

Chorley West Community Forum

**Thursday, 5 July 2007
at St Mary's Social Club, Wigan Road, Euxton**

Present: Councillor John Walker (Chair), Councillor Daniel Gee (Vice-Chair), Councillor Eric Bell (Executive Member for Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment), Councillor Henry Counce, Councillor Mrs Doreen Dickinson, Councillor Peter Goldsworthy, Councillor Harold Heaton, Councillor Margaret Iddon, Councillor Kevin Joyce, Councillor Rosemary Russell, Councillor Edward Smith

Co-opted Members: County Councillor Mark Perks, County Councillor Alan Whittaker, Parish Councillors Kristin Jolley, Brian Monk and John Pigott (Bretherton Parish Council), Parish Councillors Kath Almond, John Forrest and Anne Peet (Croston Parish Council), Parish Councillor Derek Ormerod (Ulmes Walton Parish Council), Alan Platt (Clerk of Eccleston Parish Council), PC Caroline Plummer (Lancashire Constabulary), Jason Percy (Police Community Support Officer) and Maureen Harrison (Central Lancashire Primary Care Trust)

Chorley Borough Officers: Gary Hall (Director of Finance), Simon Clark (Environmental Health Manager), Steve Pearce (Assistant Head of Democratic Services), Lesley Miller (Neighbourhoods Quality Team Leader) and Tony Uren (Democratic Services Officer)

Also present: Emma Hoyle (Lindsay Hoyle MP's office)

3 residents of Bretherton and Euxton

07.10 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair (Councillor J Walker) welcomed everyone present to the second meeting of the Chorley West Community Forums and indicated that representatives of Chorley Borough Council and its Community Forum partners (Lancashire County Council, the Parish Councils for the Forum area, Lancashire Constabulary and Central Lancashire Primary Care Trust) were present at the meeting to answer residents' queries.

07.11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Geoffrey Russell, County Councillor Edward Forshaw and Inspector Jo Keay and Sergeant Alex Clayton (Lancashire Constabulary).

07.12 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the first meeting of the Chorley West Community Forum held at the Quality Hotel, Moor Road, Croston on 21 March 2007 were confirmed as a correct record.

07.13 "YOU SAID WE DID"

Copies of a schedule detailing the action that had been taken on relevant issues raised at the Chorley West Community Forum on 21 March 2007 were distributed at the meeting.

(i) Deposit of Sewage Sludge on fields in Bretherton and Croston

As a consequence of the discussions at the last Community Forum meeting, the issues surrounding the storage and deposit of trade effluent on agricultural fields in Bretherton and Croston had been debated at a meeting of the County Council's Sustainable Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee with

representatives of United Utilities. County Councillor Whittaker read an extract from the report of the meeting at which United Utilities had assured the County Council Members that all sewage sludge disposed of on land or by landfill was treated, most often by the process of digestion. Raw, untreated sewage sludge was never deposited on land.

County Councillor Alan Whittaker accepted that the report had not addressed the problem of the pungent smells emanating from the site, which the residents confirmed had not been abated.

The Parish Councillors suggested further discussions with United Utilities to seek their views on any processes that could be undertaken during the winter months to ensure that the smell nuisance did not recur next summer. A Borough Councillor also recommended discussions with the landowner(s) to ascertain if they were aware of the extent of the nuisance created to nearby residents and to ask for their views on feasible actions that could be taken to ameliorate the situation.

Simon Clark reminded that Forum that the storage and depositing processes were controlled by the Environment Agency, which had previously asserted that the operations were being carried out in accordance with acceptable Codes of Practice.

The Chair undertook to raise the issues with the Chair of the Borough Council's Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel, with a view to the topic being debated at a future Panel meeting.

Simon Clark also promised to contact both United Utilities and the Environment Agency to request their presence at a future meeting of the Community Forum and/or the Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee to explain their respective stances on the sewage sludge issue. Lesley Miller also advised Parish Councillors and members of the public to report specific issues direct to the Environment Agency on 08708 506506, specifying that their regional office was in Preston.

(ii) Ambulance Response Times in Rural Areas

Maureen Harrison from the Central Lancashire Primary Care Trust relayed a message from the Ambulance Service to confirm that the Service was achieving its 75% target of responding to calls in rural areas within the specified time period.

Maureen intimated that the PCT, as a member of the Ambulance Commissioning Group, was not satisfied with the situation and would be reviewing with the Ambulance Service potential means of improving the response rates in rural areas.

A progress report will be submitted to the next meeting of this Forum.

07.14 LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ISSUES

County Councillor Alan Whittaker drew the Forum's attention to the following matters:

- (i) Balshaw Lane, Euxton would be closed from its junction with the A49 to its junction with Highways Avenue for resurfacing works from 23 July to 31 August 2007. Plans showing alternative routes during that period was available for inspection at the Forum meeting.

- (ii) Three Chorley schools had won the top prize for recycling the greatest number of batteries in a recent County Council promoted Schools Battery Recycling Scheme.
- (iii) In response to a recent Government Directive, the County Council would be undertaking a comprehensive review and re-assessment of the speed limits currently in question on 130 'A' and 'B' roads throughout Lancashire.

In addition, formal consultation on the plans to impose a 30mph speed limit on a length of North Road, Bretherton would also be commenced shortly.

07.15 CENTRAL LANCASHIRE PRIMARY CARE NHS TRUST ISSUES

Maureen Harrison gave a short presentation on Central Lancashire Primary Care Trust's consultations on the organisation's Statement of Strategic Intent on health and healthcare issues in the sub-region.

Maureen explained that the Central Lancashire PCT had become operative in October 2006 and was responsible for the management of a budget of £625m within an area comprising over 467,000 population. The PCT was responsible for the commissioning of health services that would best meet the needs of the community and for the provision of community health and GP services across the sub-region.

The PCT had identified the following new vision statement:

"Central Lancashire PCT will promote health, reduce health inequalities and deliver the best possible care for the population within the resources available."

Maureen emphasised that the views and suggestions of the community on the types and level of healthcare services required were vital if the PCT was to ensure that the services commissioned and provided met the needs and aspirations of the community. Maureen said that she would be available at the close of the meeting to receive the Forum members' comments and take feedback to the PCT.

Questions/Issues raised at meeting:

- (i) A Parish Councillor referred to the lack of NHS Dentists in the Croston area and queried the PCT's policy and intentions on the provision of dentistry services.

Response: Maureen Harrison promised to secure a response from the PCT and feed it back to the questioner.

Emma Hoyle also reported that the local Member of Parliament, Lindsay Hoyle, was also concerned at the insufficient supply of NHS Dentists and had recently written to and invited the comments of Mark Wilkinson, Chief Executive of Central Lancashire PCT.

- (ii) A resident requested confirmation that the Accident and Emergency Department was to remain in the Chorley and South Ribble Hospital.

Response: Maureen Harrison indicated that she was unaware of any contrary plans.

07.16 PARISH COUNCIL ISSUES

Prior to the Forum meeting, each constituent Parish Council had been invited to submit any issues or questions which they wished to raise or promote at the meeting. In response, the following two questions had been submitted by Bretherton Parish Council.

1. "Members of the Parish Council wish to express their disappointment at the last West Community Forum Meeting where there was inappropriate and inadequate representation by Lancashire County Council and other Partner Organisations for issues relative to rural villages. How will the Forum:
 - (a) ensure that appropriate representation is in attendance to address such matters? and
 - (b) be monitored and subject matters selected to ensure the content of future meetings is relative to the geographical area it is covering?"

Response: The following responses to the two parts of the question had been prepared jointly by County and Borough Council Officers and were summarised by the Chair at the meeting:

- (a) "The Officers assured the Community Forum that Lancashire County Council supported the Chorley Community Forums. The representatives at Community Forums were the elected members, the local County Councillors. LCC had been represented at the last meeting of Chorley West Community Forum by County Councillor Edward Forshaw and the District Partnership Officer. Lancashire County Council provided a wide range of services and it would be difficult to provide an immediate response to every enquiry. Enquiries relating to County Council services which were raised at meetings were taken away, raised with the appropriate Officers, and responses provided.

The County Council also informed the Community Forum of the dates for future Lancashire Local Chorley meetings. Those meetings brought together all of the County Councillors for Chorley, together with an equal number of Chorley Borough Councillors, to make decisions on, shape and influence and monitor the way Lancashire County Council services were delivered in Chorley. A number of Highways functions fell within the remit of Lancashire Local Chorley and senior Highways officers attended the meetings. Meetings of Lancashire Locals were open to the public and there was an opportunity in the meetings for members of the public to raise questions about or comment on items on the agenda. Parish and Town Councils received notification of forthcoming meetings and were invited to attend and contribute to meetings. Lancashire Local meetings would take place at Lancashire College beginning at 6.15pm on the following dates: 25 July; 12 September; 31 October; 10 December; 6 February 2008; 26 March 2008.

In addition, the Community Forum was advised that Road Safety and Traffic Management meetings took place every three months. Those officer meetings brought together County Council Officers from Traffic and Safety and the Area Team, including the Area Surveyor, the Police represented by John McLaughlin, and Iain Price, Chorley Council's Parking Manager. While speed limits were being reviewed in accordance with Government recommendations and the County Council's Speed Management Survey, and the Police were responsible for the policing of speed, the forum brought together all the responsible parties to consider specific issues which were drawn to its attention.

Any issues should be submitted to Paula Fodor, the County's District Partnership Officer on (01257) 515288 or by e-mail to paula.fodor@css.lancscc.gov.uk

The Borough Council would be represented at each Community Forum meeting by:

- The appropriate Ward Councillors

- Executive Cabinet members
- At least one Chief Officer
- An Officer from the Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment Directorate
- Other officers as appropriate for each meeting

The Police would be represented at each Forum meeting by the appropriate Community Beat Managers (CBM) and, wherever possible, by the geographical Sergeant/Inspector. The CBM would be able to respond to all local community policing issues. Any issues which could not be responded to by the CBM would receive a written response within three weeks after each meeting.

The Primary Care Trust would be represented by a senior officer from the Community Engagement Team, who would provide regular updates on local issues, including ambulance response rates.”

- (b) “A report on the key issues raised at each round of Community Forum meetings would be submitted to the Chorley Executive Cabinet and the Lancashire Local Committee for Chorley.

The feedback from the public on the “3 Big Issues” would be evaluated and reported back to the next round of Community Forum meetings and any key issues for each Forum would be included on the agendas for discussion at future meetings.

Representatives of all the Partner Organisations were invited to report on any specific issues relevant to each Forum and, in particular, all Parish Councils were requested to raise and promote any issues relevant to their Parish at the Forum meetings.”

2. “Members of the Parish Council have recently experienced difficulty in making contact with specific departments of Chorley Borough Council (CBC) through the general contact number and find the system to be inferior to the previous arrangement of contacting the Heads of Departments directly on direct line numbers, eg a Parish Councillor recently waited for 12 minutes on hold before terminating a call. How can CBC improve telephonic communication and keep holding times to a minimum and why are the Heads of Department not more accessible to the general public?”

Response: The following response to the question had been prepared by Chorley Council Officers and was summarised by the Chair at the meeting:

“Head of Departments were still accessible to the general public, but for the vast majority of enquiries this was not necessary and a more effective service could be provided by the Contact Centre on (01257) 515151 by specially trained staff. The Council have achieved in excess of 95% satisfaction with the service.

There was a separate concern in relation to difficulties customers experienced in getting through to the Contact Centre. The Council was aware of this and were recruiting more staff to deal with the high levels of demands for services. The Council was also looking at other areas for improvement and to understand customer needs so that it could provide better services. Customers had the option to leave a message during busy times and a return call was always made. Alternatively, the Council could be emailed at contact@chorley.gov.uk

Anyone wishing to discuss the issue further could contact Asim Khan, the Head of Customer and Information Services direct on (01257) 515448 or by email to asim.khan@chorley.gov.uk

Question/Issue raised at meeting:

- (i) A Bretherton Parish Councillor drew attention to the difficulty she experienced in being able to make direct telephone contact with individual Council staff members. The Parish Councillor appreciated the purpose and efficiency of the Contact Centre, but felt that Parish Councillors in particular, when dealing with constituent's queries, should be able to raise matters with known Officers on appropriate occasions.

Response: Gary Hall clarified that one of the aims of the Contact Centre was to enable as many telephone enquiries as possible to be dealt with at the initial point of contact. Gary did, however, accept that there would be circumstances when callers requesting to speak to individual Officers would need to be transferred to the Officer. Gary promised to raise the issue highlighted by the Parish Councillor with the Head of Customer and Information Services and send a response to the Parish Councillor.

07.17 THE BIG 3 ISSUES

The Chair reminded the Forum members of the Borough Council's interest in ascertaining members of the public's views on the major issues affecting their particular areas.

Forum members were invited to complete the cards available at the meeting to identify the three biggest issues or concerns that they would like to be addressed by the Borough Council and/or partner organisations. The cards had also been widely distributed throughout the Borough through local schools.

The responses would be analysed and a summary report would be compiled for submission to the next round of Community Forum meetings. The report would outline the major issues/concerns affecting areas, together with potential courses of action to address the issues.

Gary Hall reported that Chorley Council had allocated a budget of £12,500 to each of the four Community Forums to be spent on identified projects within the respective area. It was, therefore, particularly important for residents to specify their main issues that would be taken into account when the Forums would be determining how to spend the budget allocation.

07.18 LANCASHIRE POLICE ISSUES

The Chair introduced PC Caroline Plummer, the Community Beat Manager for Bretherton, Croston and Ulnes Walton, who was accompanied by a Police Community Support Officer.

PC Plummer drew attention to the 'Operation Summer Nights' campaign, a multi-agency approach that would involve the Police working alongside its partners in visiting problem 'hot spots' and other locations to target anti-social behaviour and raise awareness of drinking/drug related issues to young people. The campaign was set to run from 1 July to 31 August 2007, during which time extra Police patrols would be provided throughout the Borough.

Questions/Issues raised at meeting:

- (i) A resident claimed that the lack of continuity in the Police personnel working in the area was not assisting community safety.

Response: PC Plummer reminded the Forum that, while Police Officers changed districts for career reasons, the Neighbourhood Policing Teams had been established to assist continuity and improve community cohesion. The Team would be more informed of particular issues and people within their area and be better placed to deal with problems as they arose.

PC Plummer also clarified that Community Beat Managers were appointed on the basis that they would remain in the post for a period of at least 2 years in order for them to be fully acquainted with their area.

- (ii) Councillor Goldsworthy (Chorley Council's Executive Leader) advised the Forum that the level of crimes committed in Chorley had reduced significantly over past years and commended the efforts of the Crime Reduction Partnership in that achievement.
- (iii) An Euxton resident drew attention to the PACT meetings held at regular intervals throughout the Borough and urged the Forum members and the public to attend the meetings and report particular problems and issues direct to the Police.

07.19 OPEN FORUM

The Chair invited the local residents present at the meeting to raise questions and express views on any matters relating to the provision of local services or issues affecting the Bretherton, Charnock Richard, Croston, Eccleston, Euxton, Heskin, Mawdesley and Ulmes Walton Wards. In addition, a supply of Question Cards were made available at the meeting as an opportunity for residents to write their enquiries or views on the cards.

The Chair indicated that the appropriate Officer and/or Partner representative would endeavour, if possible, to provide a direct response to questions and issues raised at the meeting. If this was not possible a written reply would either be sent to the questioner as soon as possible after the matter had been fully investigated or a response reported to the next Forum meeting.

The following question was raised at the meeting:

- (i) A resident referred to allegations that the cost of the Astley Park Regeneration project was likely to exceed budget provision and requested the Officers' views on the resultant implications for Chorley taxpayers.

Response: Councillor Mark Perks (Executive Member for Health, Leisure and Well-Being) clarified that the Astley Park project was being implemented through a number of individual contracts and that the tenders received for the building works were, in fact, in excess of the budget provision. Consequently, the Council had submitted a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for an additional grant towards the majority of the anticipated shortfall in the Building Contract and other elements of the scheme. The Council would need to await the response of the Heritage Lottery Fund before making a decision on the Building Contract.

- (ii) The following additional issues/questions were raised on question cards presented after the close of the Forum meeting:
 - (iii) "I am concerned at the number of posts in the Borough which used to have road signs attached. Many have been years without signs (Dawbers Lane, M61 roundabouts, Croston, Bretherton, etc). If a sign is necessary, please replace it, if not please remove the posts."

- (iv) "Croston desperately needs a footpath from Lostock Bridge to Station Bridge on Bretherton Road, for both communities. The Bretherton side of Lostock Bridge is presently having a footpath/pavement installed. Please can we have one on the Croston side. Croston Junior Football Team use the playing field by the station bridge, which adds to the danger.

Replies to the question cards would be sent to the respective residents as soon as practicable and reported to the next Forum meeting.

07.20 FEEDBACK / ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

The Chair also drew attention to the feedback cards available at the meeting and invited the attendees to complete them to express their views on the format, arrangements and conduct of the Forum meetings. The cards could also be used to suggest items for consideration at the next meeting.

07.21 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Chair reminded the meeting that future meetings of the Chorley South Community Forum were to take place on the following dates, commencing at 7.00pm at venues yet to be decided:

- Tuesday, 16 October 2007;
- Wednesday, 30 January 2008.

Chair