Minutes of the West Bromwich Town Committee

27th September, 2007 at 6.00 pm
at the Institute Room, Sandwell College, Lodge Road, West Bromwich

Present: Councillor Mrs Turton (Chair);
Councillor Dhallu (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Badham, Edwards,
Mrs A Hughes, Sidhu, S L Smith, Tagger,
A Underhill, J Underhill and Wilson.

Apologies: Councillors Allcock, Y Davies, Nock, M G Smith,
Ward, Watson and Williams.

38/07 Introductions and Chair’s Announcements

The Chair welcomed everyone to the West Bromwich Town Committee and explained the protocols and ‘domestic’ arrangements for the meeting.

The Chair gave a reminder that local travel passes were due in two weeks time.

Councillor Badham updated the Committee on progress on the pUBLIC and announced that construction work was on schedule to be completed before Christmas, 2007 and that the installation of art works and exhibitions was due to commence in January, 2008. Subsequently, there would be a phase of “soft testing” of the venue and plans were in place to publicise the facilities. The pUBLIC was due to open in late Spring/early Summer, 2008.

The Chair welcomed a Mr. and Mrs. Ralph to the meeting and paid tribute to their fund raising work, over a period of 60 years and continuing, in support of the Royal National Lifeboat Institute. Their efforts had contributed to the funding of “The Sandwell” lifeboat based at Aberdovey. The Chair thanked Mr. and Mrs. Ralph for their outstanding efforts and presented them with a certificate and a bouquet of flowers as a token of the Town Committee’s appreciation.
39/07  Declaration of Interest in Contracts and Other Matters

Councillor J Underhill declared a prejudicial interest in Minute No. 51/07 (Local Area Budget Grant Applications) insofar as it related to Menzies High School.

40/07  Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 21st June, 2007 be confirmed as a correct record.

41/07  Issues Previously Considered or Raised at the Committee

The Committee noted progress on items raised at previous meetings of the Town Committee.

42/07  Petitions

The following petitions were received:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Submitted by</th>
<th>Action</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Request to fence the Alley between Larchwood Green and Orchard Road, Yew Tree Estate.</td>
<td>Referred to the Town Team Co-ordinator.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Request for the extension of the Closed Circuit Television Network in Charlemont to include the shops in Beaconview Road.</td>
<td>Referred to the Operations Director of Sandwell Homes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
43/07  **Public Question Time**

The following questions were received:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A request for details of deadlines for the submission of items for the Town Committee’s “Matters of Interest” report.</td>
<td>Referred to the Town Team Co-ordinator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A request for an update on the proposed memorial for the late Harold Short.</td>
<td>Referred to Adult and Community Services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A request for road safety issues at the junction of Thynne Street and High Street, West Bromwich to be investigated.</td>
<td>Referred to Highways Direct.</td>
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44/07  **Neighbourhood Tasking**

Inspector Cooper provided an update on the Neighbourhood Tasking process within West Bromwich. Crime had stabilised over the last three months and there had been a reduction in the number of anti-social behaviour calls received. West Bromwich was the region’s “hot spot” for the theft of metals, but the introduction of “Operation Steel” had made the Force one of the leaders in the Black Country for dealing with such offences. There had been virtually no disorder in the Town Centre over the last six weeks following a change in the style of policing. Policing in Greets Green had been recognised nationally and the Force had been voted into third place in the Community Safety and Crime Reduction category.

45/07  **Briefing on the Progress of the Greets Green New Deal for Communities Programme**

The Committee received an update on the Greets Green New Deal for Communities Programme.

The Ten Year Programme was part of the Government’s Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and operated in 39 neighbourhoods across England. It aimed to reduce unemployment, crime and poor health, to raise educational attainment and the quality of housing and environment, so that, by
the end of the programme, no one living in those neighbourhoods was disadvantaged by reason of where they lived.

Significant improvements were already evident in Greets Green as regards the educational attainment of children, reductions in crime and improvements in the quality and choice of housing. The Greets Green Partnership was ranked as ‘Excellent’ and was one of the best 14 out of the 39.

The Programme would end in 2010. The Partnership, however, was working with partners, such as the Council, Sandwell Primary Care Trust, West Midlands Police, RegenCo and Urban Living, to mainstream the learning from the Programme and to continue the agreed investment in the West Bromwich area. In addition, the Partnership had established a legacy body, Greets Green Community Enterprise Ltd., which was seeking to develop managed workspace to provide employment and training opportunities beyond the life of the Partnership. It had also taken over the running of Wood Lane Community Centre to ensure the continuing offer of community facilities in the area.

The challenge facing the Partnership was to build a strong independent organisation that could properly manage assets acquired with public funding and generate an income to sustain its activities to continue to benefit the area.

The Committee noted the report and requested the Greets Green Partnership to submit an annual briefing on the progress of the Partnership over its remaining three years.

**Responsible Bird Feeding Campaign**

The Committee was informed of a new approach to managing the feeding of pigeons and waterfowl in public places in order to minimise problems caused by this activity. A responsible bird feeding education and publicity campaign was underway and two designated feeding areas had been established; one in St Pauls Road, Smethwick and one in Victoria Park, Tipton. Work was well underway to identify a suitable feeding area in West Bromwich. The use of fixed penalty notices in those areas would be employed as a means to encourage persistent offenders to comply with the designated areas. The Committee supported the campaign.
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47/07  **Sandwell’s Housing Strategy Green Paper**

The Committee received Sandwell’s Housing Strategy Green Paper, titled “Homes for the Future”. Members were informed that the Green Paper was the start of a consultation process to allow an inclusive approach to the development of the renewed Sandwell Housing Strategy for the period 2008/2011.

The aim was for the renewed Housing Strategy to form a chapter of the Sandwell Plan, which would be published in April, 2008.

48/07  **Modernisation of Older People’s Services**

The Head of Adult Services reported on proposals to reduce residential care provision within the borough and increase care provided to people in their own homes, specifically through an increase in extra care housing, but also by modernisation of home care services and the continuing development of other intermediate care support services.

The proposals were the subject of a public consultation and Members and members of the public were invited to submit their comments to the Head of Adult Services by 29\textsuperscript{th} November, 2007.

49/07  **West Bromwich Town Team Update**

The Committee received a progress report on the work of the Town Team and activities around West Bromwich.

The West Bromwich Community Forum was successfully relaunched on 12\textsuperscript{th} July, 2007 with approximately 30 organisations represented.

It was reported that, this year, the Council would be providing festive lights in three areas of West Bromwich, i.e.

- Friday 26\textsuperscript{th} October from Dartmouth Square to Trinity Way when Lord King would switch on the lights in time for the Diwali celebrations;
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- Friday 30th November at Stone Cross when Tom Watson MP would switch the lights on;

- Saturday 1st December at Carters Green and the High Street, where arrangements were still to be confirmed

As part of a programme of activity funded through Sandwell’s Local Strategic Partnership, Multi-storey, a community arts organisation, had been working on a community cohesion project, “Telling Tales,” in Charlemont and Yew Tree. “Telling Tales” sought to explore local issues surrounding age differences and stereotyping.

The Strengthening Communities project, funded through the Birmingham Sandwell Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder, had been operating during the 2007/8 financial year in the Beeches Road and Lyng areas. A series of initiatives had been undertaken which were designed to both reduce crime as well as to make residents feel safer including:

- gating schemes, as part of the Scheme for Devereux Road, Francis Street, 43-51 Beeches Road and Salisbury Road;
- an initiative to improve the physical appearance of properties, to make them look less vulnerable, which had been commissioned through the Sandwell Council for Voluntary Organisations;
- the Crime Prevention bus, which had visited the Beeches Road area and encouraged residents to complete questionnaires about safety, had resulted in targeted investment and advice. It was also intended to commission a project addressing the issues relating to young people.

50/07 **Local Area Budget – Panel**

The Committee noted details of the Community Grants Panel.

51/07 **Local Area Budget – Grant Applications**

The Committee considered recommendations of the Community Grants Panel with regard to grant applications from local organisations.
Resolved:-

1) that the Interim Head of Towns and Environmental Health and Trading Standards be authorised to issue grants to the organisations indicated in accordance with the Council’s agreed criteria:-

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteer Reading Help Black Country (to recruit, train and develop volunteers)</td>
<td>£1,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Bromwich &amp; District YMCA (to install new CCTV equipment)</td>
<td>£2,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hallam Street Community Project (for replacement equipment)</td>
<td>£1,260</td>
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<tr>
<td>Menzies High School Science College (for extended schools activities)</td>
<td>£310</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swan Village Social Club (for purchase of a bingo machine and equipment)</td>
<td>£800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hill Top Rangers Youth ((for venue hire, first aid, strips and equipment costs)</td>
<td>£1,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends of Sandwell Shop Mobility (to print and deliver a newsletter to 5,000 homes)</td>
<td>£1,173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandwell Valley Trails Group (to produce 10,000 maps highlighting paths/trails in Sandwell Valley)</td>
<td>£1,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMWS Kickboxing Group (for kickboxing equipment)</td>
<td>£1,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>£10,043</strong></td>
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2) that the following grant applications be refused: -

- RSPB Central England Region,
- Yew Tree Healthy Living Centre,
- Yew Tree and Tame Bridge Residents Group,
- Sandwell Young African Caribbean Achievers Event,
- Great Barr and Newton Neighbourhood Watch Group

(Councillor J Underhill left the room during consideration of this item, took no part in the discussion and did not vote).

52/07  
**Matters of Interest in West Bromwich**

The Committee was informed of various forthcoming events and matters of interest in West Bromwich.
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Mention was made of:

- a John o’ Groats to Lands End cyclist who would be passing through Sandwell on 1st October, 2007 via the “Queens Head,” Lindon, corner of Lewisham Street, in aid of Macmillan Nurses.

- The Yew Tree Healthy Living Centre Open Day at Redwood Road on 11th October, 2007 from 3-7 p.m.

- The Yew Tree Healthy Living Centre “Have Your Say” event (Community Consultation Day) on 25th October, 2007 from 3 – 6 p.m.

- Sandwell Valley Trails Group meeting on 18th November, 2007 regarding improvements to Sandwell Valley.

53/07

Date of next meeting

To be held on Thursday 6th December, 2007 at 6.00 pm in the Institute Room, Sandwell College, West Bromwich.

(Meeting ended at 7.39 p.m.)

Contact Officers:
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Democratic Services Unit
0121 569 3200 / 0121 569 3791