

ACTION NOTES

MEETING:	Chesham and Chiltern Villages Local Area Forum
DATE:	3 March 2010 7.30 pm to 9.17 pm
LOCATION:	Chartridge Village Hall

Present:	John Axon (Ashley Green Parish Council), Alan Bacon (Chiltern District Council), Patricia Birchley (Buckinghamshire County Council), Jane Bramwell (Chiltern District Council), Michael Brand (Buckinghamshire County Council), Chris Brown (Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards Parish Council), Noel Brown (Buckinghamshire County Council) (Chairman), Chris Howell (Chartridge Parish Council), Peter Jones (Chiltern District Council), Karel Lewis, Joan Lherbier (Chartridge Parish Council) and David Natali (Ashley Green Parish Council)
In Attendance:	Alison Derrick, Tim Fowler, Andrew Fyfe, Eric Meek, Kerry Stevens and Helen Wailling
Apologies:	Elaine Bamford, Merrin Molesworth and Nick Rose

Item	ISSUES RAISED
1	<p>WELCOME / APOLOGIES</p> <p>See above.</p>
2	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
3	<p>ACTION NOTES</p> <p>The notes of the meeting held on 2 December 2009 were agreed and signed as a correct record.</p>
4	<p>QUESTION TIME</p> <p>Ten members of the public were in attendance at the meeting, and asked questions/made comments. The questions and answers (from Eric Meek, Group Manager Area Maintenance, and Alison Derrick, Locality Services Co-ordinator) are summarised below.</p> <p>The roads in Chartridge are in very bad condition, and need to be re-surfaced, as opposed to the pot-holes just being re-filled. Why were the roads already in bad condition, even before the severe weather?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recent severe weather conditions were the worst in over 30 years, with prolonged bad spells of weather. Cold weather was forecast for another fortnight. • All resources (with the exception of gully-emptiers) were now employed in repairing potholes. 20 gangs were at work (as opposed to the usual 6 gangs). • All principal roads were inspected monthly. C-class roads were inspected every three months, and unclassified roads were inspected every six months.

- A category 1 pothole (as defined by insurance companies) was 40mm or more in depth and greater than 300mm in any other direction.
- All category 1 potholes were repaired. When repairing a category 1 pothole, if other (non category 1) potholes were in the immediate vicinity, these would be filled.
- When a pothole was reported by a member of the public, a technician would go out and assess the category of the pothole.
- Two gangs also worked on a 'seek and repair' basis, and repaired any category 1 potholes found. A 'seek and repair' gang had been in the Chartridge / Cholesbury area the previous day.
- Since Christmas, £2m of additional funding had been made available. This had been split as follows:
 - £1m for planing and patching (60% for South Buckinghamshire and 40% for North Buckinghamshire)
 - £400 000 for slurry seal works (delayed due to the weather)
 - £100 000 for collapsed ironwork
 - £500 000 for pothole repairs
- Planing and patching was the only way of repairing potholes which could be guaranteed, as the surface of the road was planed off and re-laid. 16 000 m² of road had been re-surfaced in Buckinghamshire up to two weeks previously.
- The normal planning and patching programme was the 'We're Working on it' Programme, and sites for this were identified in liaison with the local elected members.
- There had been a lack of investment in the roads, due to a lack of funding. To re-surface all Buckinghamshire roads would cost £120m-£150m.

Why are some potholes breaking up within a week of being filled?

These are the potholes which have been filled on a temporary basis, to keep the roads as safe as possible until a permanent fill is possible.

The Local Area Forum should be better publicised. How will this be done?

The Local Area Forums were relatively new meetings, and posters are sent to Parish Clerks.

There is also an e-mail alerts system which residents can sign up to:

<http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/moderngov/ieLogon.aspx?RPID=48166915&Forms=1>

When dates are set for future Local Area Forum meetings, these will be sent to clerks for publication on local websites.

Grass verges – these always seem to be cut on the same day as recycling bins are emptied. Also, there are issues with the way the verges are cut. One of the local footpaths at times had grass growing over children's heads.

The grass verges are cut three times a year. A 1m swathe is cut back the first two times. The 3rd time cuts the grass back to the highway boundary.

Members also made the following comments:

- The issue of funding for roads was a national one.
- There was a large pothole in Chartridge, which was marked with a traffic cone. Eric Meek said he would follow this up – **Action: EM.**
- The hilltop roads around Chesham were c. 600 feet higher than other areas, and were much more vulnerable to frost damage, especially if there was water lying on the road.

- Gullies were blocked with grit, although Chartridge Parish Council cleared the grips in its Parish.

5 PETITIONS

The Local Area Forum received the Report of Bob Ayres, Engineer, and the Petition Request for Pound Lane, Stoney Lane and Heath End, Hawridge, to be added to the precautionary salting network.

A member of the public, who had submitted the petition, said that in the area referred to, residents in three roads had not been able to drive out of their homes for 19 days during the severe weather. A grit pile had been requested from BCC, but this had taken over a fortnight to be delivered. Once it had been delivered, it had taken only a few hours for residents to clear the roads.

According to the BCC scoring system, the roads in question scored 30, whereas the threshold for gritting was 28.

In addition, the roads in question were marked as not being a route for school buses. However two school buses used this route.

Tim Fowler (Area Maintenance Manager, North) said that gritting of roads had to be prioritised. Priority 1 roads were salted on a precautionary basis, and included A Roads, B Roads and other roads as risk-assessed, based on a scoring system. Priority 2 and 3 roads were roads and footways which were treated after the event (snow or ice).

All efforts in the current year had been concentrated on Priority 1 roads, with very little capacity left for Priority 2 and 3 roads.

Tim Fowler said that he would re-visit the road scores with Bob Ayres and would question the issue of the school bus route. **Action: TF**

The Local Area Forum noted that Buckinghamshire County Council does not have the resource available to carry out precautionary salting over its entire network, and therefore it has to prioritise to establish the levels of treatment appropriate for particular roads on the basis of route importance and risk assessment.

A risk assessment has been carried out for Pound Lane, Stoney Lane and Heath End, Hawridge and they do not meet the necessary criteria for inclusion on the Priority 1 (precautionary) salting network.

A member said that although they understood that it would not be possible for all rural roads in Buckinghamshire to be gritted, there needed to be a plan for the following Winter so that residents of hill-top villages had a way-out during severe weather. Residents also needed access to real-time weather information. Some residents in small roads had not even been able to get to the main road in the village.

The Chairman said that emergency planning work had started in conjunction with Chesham Town Council.

A member said that farmers used to be willing to use their tractors to clear the roads in their local area, but were stopped from doing this as it meant they were using red diesel on public roads. There was also an issue with NFU insurance not covering non-agricultural work.

A member said that they had written to Chris Schwier (BCC) to ask if accredited

volunteers could be insured under the BCC insurance scheme. However the response had been that insurance companies would not do this. The member said that the Local Area Forum needed to push for this to happen, as using volunteers would be the only way of achieving a co-ordinated response during severe weather.

A member asked about salt bins. The Chairman said that salt bins could be purchased from BCC for £450 – the location was agreed with BCC and the Parish/Town Council. BCC would refill the bins from then on. Cholesbury Parish Council had ordered four bins recently.

6 WORK OF THE RESILIENCE TEAM AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING

This item was taken out of order due to timing at the meeting.

Andy Fyfe (Resilience Manager) was welcomed to the meeting. Andy Fyfe told members the following:

- The Resilience Team covered emergency management, business continuity management and community resilience.
- Under the Civil Contingency Act, BCC and the District Councils had seven duties.
- A 24/7 duty resilience officer was employed by BCC.
- The Resilience Team managed voluntary organisations (7 were used currently, including the 4x4 Response Unit and Bucks Search and Rescue)
- The Resilience Team provided insurance for organisations they currently worked with, but not for volunteers not attached to an organisation, as they could not be vetted or vouched for.
- An e-mail had been sent to Parish Councils in June 2009 re: Community Resilience and Community Self-help plans. A guide was available on the website. Parish Councils had been asked to provide a 24/7 contact – so far 40 Parish Councils had responded. Workshops could be held to help Parish Councils in writing the plans if there was interest.
- An example of a single-point incident was the fire on the A41 at Vale Tyres in Waddesdon, when residents within 200m had to be evacuated for 24 hours. Waddesdon had an emergency plan in place at the time, but this was not known about and therefore had not been activated. This was an example of an opportunity of when a Parish Council could do things in their own way.
- In the event of a catastrophic incident, community resilience plans would be necessary, e.g. to deal with power outages.

A member said that bureaucracy was putting up hurdles as regarded insurance for volunteers, and that providing insurance would be a quick way of increasing resources in emergency situations.

A member said that there was a need to sort out insurance cover for volunteer gritters and snow clearers, and asked Andy Fyfe to look into this, as the lack of insurance created a major block to outside assistance. **Action: AF**

A member of Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards Parish Council said that their Parish was very small and that they would want a plan which was joined to other local plans. Andy Fyfe said that the type of information which a plan needed to contain was not complex, e.g. where a village hall key was kept etc.

The contact for Resilience Team:

Andy Fyfe, Resilience Manager, afyfe@buckscc.gov.uk, 01296 382937

7 WORK TO SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY DURING THE RECENT SEVERE WEATHER - ADULT SOCIAL CARE - VERBAL UPDATE

Kerry Stevens (Head of Service Provision, Adult Social Care), told members the following:

- 10 000 vulnerable adults were supported by Adults and Family Wellbeing. Only 30% of these could be reached in the recent severe weather.
- All clients were contacted by phone if they could not be reached. The recent severe weather was a very risky time for vulnerable people.
- Some staff (BCC and Health) were out in the snow until 2am to reach vulnerable clients.

A member said that they had struggled to contact the warden of some sheltered accommodation in Chesham during the severe weather, when they had been worried about a vulnerable resident there.

Kerry Stevens said that very few wardens were now on duty 24 hours, and that some were peripatetic. For future reference, the best contact was the Emergency Duty Team - 01494 675802.

A member said that a recurring theme was the need for communication, and referred to the BCC Website having been out of order during the severe weather. The member said that out-of-date technology should be challenged.

A member suggested a separate website be set up for use in an emergency. Erick Meek said that BCC was developing the use of Twitter.

A member noted that there were many Buckinghamshire residents who did not have access to the internet, particularly the elderly, who were the most vulnerable. Andy Fyfe referred members to the Emergency Planning contact numbers:

Useful numbers

- Emergency Services - 999
- Gas emergency - 0800 111999
- Anti-terrorist hotline - 0800 789321
- NHS Direct - 0845 4647
- Buckinghamshire County Council Highways on-call - 08452 302882
- Social Care Emergency Duty Team - 01494 675 802
- Thames Valley Police (Non emergency) - 0845 8505505
- Crimestoppers - 0800 555111
- Environment Agency Floodline Warnings Direct - 0845 9881188

Contact details

Office hours

- Customer services - 0845 3708090
- [Highways on call](tel:08452302882) - 0845 2302882

Out of hours

- [Social Care Emergency Duty Team](#) - 01494 675802
- [Highways on call](#) - in an emergency or to report a dangerous fault to the roads - 01296 486630

District council contacts

- Aylesbury Vale District Council - 01296 585858
- Chiltern District Council - 01494 729000
- Wycombe District Council - 01494 461000
- South Bucks District Council - 01895 837200

Andy Fyfe also referred to the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum, made up of category one responders - <http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/about-us-stplan-eplan>

Resilience leaflets were also available for residents without access to a computer, although there was not available funding to deliver these to every household. It was hoped that Parish Councils could assist in delivering these leaflets.

8 FEEDBACK ON WINTER MAINTENANCE 2009/10 AND INITIAL DISCUSSION OF ROUTES FOR 2010/11

This item was taken out of order due to timing at the meeting.

A member of Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards Parish Council said that they had requested this item before the severe weather, and that this item referred to winter maintenance in previous years.

The member of Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards Parish Council asked the following questions:

- What percentage of the road network does BCC treat in a 'normal' winter?
- To what extent have the criteria for gritting of roads changed?
- How do you collect up-to-date information on changes to roads?

Tim Fowler (Area Maintenance Manager, North) told members the following:

- The risk assessment process for gritting of roads had been in place for c. four years.
- Information gathering on roads was carried out on a local basis.
- An annual review was carried out, looking at exceptions (e.g. the petition in item 5).
- Traffic data was available on some roads.
- 25 spreaders worked across the County, but had limited capacity in terms of length of roads which could be salted. Adding another road to the salting network meant that another road had to be removed from the salting network.
- Four years previously 44% of the network was salted. BCC then reduced funding on this, and the figure dropped to c. 34%. Following strength of public opinion, funding was re-instated so that 40% of the roads could be salted. However currently only 26% was being salted, due to the national salt shortage.
- BCC would write to Parish Councils by the end of March 2010 to ask for input into future plans, and for Parish Councils willing to help in distribution of salt.

	<p>The member said that BCC did not count 12/14-seat buses as school buses. However in rural communities, these smaller vehicles were used to transport children to school, and this should be taken into account.</p> <p>A member asked if BCC had donated salt to anywhere else. Tim Fowler said that they had not.</p>
9	<p>VOTING ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHESHAM AND CHILTERN VILLAGES LOCAL AREA FORUM</p> <p>This item was deferred until the next meeting, due to timing.</p>
10	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>17 March 2010, 3:30pm, Chesham Town Council - Local Priorities Workshop 23 June 2010, 7:30pm</p>
11	<p>LOCAL PRIORITIES FUNDING UPDATE 2009/10</p> <p>The Local Area Forum received the report of Alison Derrick, Locality Services Co-ordinator.</p> <p>Alison Derrick reported that the Local Priorities budget for the Chesham and Chiltern Villages Local Area had had an underspend of £1475.</p> <p>Shed@ThePark had made a bid for funding, and following consultations with the budget holder and LAF Chairman, the Local Services Co-ordinator had made an offer of the remaining £1475 to the Shed@ThePark. This would need to be spent before the end of the financial year 2009/10. This had meant that the Local Priorities budget was now fully committed.</p> <p>Further Local Priorities funding would be available in the following year, and this would be allocated based on priorities identified at the workshop on 17 March.</p> <p>The Local Area Forum noted the progress made on the bids for funding from the Local Priorities budget that were agreed at the meeting on 2 December 2009.</p>
12	<p>PAYP BUDGET UPDATE 2009/10</p> <p>The Local Area Forum received the report of Alison Derrick, Locality Services Co-ordinator.</p> <p>An additional document was circulated (attached) with details of an additional bid from Chesham Youth Welfare Association Rising Stars Two for £800. Some additional funding had been identified from another Local Area and this bid had therefore been accepted.</p> <p>The Local Area Forum noted the progress made on projects that were agreed at the meeting on 2 December 2009.</p> <p>The Local Area Forum agreed the additional bid from Chesham Youth Welfare Association Rising Stars Two and noted that that this bid could be funded from</p>

	another Local Area's funding.
13	<p>EARLY YEARS AND CHILDCARE GRANT - SMALL CAPITAL GRANTS PROGRAMME AND LAF DEVOLVED BUDGET 2009/10</p> <p>The Local Area Forum received the report of David Shaw, Divisional Manager.</p> <p>Alison Derrick told members that the Report provided an update on the Early Years and Childcare Grant in the Chesham and Chiltern Villages Local Area. In practice the Local Area Forum had not been able to influence how the Grant was spent in the current financial year. There had been sufficient funds available to fund all the bids submitted. Different processes were being looked at for the next financial year so that the Forum could influence how the money was spent.</p>
14	<p>HIGHWAYS DELEGATED BUDGET UPDATE 2009/10</p> <p>The Local Area Forum received the report of Jim Stevens, Head of Transport. All work had now been completed.</p> <p>A member of Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards Parish Council said that they were generally happy with the work carried out. However the Parish Council had not been told when the work would take place, and so had had no opportunity to comment on the plans.</p> <p>The Local Area Forum noted the report of Jim Stevens, Head of Transport.</p>
15	<p>HIGHWAYS DELEGATED BUDGET 2010/11</p> <p>The Local Area Forum received the report of Jim Stevens, Head of Transport.</p> <p>The Local Area Forum noted the list of schemes.</p>
16	<p>UPDATE ON LTP 3 CONSULTATION</p> <p>The Local Area Forum received the LTP3 Local Community Engagement Report.</p> <p>A member said that the timetable of the rural bus service for Hyde Heath needed to be reviewed as it only allowed residents to spend an hour in Chesham Town. Noel Brown said that he would find out the cost of Dial-a-Ride Services for the Hyde Heath area.</p> <p>The Local Area Forum noted the LTP3 Local Community Engagement Report</p>
17	<p>AOB</p> <p>Planning Core Strategy</p> <p>Noel Brown told members that Chiltern District Council would be sending the Planning Core Strategy to each household, and asked Parish Councils to respond urgently to this.</p>