

PARISH CONFERENCE

THURSDAY, 1 OCTOBER 2015

PRESENT: Councillors Claire Stretton (Chairman) and Christine Bateson (Chairman)

Also in attendance:

Officers: Andrew Green, Harjit Hunjan, Shilpa Manek, David Perkins, Sean O'Connor, David Thompson, Matthew Tucker, Peter Lerner, Craig Miller, Lynne Penn and Simon Fletcher

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman of the Conference, Councillor Claire Stretton, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Councillor Stretton explained the shared Chairmanship again to the conference that she would be sharing with Councillor Christine Bateson. The Chairman changed the order of the Agenda, bringing item 8, Communications to the beginning of the meeting.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Bob Austen (Eton Town), John Birkett (Waltham St Lawrence), Mary Cooper (Bisham), Betty Marlow (Horton) and Keith Robinson (White Waltham).

MINUTES FROM LAST CONFERENCE

The minutes of the last meeting held on 29 June 2015 were approved.

TRANSPORT IN RURAL AREAS

Lynne Penn, Transport and Access Team Leader, informed the Conference of the background, costs of running buses, timetables and bus routes. Lynne Penn highlighted that the borough were keen to improve bus services by having more real time information, have more bus shelters, have better information for passengers, and work better with bus operators to improve express services and evening services, accessible bus stops, improve waiting times and connecting and working with schools times and train times.

Issues raised by Parish Councils included:

- Better services generally in rural areas.
- Smaller buses used at off peak times.
- Better bus services during floods.

ACTION: Lynne Penn to attend a future meeting to update the Conference.

ACTION: Lynne Penn to add Parish Councils to list where all consultations are sent for information and/or comments.

UPDATE ON DELIVERING DIFFERENTLY PROJECT AND WORKSHOPS

Dave Perkins, Head of Neighbourhood and Streetscene Delivery, gave a brief history, background and update to the Conference. Dave Perkins thanked all Parish Councils for

taking part in the project and for their participation at the various workshops. He advised that 14 Parish Councils had been represented with around 50 Parish Councillors attending. The feedback received will be pulled together and then circulated to all Parish Councils and an action plan will be developed for the way forward. Dave Perkins explained that quick wins will be identified and implemented if appropriate.

Dave Perkins said that work will continue on developing new devolution options and more information shared with Parish Councils to enable them to make better decisions. This will specifically apply when contracts are renewed and information on costs and activity within parish areas will be included as part of the specification and contract design. This will enable greater local choice.

SEWAGE

Councillor Stretton declared an interest as she is currently undertaking some graphic design consultancy work with Thames Water.

Craig Miller, Head of Community Protection and Enforcement, introduced the item and then introduced David Harding from Thames Water.

David Harding went through the presentation highlighting the following points:

- Change to the drainage laws.
- The importance of Thames Water and RBWM working together especially at flood times.
- The roles and responsibilities of RBWM, Thames Water, the Environment Agency, the Highways Authority, the property owner and the LLFA.

Points raised by Parish Councils included:

- Wraysbury - pumping stations and the electrics serving the stations being below water level and subsequently failing to work when water entered the station.
- Longridge – concerns raised about Longridge not having adequate sewers and if there were any plans to replace these.
- Datchet – Thames Water business plans stating that funds were available to improve sewage and treatment plants. The conference wanted to know if any planned improvements were in the borough.
- Bad communications with Thames Water.

Craig Miller reassured the Conference that the communication was much better now with Thames Water and were working very closely with them on a number of projects.

The Conference were reminded of the Parish Flood Liaison Group and all big issues could be fed in via the Parish Liaison Group.

The Chairman invited Thames Water to attend a future Conference to update Parish Councils.

PRESENTATION ON RECYCLING

The Conference received a presentation on recycling and waste directorate from Dave Thompson, Interim Head of Contracts and Commissions.

The Parish Councils raised the following points:

- Large recycling bins in Datchet not emptied, causing a real mess and eye sore. These need to be emptied more frequently.
- Cancellation of voucher schemes.
- The food bins from flats in Cox Green have been removed.
- Large bins emptied in Datchet but any rubbish around the bins left on the floor causing mess.

Dave Thompson raised the following points:

- Recycling sites are being expanded and upgraded.
- A years worth of food caddy liners given free by borough, however, plastic bags can also be used. All converted to energy.

COMMUNICATIONS

Peter Lerner, Interim Planning Policy Officer, informed the Conference of the planning training on Thursday 8 October 2015 and went through the agenda. Peter Lerner asked members of the Conference if they wanted anything further included in the training. The Conference seemed happy with the suggested agenda. Peter Lerner continued to explain that Simon Rowberry would be the officer to discuss IT issues but unfortunately Simon Rowberry was unable to attend the Conference. However, all issues raised will be passed on to Simon Rowberry.

Issues raised by Parish Councils included:

- Contracts not placed on website by borough and therefore Parish Councils not given enough time to comment and respond.
- The quality of the .pdfs on the website were not clear and were therefore difficult to read.

Peter Lerner explained that the issues have all been worked on and as a result of a backlog; the system was still not good enough but would be resolved soon.

Dave Perkins, Head of Neighbourhood and Streetscene Delivery, clarified the issue of the designated emergency officer. Dave Perkins explained that the control room was manned twenty four hours a day and 365 days a year. The out of hours telephone number is 01753 853517. Dave Perkins explained that an officer was always on duty and would deal with all issues.

CHANGES TO STREET LIGHTS

Dave Thompson, Interim Head of Contracts and Commissions, provided the Conference with a presentation about the changes to street lights in the borough.

Points highlighted included:

- Columns of lights tested and if structurally unsound, replaced.
- Light pollution – consultants producing report.
- Visiting all Parish Councils to discuss changes individually.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OF CIL

Sean O'Connor, Solicitor and Service Manager, SLS, introduced the item and then handed over to Matt Tucker to provide the Conference with the presentation of the legal implications of CIL.

Points raised included:

- What happens to payments in between S106 and CIL?
- The absence of a local borough plan as RBWM does not have one yet.
- CIL appeals – are they possible?

The Chairman suggested that Shared Legal Services attend a future meeting to update the Parish Councils.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

All Parish Councils to contact Sandra Baker at DALC to suggest any items for future Parish Conference Agendas.

DATE OF NEXT CONFERENCE

Wednesday 24 February 2016.

The meeting, which began at 7.00 pm, finished at 9.15 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....