

Lavant Valley Partnership
Minutes of meeting – 11 March 2014
Tangmere Village Centre, Malcolm Road, Tangmere, PO20 2HS

Agenda Item	Notes
<p>1. Welcome, minutes and introductions.</p>	<p>Cllr. Potter welcomed members of the Lavant Valley Partnership (LVP) to the forum meeting and thanked Tangmere Parish Council for hosting.</p> <p>Present: Henry Potter – Boxgrove Ward and LVP District Council representative; Susan Fairley – East Dean; Nick Reynolds – Lavant Neighbourhood Plan on behalf of Lavant Parish Council; Ron Migliorini – Oving; Sjoerd Schuyleman – Oving; Nick Conway – Singleton; Keith Hope-Lang – Singleton; Kate Beach – Tangmere; Roger Birkett – Tangmere; Andrew Irwin – Tangmere; Hilary Nation – Tangmere; Simon Oakley – Tangmere Ward; Brian Wood – Tangmere; Bob Holman – Westhampnett; Greg Ockwell – West Sussex County Council; Amie Huggett – LVP co-ordinator, Chichester District Council.</p> <p>Apologies: Jeremy Hunt – Chichester North Ward; Andrew Smith – Lavant Ward; Bill Harding – Westhampnett; Lavant Parish Council; John Ruffell – West Dean.</p> <p>Minutes of last meeting: The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 28 November 2013, were approved.</p>
<p>2. Proposals for a Transit Site for Gypsy Travellers, Steve Hansford</p>	<p>Steve Hansford, Assistant Director Communities at Chichester District Council, was welcomed to the meeting. Steve provided a quick overview of the issue explaining that last year was unprecedented in terms of the number of unauthorised encampments on public and private land. The Chichester area had 51 instances which was more than any other West Sussex Local Authority.</p> <p>Steve explained that a Transit site is an authorised site provided by the Local Authority on a permanent basis which provides basic facilities and services for short term stays. Having a transit site in place will open up legislation which has not been available so far and Steve reminded the Forum of the powers available to the police. Without a Transit site the legal options to manage unauthorised encampments are limited. Under S61 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act</p>

(CJPOA) the police have the discretion to direct unauthorised campers to leave a site if certain conditions are met i.e. damage to property, violent behaviour. This power was used once last year in the Chichester area. The police may use a discretionary 'power to direct' under S62 CJPOA if there is a suitable local authority site available. If the site is managed by the County Council on behalf of all Districts in its area the 'power to direct' applies to the whole of West Sussex.

An assessment of the accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community undertaken by the coastal West Sussex authorities identified that up to 10 transit pitches (in addition to private pitches) are required in West Sussex from 2012-2027. Steve explained that no land for the Transit site was identified under the Local Plan nor did other areas identify suitable space. As part of the development of plans to refurbish the CDC Depot site at Westhampnett, surplus land was identified and on 17 December 2013 CDC Council approved a report outlining the proposals.

The plans for the Transit site set out space for 9 pitches, each providing parking for a caravan, two vehicles, electrical power to each pitch and a shower/toilet block. There will be a manager's office, secure boundaries and a secure entry and exit system. The design will be robust and sustainable and the planning application has been submitted and is available to view on the CDC website at www.chichester.gov.uk/planning. It is proposed that West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) will manage the site and will include site supervision from 9.00am - 5.00pm, Monday to Friday with day time entry only. Pitch fees will be charged and a code of conduct enforced. A multi-agency protocol will also be agreed to manage both unauthorised encampments and arrangements for direction to the Transit site.

In relation to costs, Steve explained that a partnership of all the District and Borough Councils and the WSSCC have agreed to jointly fund the capital and revenue costs on a shared basis. A substantial grant from Government has been agreed providing the facility can be in place by March 2015. The running costs will be dependent on the usage of the site.

In response to questions Steve agreed that the Transit site is not the only solution but the experience of East Sussex is that a Transit site coupled with strong multi agency management can significantly reduce unauthorised encampments. There is also a waiting list for permanent sites which is another issue. In relation to the capacity of the site, Steve explained that the most vulnerable will be directed to the site first and if necessary those already on the site will be asked to leave to ensure adequate turnover. If S62 is applied but the travellers refuse to go to the Transit site they will have to leave the District but not the County.

Bob Holman shared Westhampnett's experiences and concerns in relation to the proposal, explaining that Bill Harding is a representative on the committee and that their concerns have been feedback to the District Council.

<p>3. Winter Management Plans and Resilience, Greg Ockwell</p>	<p>Greg Ockwell, Principal Community Officer at WSCC, was welcomed to the meeting. Greg explained that for this winter WSCC will be working with Parishes to plan for winter management. He also explained that the intention is to release a further £1million for drainage and flooding under Operation Watershed. To support his team, Greg asked for feedback in relation to the previous year and asked Parishes to think about the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking about winter 2013/14; what went well or what could be improved? • Thinking about winter 2014/15; what do Parish Councils need? This may include; funding, training, tools, better insurance cover, better quality information. • Thinking about winter 2014/15; what can Parishes and communities do best themselves? • Thinking about winter 2014/15; what can Parishes and communities do, but with some help? <p>The Forum discussed these questions in detail providing their own experiences on certain issues in relation to ditch clearance, gritting, insurance and the role of the Environment Agency (EA).</p> <p>In response to questions Greg explained that ditch clearance is an issue and as part of Operation Watershed there is opportunity to look at ways to manage it. Greg emphasised that more needs to be done to look at creative long term solutions rather than short term fixes. Seeking engineering advice was also discussed as a way to help with this and to support coordinated action. In relation to contractors clearing ditches, Greg explained that it is standard practice for the spoil to be left on site, on the side of the bank.</p> <p>In relation to the EA, Greg explained that the National Flood Forum has a dedicated resource from the EA and Greg can raise issues on behalf of the Parish Councils. Greg also explained that the EA is responsible for enforcing the duty for riparian owners to clear their ditches. It was noted that WSCC hold an inventory of the gullies and ditches on their land and mapping software will soon become available for Parish Councils to access which will enable them to identify highway boundaries and the inventory information to see where ownership may lie.</p> <p>For the insurance of volunteers, Tangmere Parish Council explained that they had contacted their insurance company who confirmed that a volunteer would be covered by their insurance if they had been instructed by the Parish Council.</p> <p>A number of members thanked Greg and his team for the support they had given in writing their Parish Council's Winter Management Plans. Greg asked the Forum to provide any feedback in relation to the above questions to either himself: greg.ockwell@westsussex.gov.uk / 0330 222 3878 or to Amie ahuggett@chichester.gov.uk.</p>
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4. Forum Action Plan.	It was agreed that this was covered by the previous item and that the linking of the Parish Council's Emergency Planning documents is likely to develop as part of WSCC's facilitation of the Winter Management Plans for 2014/15.
5. Individual Updates on Neighbourhood Planning.	<p>The following updates were provided and housing allocation numbers discussed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boxgrove – noted that the position is still unclear and difficult as a third of the parish falls within the South Downs National Park (SDNP). • Tangmere – Positive feedback so far and feel that the planning for growth concept has been taken on board by residents. 170 people attended a meeting to discuss their Neighbourhood Plan; 30% of which are part of the task group. • Oving – have not started a Neighbourhood Plan and there is no resource to do so. • Westhampnett – are undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan. • Lavant – started just before Christmas last year, also split over SDNP.
6. Items for future meeting.	<p>Cllr Potter explained that a meeting had been held to review how the forums are performing since changes were introduced last year. Officers and the Cllr representatives discussed how they felt the forums were going and one suggestion put forward was to consider reducing the number of forum meetings held as there are two all parish meetings in a year. The Forum discussed this suggestion and the following points noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the frequency of the meetings is important and should not be changed. If reduced it was felt that less people would attend. • The Forum is useful for information to be gathered and then disseminated back to the Parish Council and fewer meetings would have an impact on this. • Experiences can be shared and issues discussed in more detail compared to the all parish meeting. • It was suggested that the date of the May all parish meeting be moved as it can clash with the time period that Parish Councils have their annual meetings. <p>It was agreed that for future meetings of the LVP, if a specific topic has not been identified, that there be an open forum for members to share the issues and problems facing their Parish Councils in order to stimulate discussion, build cohesion and share best practice. It was also suggested that on rotation each Parish Council could lead the discussion.</p>
7. AOB.	None.