

Rural Voices Rural Choices

Meeting Notes March 11 2003, 7-9pm Rodmell Village Hall

Present:

Cllr Shirley James, Chair and Lewes District Council
Willie Edmonds, Rodmell PC
Roger Moore, Lewes District Council, Housing
Cllr John Crabb, Kingston Parish Council
Jeremy Leggett, Action in Rural Sussex, Chief Executive
Cllr Pauline Lewis, Ringmer Parish Council
Jemma Wray, Action in Rural Sussex, Young People
Sally Harper, Lewes District Council, Community Development
Geoff State, Lewes District Council, Community Funding
Rebecca Meitlis, Northern Villages Transport Group
Ian Chisnall, Churches Together in Sussex

Apologies:

Michelle Croft, National Farmers Union; Dr Alex MacGillivray, Lewes District Association of Local and Parish Councils

Willie Edmonds welcomed the group to Rodmell.

1. Election of Chairman: Ian Chisnall mentioned that the Chair's function is wider than purely managing the meeting, as it would require representing RVRC at the Lewes District LSP and possibly on other related issues.

Cllr Shirley James was elected as Chair and it was suggested that a Vice-Chair should be elected at the next meeting.

2. Notes of the Last Meeting: All received and no comment.

3. Matters Arising: None.

4. Funding Advice: Geoff Sate, Community Funding Officer, Lewes District Council, outlined some of the funding streams available for partnership working and offered advice to the group if considering seeking funds.

The Government is making more funds available for capacity building as are one or two charities. The need for funding is normally triggered by a new project as groups generally lack core funding. Geoff offers assistance in formulating project ideas, fleshing them out ready for the application and then help with checking the application prior to submission.

Groups intending to apply for funds need to be constituted. Funds can be secured for capacity building and administrative support but the bidding processes can be fairly onerous. Geoff can offer advice.

An application and related project is more likely to be successful if a champion has been determined.

Rodmell PC is trying to obtain money for a new cycle track. There is a lack of support from ESCC and various stakeholder agencies have been approached. At this stage, it has the money for a feasibility study. Geoff suggested that Willie contact him if he needs assistance.

Jeremy Leggett questioned whether cycle routes should be a priority for the District? He suggested that cycle routes could be considered as part of the transport and traffic issues sub-group. It could also be a strategic priority for the LSP as it crosses several agendas such as youth, health, community safety, traffic reduction needs etc.

Pauline Lewis from Ringmer PC, stated that villages may be at different stages and may not be ready to sign up to a district wide rural priority.

Jeremy Leggett suggested that in two meetings time, RVRC should hold a village mapping evening which would entail taking stock of which villages were involved in the preparations of Village Action Plans and if they were, how far advanced they are. All present agreed but adequate time would be needed to prepare for this to enable it to be focussed and structured. Invites should go to all those leading on Action Plans in villages.

5. Feedback from sub-groups:

- i. Transport & Traffic Flow Groups: Neither group had met. After some discussion, it was decided to merge the two groups and ask Tom Hawthorne of RDH Services to co-ordinate a joint meeting. There was some concern that the traffic issues, which could be fixed reasonably quickly, would become lost if considered in a wider agenda.

The aim of the meeting would be to determine the issues, thrash out ideas for solutions and set short and longer term priorities.

The priority list should go to the LSP. Those invited to attend should include ESCC, Police, Stage Coach, RDH, Kim Lanning from AiRS, Alex MacGillivray.

- ii. Consultation: Pauline Lewis explained that the Communication sub-group had met and talked through some ideas on what needs to be

communicated and how. Where possible existing networks should be used.

There should be an inter-village communication channel. Jeremy Leggett agreed to set up a RVRC website at AiRS, which would link all the village websites and contain the notes of each meeting.

The progress of RVRC would be regularly mentioned in any Lewes District LSP newsletter and Liz Lacon from LDC, has offered to help write articles for parish newsletters.

Parish Councils already receive a vast amount of correspondence and this should be appreciated by the bodies that send the information out.

6. Rebecca Meitlis, speaker from the Northern Villages Transport Group:

Rebecca highlighted a few local issues such as the high speed of traffic that pass through villages, the numbers of cars on the roads and that the transport service does not meet the needs of the community. Some villages are currently looking at safe routes to schools.

Although there have been successful attempts at partnership working such as the Taxi Bus Scheme, the NVTG needs a boost and would be ready to join a bigger and more structured group. The LSP is also important in being a strategic champion for rural transport and traffic issues and closer links should be made with this.

7. Youth Consultation Session – 28th March:

Jemma Wray and Sally Harper have had a couple of planning meetings with regards to the imminent youth consultation session at the White Hart. Jemma outlined the planned format, which will be based heavily on group participation. She asked for volunteer facilitators to help on the day. Pauline Lewis volunteered and Sally will ask others.

Jemma updated the group on the progress of the Health Living Centre project, “Your Bus Your Call”. The helpline and the mobile is on schedule to be launched in April. Ali Cardosi has been appointed as the Community Development Worker. She will be making contact with parish councils and villages soon.

8. Speaker from the National Farmers Union

Unfortunately, there wasn't a speaker from the NFU as Michelle Croft had to cancel at the last minute. However, she had said via Sally Harper, that she could be used as a consultee on farming issues.

9. Update on the LSP and Community Strategy

Sally Harper stated that the notes of the previous LSP were available on the website www.localvoices.info. She writes the RVRC update report for the LSP meeting and for the RVRC page in the Community Strategy. She confirmed that an updated page would be put in the draft strategy following this meeting. Any issues could also be raised at the next LSP meeting, which is on 30th June.

The Community Strategy is currently being finalised by Owen Clifford, LDC following comments made at the last LSP meeting 24 March.

10. Meetings schedule and future agenda items

19th May, 7pm Ditchling (now 11th June) Rural Proofing Community Strategy (not completed yet), youth consultation
14th July, 6pm village mapping evening
15th September

11. Any Other Business

None.