



Chesham & Villages Community Board minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Chesham & Villages Community Board held on Wednesday 30 September 2020 in Via Video Conference, commencing at 7.00 pm and concluding at 8.23 pm.

Members present

A Bacon, P Birchley, N Brown, E Culverhouse, A Garth, P Jones, J MacBean, N Rose, M Shaw, M Stannard, F Wilson, V Martin, M Smith and G Williams

Others in attendance

C Brown, PC R Evans, C Harris, L Hornby, J Llerbier, D Martin, H Mee, V Mistry, L Stewart-Liberty, K Wager, R Watts and D Wilbee

Apologies

A Birkett, P Hudson and N Southworth

Agenda Item

9 Introduction by Chairman

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the second meeting of the Community Board and reminded members that the meeting was being recorded.

The Chairman reported that Chesham had received very good GCSE and A level results over the summer and wished, on behalf of the Board, to congratulate our students and to thank all the teachers for their hard work.

The Chairman also welcomed Mrs Liz Hornby who had replaced Ms Alice Williams as clerk to the Board. It was noted that Ms Williams was now the Community Board Co-ordinator for Marlow.

The Chairman also reminded those present that questions were welcome at the Board if they were submitted five days in advance of the meeting.

10 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Anne Birkett and Councillors Hudson and Southworth.

11 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

12 Minutes from the Last Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2020 were agreed as a true record, subject to the sentence on page 5 "Chesham town appeared to be less deprived than the villages" being deleted.

13 Thames Valley Police - Update

PC Roy Evans explained that he had PC Gavin McVeigh with him.

PC Evans explained that he had produced a report for the Board and was to produce a quarterly newsletter which would be published on 1 October 2020.

He explained that three priorities had been decided on in May, which were Drug dealing / usage; Residential burglary and Anti-Social behaviour and he summarised as follows:

Drug dealing/usage: there had been an increase in county lines drug gang members coming into Chesham with intelligence stating they were from London and picking on vulnerable communities within the town. However, the neighbourhood teams were tackling this issue. Chesham and Amersham colleagues were proactively working together in trying to intercept them. Intelligence was constantly developing and if there was intel in a certain area, then that area would be 'flooded' with police and PCSO's. A recent drugs operation was carried out at Chesham station to stop county lines coming in that way. A drugs dog was used and everyone who the dog identified either admitted they were carrying drugs or had been in possession of them recently. Criticism had been levelled against the police on social media in relation to this operation as people believe that the British Transport Police should have carried it out, however, anyone coming into the town with the intention of dealing drugs meant that the Thames Valley Police should carry out the operation. On the same day as that operation, a vehicle carrying 3 males was stopped in Ashley Green. Those 3 males were found to all be on bail and were found in possession of drugs and cash in the vehicle. It was hoped that a charge of Possession with Intent to Supply would follow.

Burglary: figures showed that Chiltern and South Bucks was one of the most targeted areas. Within the past three months the two most common ways for a burglar to enter a property were via the front or rear doors with front doors being the most used in the evenings. Advice from TVP was that all doors should remain locked even when the householder was within the property. PC Evans wanted to promote CCTV for homes and stated that there were some extremely good/high picture quality, but inexpensive, CCTV systems on the market. In normal circumstances, TVP would attend neighbourhood meetings, events and fairs etc. to promote house safety but because of Covid-19, this had been impossible. However, depending on restrictions, it was hoped that these events would start again and TVP would attend.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB): this covered a wide definition, from personal to community or environmental to nuisance. PC Evans explained that there was a full list on the TVP website. Members of the public also believed that speeding and drugs were anti-social too but because they overlapped with other categories it was

never clear what they were more concerned with. Covid-19 had brought more problems for TVP to deal with since March 2020. Not only had they been expected to enforce the government guidelines but the numbers of people reporting breaches had increased substantially particularly people reporting their neighbours. The aftermath of these increased neighbour reports was still ongoing particularly where neighbours had got along in the past and now TVP were acting as mediators to sort issues out and that took some time.

PC Evans stated that the priorities for the next three months, which were identified at a meeting held on 23 September, would be burglary and crime prevention, Anti-Social Behaviour and Speeding.

Finally, PC Evans reported that two new officers were now at Chesham station. They were both warranted officers from the Emergency Response Unit. They were PC Jack McGregor and PC Hugh Flanagan and they would be taking on the neighbourhood priorities.

In answer to questions, PC Evans explained that putting an additional ten speed cameras in place mainly in rural areas would be a decision by people more senior than him but that he would take the request back. PC Evans encouraged people to report anti-social driving to police by calling 101 or reporting on the TVP website. In particular police would be looking for registration numbers to help identification. PC Evans explained there was also an app for smartphones which could be downloaded, which made reporting easier.

The Vice-Chairman thanked PC Evans and all the team and recognised that the last six months had been very challenging due to not just Covid-19 issues, but the local team being put on standby to assist with mass demonstrations, Black Lives Matters (BLM) rallies, etc in the local and neighbouring areas.

A suggestion was made that instead of increasing the number of speed cameras, mobile speed devices could be utilised.

The Chairman also thanked PC Evans and all Thames Valley Police for their hard work.

14 Leader Update

Members received a short update, via video, from Councillor Martin Tett, Leader of the Council.

15 Sub-Groups Updates

HS2

HS2 Update (slides attached)

Mr Colin Sully explained that this was the first report to the Community with different impacts across the area. For this report he had confined HS2 activities between Wendover and Amersham.

Board members noted that the presentation slides summarised the contents of the report which had been circulated with the agenda.

The following points were raised during the presentation:

- It was clear that 2021 would see a ramping up of significant impact on the A413 corridor which would have an effect on surrounding areas.
- It was noted where trains would emerge from the North portal of the Chilterns tunnel, travel through deep cuttings and then cross the A413 south of Wendover. Local community groups, Parish Councillors and Bucks Councillors had, for some time, been trying to find out how HS2 proposed to carry out this work without putting large amounts of additional traffic on the A413.
- Before commencing works, under the HS2 Act the company had to submit planning applications under Section 4 or Section 17 and it was noted that there was a programme of applications about to be submitted to the Council.
- The Chalfont St Peter ventilation shaft applications were submitted on 17 August 2020 and 10 September 2020 and were currently being reviewed. Applications for the Wendover Viaduct, Chalfont St Giles and Chiltern North Portal and two more applications for the southeast were due in October.
- There was uncertainty around how engagement would take place at a local level. It was also noted that councils had very limited powers to refuse or request amendments to these applications. There were some difficulties with HS2 communicating with the local community groups. There had been some impact during 2020 in respect of Covid-19, various protest groups and the change of local authority to a Unitary Authority.
- A group called the Missendens Meetings, which included the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of this Community Board as well as the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Missenden Community Board would consider how to engage with HS2. Perhaps HS2 could be invited to a future Community Board meeting?
- There was concern in relation to the haul routes, particularly on the A413 and other routes that were not authorised for HGV's. There was also concern in relation to 'rat-running' by drivers trying to avoid the congestion on the A413 as well as the closure of some footpaths and roads. The final concern was in relation to local landowners and farmers many of whom were facing life changing decisions as a result of HS2.
- The promised traffic monitoring had not been put in place, despite many appeals to the Secretary of State.
- Further concerns were raised in relation to the key designs and that HS2 had not liaised with the public in relation to the builds. Engagement was not forthcoming.
- Broader impacts of concern were noise from the train operation, particularly the South Heath and Wendover areas and issues remained unresolved. Water supply issues in the Chesham Valley on Bacombe Hill and water supply / quality concerns in general had been raised.
- In summary, the key issues were:
 1. Further clarity on the programme of works and traffic implications
 2. Understanding the processing of Schedule 17 applications by Bucks

Council

3. Improved engagement by contractors on the design of key elements
4. Resolution of operational noise issues
5. Resolution of water issues
6. Improved engagement and communications with Bucks Councillors, local councils and communities
7. Exploring business and employment opportunities.

In answer to questions and comments, the Board noted that:

- There were five sets of roadworks at present and two sets of traffic lights on the A413 from Amersham to Wendover. The Chairman of this Board had attempted to engage with HS2 and their contractors to find out what the overall plan was in relation to that part of the A413.
- Cllr Gareth Williams, Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Health, reported that he had met with HS2 engagement managers specifically in relation to points that were raised in the presentation.
- It was noted that the Missendens Meeting was the right forum in relation to addressing issues and communication with HS2 and their contractors although there was a level of frustration with promises being made and not being fulfilled.
- Information on traffic management should have been circulated in July 2020 but, to date, had not. There was much frustration locally that this information had not been shared.
- There was nothing to stop non-HGV drivers using every route other than the haulage route. There was nothing to stop them using routes through Chesham, Cholesbury, etc. However, HS2 had conditioned their suppliers to stick to the haulage routes.
- It was agreed that updates would be disseminated to Board members on a regular basis. Liz Hornby and Kama Wager would liaise with the Chairman to work out how best to do this.
- The issue of non-payment of compensation to local landowners and farmers was noted and that the issue was being taken up countywide.

Village Forum

The Chairman reported there was a need to prevent and slow HGV's which were causing problems on rural lanes and a discussion with Buckinghamshire Council's Freight Network Manager on how to track HGV's would be undertaken. Discussions around neighbourhood planning across all parishes and how to tackle this issue would take place. There was also much concern in relation to fly tipping and a request for a camera in a persistently problematic site would be requested from Bucks Council.

Funding would be requested for putting WiFi in village halls to help Silver Surfers learn how to use email and the internet, and possibly another for wellness facilities in Chesham and the villages to improve fitness.

It was agreed that finding someone to help with the applications for funding due to

Parish Clerks already being busy with parish work.

Covid-19 Response

Councillor Mark Shaw reported that at a first meeting of the Covid-19 Response group it was noted what each local group had done and learned through the first wave of Covid-19 and they then looked at what could be done jointly if there was a second wave. A Chesham Coronavirus Group had been set up in Chesham and were looking to relaunch soon in the hope of recruiting volunteers. Some may be the original volunteers who helped during the first wave, but it was hoped to involve new volunteers.

It was noted that the Vice Chairman of the Board was a member of a Covid-19 committee set up by Bucks Council which monitors the figures supplied by Public Health England and it was clear that cases were increasing so there would be an increase in communication from the Council with public groups. It was hoped that those residents who had been helped during the first wave, would be aided to become more independent, e.g. putting them in touch with pharmacies that would deliver prescriptions, online shopping etc.

It was noted that 1800 volunteers throughout Buckinghamshire had helped out in the first wave. Along with the Clare Foundation, the Council had triaged volunteers to ensure they were ready to be deployed at a moment's notice. One hundred and fifty Council employees were redeployed from their 'day jobs' and could be redeployed if necessary. Emma Denley, from Bucks Council, had managed the hubs which were still in place and are ready to be scaled back up if required.

Members were encouraged to take advantage of the flu jab this year.

Town Team

The Vice-Chairman reported a strong meeting had taken place with good officer support secured. Market Square in Chesham had been pedestrianised and further conversations around the High Street were ongoing. Other low-key initiatives included information boards and improvement to the town centre which were currently under discussion. A further meeting would be held in a few weeks' time and information would be reported back to the Board at the next meeting.

Progress on Community Forum

The Vice-Chairman reported that a community group in the Chiltern had always been strong and lots of discussions had been held recently on how to continue the good work of the group. Further detail to follow after feedback was obtained from TVP.

16 Funding and Priorities

The Chairman reported the following budgets:

Health & Wellbeing - £16,000 left having spent £16,000 during the Covid-19

emergency.

Local Infrastructure Fund - £24,000

Community Area Priorities - £90,000

Funding streams were now open to all organisations who had a bank account. Funding decisions would be taken later in the financial year. Applications with match funding would be prioritised. Funding was not available for any political purposes or for the benefit of a single individual.

Clarity had been sought on whether the funding could be used for transport / roads. It was noted that Councillor Gareth Williams had spoken with Mark Davies, Transport for Bucks, for clarity around what was considered Transport for Bucks highways projects and what was not covered. Cllr Williams would follow up on the outcome of these discussions.

17 Presentation

It was noted that because Mr Colin McGregor-Paterson was not at the meeting it was agreed that this item would be deferred to the next meeting.

18 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 3 November 2020 at 7.00pm.

This page is intentionally left blank