

West Swindon Cluster Forum  
Minutes of Meeting  
12<sup>th</sup> July 2010

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Nick Martin (Chair), Michael Bray (Vice Chair), Mary Martin, Michael Dickinson, Garry Perkins, Steve Wakefield, Keith Williams

Police:

Adrian Burt

Swindon Borough Council:

Bernie Brannan, Simon Lymn, Georgina Congerton

Residents:

S Lazarides, N Plumb, D Seaman, Brenda Poat, Brian Poat, M Rowland, L Dawkin-Jones, J Dyer, G Newell, K Newell, A Farr, T. Farr, T Ratcliffe, P Frattini, T Senes, A Frattini, N Jansen, J Jansen, S D'Aray, R Ogle, M Pringle, 11 other residents no signed in.

Apologies:

Councillor Peter Greenhalgh

**1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

Cllr Nick Martin was elected as Chair and Cllr Mick Bray Vice Chair of the West Swindon Forum.

**2. Matters from the Floor**

2.1. Mr Ratcliffe raised the issue of the garden clearance to the rear of the vacant Toothill cottages, large brambles and shrubs have not been removed.

**ACTION: Bernie Brannan will follow-up and respond to Mr Ratcliffe direct.**

2.2. Nick Jansen stated that there is no longer a bus from the Railway Station to West Swindon (No 19 bus has been rerouted). Andy Farr raised that the cutting of No 18 route means there is no public transport between West and North Swindon. Cllr Williams, who chairs Thamesdown Bus Service, responded; a review of bus services was carried out earlier in the year.

Some routes were previously funded from developer contributions, but as this funding is no longer available, the routes have been withdrawn. Some services also carried few passengers to make them viable. Cllr Williams agreed to give a formal response to Mr Jansen and Mr Farr. This will also form an agenda item at the September meeting of the West Swindon Forum.

- 2.3. Concern was raised by residents of George Tweed Gardens about people measuring the 'Pilgrim' open space behind the shops and looking at the drains. There was suspicion that it may have been travellers.

**ACTION: Bernie Brannan will pass this on to the Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer.**

- 2.4. A Housing Benefit issue was raised and dealt with directly by Cllr Michael Dickinson.

- 2.5. Feedback was requested on the removal of speed humps in Tregose Way, which create a dangerous blind spot for traffic.

**ACTION: Bernie Brannan to ask Gwillam Lloyd to respond.**

- 2.6. It was reported that culvert works are now complete, but cycleway signs have been left on the floor. **Simon Lymn to action.**

### **3. Presentation from Students of Greendown School**

Janet Mason introduced Megan and Sharna and said they are delighted to share their ideas at the West Forum and it is nice to be able to give time to celebrate the many positive contributions that teenagers in the area do make to their community.

The remit given to the students in the morning was to present a campaign idea based on at least one of the three main issues raised by the West Cluster survey earlier this year – activities for teenagers, levels of crime and clean streets. We also discussed the issue of perceptions of teenagers and how they might dispel some of the negative perceptions, which many residents may have due to the behaviour of a minority of young people.

Some groups did presentations on litter, others looked at what young people could do to change adult perceptions of them, but the majority focused on publicising activities for young people and particularly how getting involved can lead to lower levels of aspects of anti-social behaviour and greater engagement in the community.

As part of the presentation students were showed photos of the newly revamped area in the Freshbrook Community Centre and asked them to think about what they would like to see happening there – so it was rather like a youth focus group. Quite a few of the tutor groups focused on this theme.

It was originally planned to run the day in March before the West Swindon open day, in the hope that some groups could come and display their ideas to the wider public. Many of them intend to take their presentations to the primary schools in the new academic year, as well as present them in Assembly to Greendown School young pupils. Megan and Sharna's presentation is attached to the minutes as Appendix 1.

#### **4. Update of Cycleway Signage and West Swindon Accessibility Plan**

A presentation by Simon Lymn is attached as part of these minutes at Appendix 2.

#### **5. Police Update**

- 5.1. Adrian Burt updated on the priorities set at the previous Forum meeting: Shaw Ridge George Tweed Gardens have had 140 patrols with 2 arrests (children) and 28 alcohol seizures. Feedback from residents is that it is noticeably quieter and residents have commented positively that police have been seen patrolling in the area.
- 5.2. Mini-Motorbikes – There has been 4 seized (3 have been disposed of) and the message is getting out that the Police will take action.
- 5.3. Other Issues – drugs and alcohol in the Toothill area; there have been 6 warrants, 8 arrests, 8 alcohol seizures, and £7K in cash seized. The preventative work around the World Cup time was successful as there were no serious issues. Four dangerous dogs have been seized (3 destroyed, 1 rehomed) and use of speed guns has increased as requested by the Forum.
- 5.4. The Restorative Justice and local solutions/resolutions initiative discussed at the last meeting is continuing.
- 5.5. 86% of policing time has been spend on the beat. The only increase in crime in West Swindon is violent crime. There have been 150 incidents since April. 41% of offences committed by 14 – 17 year olds, of which 24% relates to schools, 27% of violent crime in West Swindon have been domestic violence related. The focus over the summer period will be on advice and gathering intelligence, etc. The Neighbourhood News letter can be found at [www.wiltshire.police.uk](http://www.wiltshire.police.uk).

#### **6. Public Art in West Swindon**

Roger Ogle (Link Magazine) informed the Forum that he is producing a new map and guide in September showing that there is much more to discover in West Swindon other than housing. Over 20,000 people turned up for the Big Arts Day in Lydiard Park, which demonstrates there is a big interest in culture in Swindon. Some of the public art has deteriorated and needs some attention, but we must find innovative ways to get these restored, possibly using the probation service, community volunteers, or even grant aid. West Swindon has uniqueness in

Swindon with its public art and we need to raise awareness through web sites, libraries, schools, etc.

## **7. Wiltshire Proposed Development**

Councillor Nick Martin updated the forum on the proposed development. There has been debate in Parliament by MP's and the Regional Special Strategy has now been withdrawn by the government, which goes some way to help prevent overdeveloped sites. A motion is being put before Swindon Borough Council's full Council meeting to rewrite the Core Planning Strategy considering the required infrastructure. North Wiltshire residents want Swindon residents to support them in signing a petition against the development; they require 11,000 signatures to take to Wiltshire Council.

8. Bernie Brannan reported on the successful open event held in the Link Centre on the 10<sup>th</sup> July, the event celebrated the community work in West Swindon and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Link Centre.
9. Bernie Brannan informed the Forum that John Lewis, through their contractor McLaren Construction, are willing to contribute to a community project. All suggestions to be emailed to [bbrannan@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:bbrannan@swindon.gov.uk) by the end of July 2010.

Developing activities for young people at Freshbrook Community Centre

Script for 8MG's presentation led by Megan Thornett and Sharna Newell (aged 13)

Our idea is to change part of Freshbrook Community Centre into a youth centre café and how this could help to keep teenagers off the street.

This centre is aimed at reducing levels of crime, which has been raised as a concern in West Swindon.

Before the centre closed there was a group called the internet café group, and so we could ask them to help us get it started again with their knowledge and equipment.

(Pupils had prepared posters showing the various ideas mentioned here\*)

\*Here is a plan of the youth centre. Here we have an internet café, chill out zone, an area for a pool table or table football, and a seating area where we could have film nights, sporting events and TV shows like X Factor showing.

\*This is our slogan – Fun Young Creative Kids. The FYC can also stand for Freshbrook Youth Club

To raise money the volunteers (youth and Leaders) would organise events like fetes, car washes, bag packing that would help them fund themed nights and trips.

Next are a few events we can organise:

To promote our café and events we could hand out leaflets in the streets, and put up posters in schools and public places in West Swindon.

For example we could have themed nights such as a pamper evening for girls. We could ask adults we know who are in the beauty industry to volunteer their services at reduced prices.

\*Here is a leaflet aimed at girls and activities they run such as chick film nights where we could ask people to bring in DVDs.

\*Here is a poster showing suggestions for boy's activities, such as Go Ape trips and football tournaments. We can organise a football tournament for primary pupils where we can help the younger children get involved in sport.

Unfortunately, we have no sponsors yet. However, hopefully we will be hosting raffles and competitions to start to raise money. We would be very grateful if you could donate anything that would help achieve our goal.

## **West Swindon Local Accessibility Action Plan July 2010 update**

### Introduction

West Swindon was established in the Local Transport Plan as an area identified for needing to improve and promote travel choice and increase opportunities for travel by public transport, cycling and walking.

The original design and layout of the streets in West Swindon area was based around Village and District Centres. The pedestrian routes were designed away from the roadside to avoid any conflict with high-speed traffic. Consultation through the Link Magazine and the West Swindon Cluster Forum identified that a lack of signage to key destinations was one of the main concerns. There were also concerns with the state of some of the paths where shrubs have become overgrown.

### Where are we now?

Following feedback from the Consultation process and further discussion with Members the brief, given to Halcrow was to produce a sign specification with the following:

- Simple and clear;
- Cost effective;
- Allow for easy maintenance and reduce the potential for graffiti vandalism;
- Indicate orientation wherever possible;
- Be innovative where possible;
- Minimise clutter and complement existing street environment
- Use existing infrastructure and street furniture wherever possible; and
- Link in with existing signing for consistency wherever possible.

Over spring, a full, detailed site audit of the footpath and cycleways was undertaken taking into consideration the above. Below lists the work we will be undertaking:

- A comprehensive new signing scheme incorporating over 200 new signs to cover decision points on the cycle network.
- The scheme also incorporates over 200 repeater columns, which will mark out the 'West Swindon Round' as a way-finding point.
- The majority of signs will indicate approximate walking and cycling journey times.
- Removal of old, redundant and worn out signing.
- The clearing of over grown paths on the routes included within the site audit work.

### Implementation and further work

Following any further comments from Members, we will look to implement the scheme in the autumn. Swindon Borough Council will be working closely with The Link magazine to promote the cycle routes to ensure people are aware of them and give information on how the signage scheme works.

We are currently developing a way to assess how the effectiveness of the scheme by undertaking count at the main points in the cycle/footpath network both before and after the scheme has been implemented.

If successful, we are looking to extend this model out to other areas of the Borough. Below gives an indication of some of the signs that give an appreciation of the signage on the footpath/cycle network.

Examples of signage proposed for West Swindon

