

**AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY BOARD  
WAS HELD 9 APRIL 2014**

The Mayor (Councillor Beavis) (Ex-Officio) Chairman of the Policy and Organisation Board (Councillor Hook) (P), Burgess (P), Carter C K (P), Mrs Cully (P), Edgar (P), Foster-Reed (P), Henshaw (P), Mrs Hook (P), Hylands (P), Kimber (P), Mrs Morgan (P), Murphy and Mrs Wright (P).

It was reported that in accordance with Standing Orders 2.3.6, Councillor Hook had been nominated to replace Councillor Murphy for this meeting.

**46. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were received from the Mayor and Councillor Murphy.

**47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**48. DEPUTATIONS**

A deputation was received from Mrs Greer Jones, Bridle Way and Access Officer for the Hampshire Branch of the British Horse Society, on Agenda Item number 6, Alver Valley Country Park.

Mrs Jones was invited to address the Board whereby she said she was speaking on behalf of the British Horse Society (BHS). She expressed that overall; she was disappointed with the strategy in relation to equestrian access.

Mrs Jones said she had seen previous Gosport strategy documents, the oldest going back 20 years and the most recent from October 2012 which all mentioned a network of paths being provided for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Mrs Jones reported that she had attended various consultations with Groundwork Solent when they were in responsible for the site, and they had all been very positive about access for riders.

Mrs Jones raised four points:-

1) That within the document it was said that a 'desire had been expressed for a horse route through the country park'. Mrs Jones opinion was that the comment sounded very half-hearted. She continued and advised that there was strong support amongst equestrians for off-road provision of paths in the park and that she felt there was no provision at all for off road riding in Gosport at the moment. Mrs Jones said she that had documents going back to the 1990s relating to negotiations between the BHS and Gosport Borough Council over access to the area and that there had been protests by riders over the lack of provision in the past. Mrs Jones continued to advise that she had

identified approximately 100 horse owners in the area who would support access to the site, this included emails from Gosport residents expressing outrage that the site had been closed to horse riders. Mrs Jones said that surveys in the past had shown that Gosport residents supported equestrian access.

2) That the document referred to the consideration of a single route through the park and that this was felt unlikely to have been of use to riders. Mrs Jones said there was a bridleway established in the Alver Valley in the 90's after negotiations with the BHS but that had been withdrawn, without any consultation, as the park rangers said it was not used. Mrs Jones advised that she felt this could have been true, as most horse-owners in the area had been unable to access the path as getting to the entrance involved a long road ride. She said it was essential that any route offered was negotiated.

Mrs Jones suggested that the routes she had identified would to some extent separate horse riders from other users, and advised however that she understood that financial reasons could prohibit a network of paths and that the request may have been over ambitious, she advised that any path offered should include a loop so that riders would be able to do a circular ride.

3) Mrs Jones had recently been asked as BHS representative, to attend meetings of the South Road Safety Council; she said that the single most important thing that any council could do to improve safety for horse riders was to provide off- road paths so that Horse Riders would not have to take their horses out on the road. Mrs Jones emphasised this by sharing her belief that, currently there were many horse owners in Gosport who were forced to ride on the road as there was no alternative.

She advised that the Alver Valley was one of the few places left after extensive development where provision for horse riders could be made. Mrs Jones requested that the Council provide paths before a rider was seriously injured or killed on the roads in Gosport.

4) That other country parks provide access for horses. Two examples were the Royal Victoria Country Park at Hamble and the Queen Elizabeth Country Park near Petersfield. Mrs Jones said the Royal Victoria Country Park charged riders; Queen Elizabeth Country Park did not. She said she was opposed to charges because they involved administration costs that made returns poor and because the effect of charges rationed access to those that could afford it and that it was particularly important in an area where the horse owners/riders were not the most affluent people. Mrs Jones also advised that other groups such as walkers and cyclists were not charged and had their needs met out of the public purse, so why should it be different for horse riders.

Mrs Jones asked that the arguments put forward in her deputation be taken into consideration. She highlighted that if no commitment was made for horse access in the Alver Valley, then the opportunity would be gone for good. Mrs Jones said that horse owners spent money on their animals within the local economy and that if no provision was made they would move to other areas

and that livery owners, instructors, farriers, farmers would all be worse off as a result.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Jones for her deputation.

#### **49. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions.

### **PART II**

#### **50. ST VINCENT ROAD DEVELOPMENT**

Consideration was given to a report of the Housing Services Manager which outlined the progress made in developing plans for the future of the St Vincent Road bungalow site.

Further to a Member's question the Borough Solicitor and Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that the purchase price for properties in the St Vincent Road Development under the Right to Buy Scheme would not be less than the 'cost floor' for the first 15 years of the development.

**RESOLVED:** That

- a) the proposal to provide up to 16 two bedroom houses on the St Vincent Road Bungalow Site, be approved; and
- b) the Housing Services Manager, in consultation with the Borough Solicitor and Deputy Chief Executive and Borough Treasurer, be authorised to implement this proposal.

#### **51. ALVER VALLEY COUNTRY PARK**

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive which proposed and sought approval for an updated strategy for the Alver Valley Country Park and a number of measures which would enhance the attractiveness of the Country Park.

In response to Mrs Jones deputation the Chief Executive confirmed further consultation and discussions would take place that would look at routes and areas best suited to Bridle Ways.

**RESOLVED:** That

- a) an updated Strategy for the Alver Valley Country Park, Appendix A in the report of the Chief Executive, be approved;
- b) the logos for the Country Park to be offered for public consultation via Coastline, Appendix B in the report of the Chief Executive, be approved;
- c) the proposed marketing of the Grange Farm site for use as a Garden Centre including a café and visitor facilities, be noted;

- d) the proposed renewal of the lease to the 17<sup>th</sup> Century Living History Society as outlined in the report of the Chief Executive, which will be referred to the Economic Development Board, be noted; and
- e) the proposal to construct a car park off Cherque Way, Appendix D in the report of the Chief Executive, and refer it to Policy and Organisation Board for inclusion within the Council's Capital Programme be noted.

## **52. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP INTO TEXTILE RECYCLING**

Consideration was given to a report of the Textile Recycling Working Group cross referenced from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Kimber addressed the Board as he had led the Textile Recycling Working Group investigation. He advised that it had been a cross party scrutiny and that it was carried out over a period of four months.

He thanked the Members involved with the working group and advised that they had asked searching questions of those using the facilities as well as seeking the views of both Fareham Borough and Test Valley District Councils. He also thanked the officers involved for their support in bringing the report together.

Councillor Mrs Cully welcomed that charities could use the sites without charge and that the people of the Borough were able to choose which charity to support and also welcomed that the current set up left minimal waste. Councillor Mrs Cully also thanked Councillor Kimber for his leadership.

The Chairman of the Policy and Organisation Board advised that he was pleased with the outcome of the report and the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He welcomed the work the Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertook and the cross party working that took place on the Committee.

Members paid tribute to Councillor Kimber's work as a Councillor as he would be stepping down at the next election

The Chairman of the Policy and Organisation Board also thanked the Chairman of the Community Board for his leadership over the past Municipal Year.

**RESOLVED:** That Gosport Borough Council;

- A) do not enter the Framework set up by Fareham Borough Council at this time and retain the status quo, and
- B) the charities interviewed be advised to engage and discuss mutual benefits in combining textile operations.

**53. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was none.

The meeting concluded at: 7:25pm

CHAIRMAN