reserves, footpaths and cycleway, a visitor centre, landscape enhancements and many community initiatives

38 ITEMS WHICH REQUIRE REFERRAL TO CABINET

There were no items to be referred to Cabinet

39 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Melksham Area Seminar meeting was scheduled for Thursday 16 March 2005 at Melksham Assembly Hall, Melksham at 7pm.

(7.00pm – 8.30pm)

These minutes were prepared by Melanie Stimpson, Member Support Officer.
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