

ACTION NOTES

MEETING:	Chesham and Chiltern Villages Local Area Forum
DATE:	25 January 2012 7.30 pm to 9.08 pm
LOCATION	Cholesbury Village Hall, Cholesbury Common, HP23 6ND

Present:	Mohammad Bhatti MBE (Buckinghamshire County Council), Patricia Birchley (Buckinghamshire County Council), Chris Brown (Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards Parish Council), Noel Brown (Buckinghamshire County Council) (Chairman), John Ford (The Lee Parish Council), Andrew Garth (Chiltern District Council - Ashley Green, Latimer and Chenies), Joan Lherbier (Chartridge Parish Council), Keith Platt (Latimer Parish Council), Elizabeth Stacey (The Lee Parish Council) and Fred Wilson (Chiltern District Council - Hilltop and Townsend)
In Attendance:	Mike Barber, Pam Curtis, Ann-Marie Davies, Simon Evans, Christine Gardner, Kerry Stevens and Helen Wailing
Apologies:	Michael Brand, Peter Hudson and Mark Shaw

Item	ISSUES RAISED
1	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP</p> <p>See above.</p>
2	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>Noel Brown and Mohammad Bhatti MBE both declared an interest as regarded any discussions about Day Care Centres. This was because they were Chiltern District Councillors, and Chiltern District Council owned the land on which the proposed Day Care Centre in Amersham was going to be built.</p>
3	<p>ACTION NOTES</p> <p>Notes of the meeting held on 19 October 2011 The notes of the meeting held on 19 October 2011 were agreed and signed as a correct record, with the following amendment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page 1 – John Ford (The Lee Parish Council) was not in attendance at the meeting. <p>Matters arising Page 3 – <i>Building Community Capacity in Cholesbury</i> – the Chairman congratulated Chris Brown on the Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards Parish Council's scheme for severe weather (Hilltop Villages Good Neighbours Scheme). Chris Brown had been invited to attend the Missendens Community Partnership to speak about the Scheme.</p> <p>Amendment to the Notes of the meeting held on 15 June 2011 Members were also asked to agree the following amendment which had been put forward regarding the notes of the meeting held on 15 June 2011:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda item 13 – last line should read, "<i>The lighting level could be adjusted once it</i>

	<p><i>was in place if residents requested this. “</i></p> <p>Members agreed this amendment.</p>
4	<p>QUESTION TIME</p> <p>There were no questions.</p>
5	<p>PETITIONS</p> <p>Petition - objection to the proposed closure of Outreach Day Centre in Chesham for adults who have disabilities and learning difficulties</p> <p>This petition had been presented at the previous meeting.</p> <p>Patricia Birchley, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, Buckinghamshire County Council, said that she was very pleased to be able to tell members that subject to the end of the staff consultation, the County Council would continue to run the Outreach Service from above the Douglas McMinn Centre in Chesham. It was likely that the Service would eventually be run by the Voluntary and Community Sector.</p>
6	<p>TRANSPORT UPDATE</p> <p>Ann-Marie Davies, Transport Localities Team Leader, updated members as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two pilots of movable vehicle activated signs (MVAS) had been carried out in Ford and in Ellesborough. An MVAS could be shared by several Parish Councils, and was either solar-powered or battery-powered. The Policy regarding MVAS would be brought to the Local Area Forum (LAF) when it was completed. • The delegated budget for 2012/13 would no longer be ring-fenced for different purposes, and the local priorities budget and highways budget would be combined. <p>A member noted that some of the roads listed in the carriageway works had only been partly treated.</p> <p>A member asked if the LAF had any input into where carriageway works were carried out. Ann-Marie Davies said that the local County Councillor put forward five roads needing priority treatment, in discussion with other local councillors.</p> <p>It was noted that this was an improvement on the previous system, when the engineers selected the roads to be treated. It was also noted that five roads per electoral division was not enough to include all roads needing treatment.</p> <p>Ann-Marie Davies said that this would be repeated in the next financial year, when another five roads could be put forward.</p> <p>A member referred to the delegated budget for 2012/13 and said that as this would not be ring-fenced, the LAF would have to make a primary judgement about where the funding was spent. Ann-Marie Davies said that any funding application would have to meet one of the priorities identified by LAF members.</p> <p>A member said that they had contacted the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation at Buckinghamshire County Council regarding the condition of the roads in the local area, and about their concern about the productivity of the road gangs.</p> <p>Ann-Marie Davies said that the Cabinet Member was keen to check on the quality of the</p>

	<p>repairs carried out, and to ensure that there was no duplication of repairs.</p> <p>The Chairman said that he had sat on an Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group which had looked at the quality of repairs being carried out.</p> <p>A member referred to the Localism Act 2011 and said that Parish Councils should be able to commission and be more in control of local budgets.</p> <p>Mike Barber, Local Area Technician, said that holes in roads sometimes had to be plugged quickly during bad weather, to ensure that they were safe. The Chairman noted this but said that the bad quality repairs had been carried out since late summer 2011.</p> <p><i>[post meeting note – further information from Ann-Marie Davies – ‘All potholes should be repaired as first time permanent repairs, however at times, due to the number of Category 1 defects ordered, make safe repairs are undertaken, which should be followed up with permanent repairs within 28 days.’]</i></p>
7	<p>APPLICATION FOR FUNDING TO LOCAL PRIORITIES BUDGET</p> <p>Christine Gardner referred members to the report on pages 31-32 of the agenda pack.</p> <p>The report related to a proposal from the Lee Parish Council for £700 of Local Priorities funding. The report stated that the application had been received too late to be considered for 2011-12.</p> <p>However on the morning of the meeting, another approved project had withdrawn its application for funding, and had released £1500 of funding for 2011-12.</p> <p>The Chairman had therefore taken a decision to bring the application from the Lee Parish Council back into the financial year 2011-12.</p> <p>The invoice from the Parish Council would need to be received by the end of March 2012.</p> <p>Members noted the Chairman’s decision to award £700 in funding to the Lee Parish Council for the renovation and replacement of playground equipment.</p>
8	<p>CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY / LOAN SHARKS</p> <p>Pam Curtis, Child Poverty Programme Manager, Buckinghamshire County Council, was welcomed to the meeting.</p> <p>Pam Curtis told members the following:</p> <p>Child Poverty Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Child Poverty Act 2010 gave responsibility to partner organisations to conduct a needs analysis and produce a strategy. • The Buckinghamshire Needs Assessment had been completed in 2010 and in late spring 2011 the Buckinghamshire Child Poverty Strategy had been published. The Strategy was for three years. • The latest Department of Work and Pensions statistics (2008) stated that 11,725 children aged 0-19 years were living in poverty in Buckinghamshire. • In January 2011, 5.7% of pupils were claiming Free School Meals in the Chesham and Chiltern Villages local area.

- Data sets, including the Free School Meals indicator, needed to be used with caution. The Free School Meals indicator only measured the uptake of schools meals, and not the number of eligible pupils.
- It was often assumed that there was no child poverty in Buckinghamshire, but this was incorrect.
- The impacts of living in poverty for children and young people in families on low incomes were: they were often less healthy; they had lower aspirations; they attended fewer social and educational activities; they were more frequently victims of bullying than their peers from higher income families.

Youth Unemployment

There had been an increase in youth unemployment for those aged 18 – 24, and young people were bearing the brunt of unemployment.

Areas in which job losses were highest were also where the number of people looking for jobs was increasing.

Activities taking place to tackle poverty included information events to warn against loan sharks. The Youth Service was also working with young people on employability skills.

All community groups should be aware of the Child Poverty Strategy and what could be done locally to alleviate the situation.

Child Poverty Strategy Priorities

- 1 Aim to help people work together and maximise parental income by increasing employment.
- 2 Reduce health and housing inequalities.
- 3 Improve career advice and opportunities for children and young people.
- 4 Build community resilience.

Contacts and further information

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For additional information see the Children and Young People's website Child Poverty Page:

<http://www.buckinghamshirepartnership.co.uk/partnership/CYPT/Child+Poverty.page>

Information to support individuals and families including those on low incomes is available on the Buckinghamshire Information Service (BFIS) website:

<http://www.bucksfamilyinfo.org/>

Loan Sharks

A loan shark was someone who lent money as a business to two or more people without having the necessary licence issued by the Office of Fair Trading. Loan Sharks were illegal, and were not the same as 'pay day' loan companies advertised on TV. 'Pay day' loan companies were legal, although they had caused much concern about the amount of interest they charged.

An Illegal Money Lending Team (IMLT) based at Birmingham City Council worked across the South East to prosecute loan sharks and help victims.

Loan shark victims were most likely to be female, aged 30-40, on benefits, in social housing. It was estimated that 165 000 UK households used illegal money lenders, equating to 6% households in the most deprived areas (the 'hard pressed' areas in the acorn data sets).

A member asked what evidence was available of loan sharks being active in the Chesham and Chiltern Villages local area. Pam Curtis said that Trading Standards were not able to give out specific information due to ongoing prosecutions, but that Buckinghamshire was similar to other areas.

The Chairman said that there had been confirmation through the Housing Association that loan sharks were active.

Pam Curtis also gave out some information on the local area, although said that this was due to be updated. Here is a link to the information:

<http://www.buckinghamshirepartnership.gov.uk/assets/content/Partnerships/BSP/docs/Chesham.pdf>

9 CHILTERN CREDIT UNION

Simon Evans, Chairman of the Chiltern Credit Union Steering Group, told members the following:

- Simon Evans was a member of St Mary's Church (Amersham), and had been involved in starting a food bank. Martin Holt (Chiltern District Council) had asked if a Credit Union could also be developed. The Citizens Advice Bureau was also involved in setting up the Credit Union.
- A Credit Union (CU) was a bank which was owned and run by and for the local community.
- Some organisations had CUs for their employees (e.g. taxi drivers).
- A CU would encourage people to save to afford things, rather than buying items on credit.
- A bank was needed that was run in a sustainable way, and which would have a profound impact on culture.
- To save or borrow from a CU, someone would need to be a CU member, and live in the common bond (the area which would be set by the CU members).
- CU members had to demonstrate they could save regularly before being allowed to borrow money.
- A marketing and feasibility study was being carried out to look at what was needed.
- The London CU had advised that a large number of people was needed for the CU to happen.
- The aim of attending local area forum meetings was to inform members and to obtain contacts who were interested in getting involved, who could be contacted by email or phone after the meeting.
- It was hoped that service points for the CU could be located in schools, and that this could be linked to financial education.
- Balances in the CU were protected up to a limit of £85 000.

A member asked how the CU would be capitalised. Simon Evans said that loans and grants would be used to start the CU, and people were needed who were prepared to put

	<p>funds into the CU.</p> <p>A member asked what the difference was between a CU and a bank that was set up cheaply. Simon Evans said that a CU had certain rules, and was regulated. A CU was also required to have a common bond area.</p> <p>A member asked how the CU would benefit if they became involved in it. Simon Evans said that putting money into the CU would allow careful lending to be carried out to people who could not otherwise get a loan. The idea of the common bond was that CU members were much less likely to default on a loan as they would be letting down their local community. Loans could be used for critical needs (e.g. a new washing machine).</p> <p>A member asked if CU members could use direct debits. Simon Evans said that the aim was to make the CU as electronic as possible. The member also suggested that people who did not have bank accounts and who therefore could not use direct debit could use a key (as was used for utility bills).</p> <p>A member asked if a Local Area Forum could place some of their delegated funds in the CU. Simon Evans said that this was possible but that this would have to be done cautiously, as they would not want the money to be in the CU unless it was being used.</p>
10	<p>SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN - FOR INFORMATION ONLY</p> <p>Members noted the documents.</p> <p>The Chairman said that the decision had not been sent to local members before it was taken.</p>
11	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>2 May 2012, 7:30pm, venue tbc</p>
12	<p>SECOND HALF OF LOCAL PRIORITIES WORKSHOP</p> <p>Members had a discussion about the local priorities for the Local Area Forum.</p> <p>Members were asked to discuss each priority in groups with the view to coming up with projects or actions to address the priorities.</p> <p>Members felt that they did not have enough information to do this, and it was agreed to defer the decision about the priorities due to the number of members in attendance.</p>