

RURAL VOICES RURAL CHOICES

PARTNERSHIP MEETING NOTES

Thursday 15th July 2004

Present: Cllr Shirley James (Chair), Lewes District Council
Dr Alex MacGillivray, Barcombe PC/LDALPC
Sally Harper, Lewes District Council
Insp Jeff Woodall, Sussex Police
PC Mark Cranley, Sussex Police
Christine Arbenz, Barcombe PC
Veronica Humphrey, Ringmer PC
Pauline Lewis, Ringmer PC
Brenda Watson, Plumpton PC
David Lloyd, Barcombe PC
Cllr Sarah Osborne, Lewes DC/East Chiltington/St John/Plumpton
Graham Allen, Consultant
Teresa Gittins, Action in Rural Sussex
Alan Wyle, Action in Rural Sussex
Marilyn Eva, Action in Rural Sussex
Marina Burn, East Chiltington PC
Philip Tucker, Westmeston PC

All were welcomed to the meeting and introduced themselves.

1. Apologies

Roger Moore, LDC Housing; Tony Gedge, Streat PM; Ken Stevens, Fed of Small Businesses; Melanie Cutress, Falmer PC; Tom Jones & Jill Holmes – Ditchling PC

2. Notes of the last meeting & matters arising

The notes of the last meeting were agreed.

General discussion on NCP car park plans and apparent lack of consultation and time given to comment by ESCC/LDC on changes to the operation of car parks throughout the district. There needs to be better communication with the parishes.

Action: Shirley James will enquire with LDC officers re consultation

3. Rural Business Networks Project

Marilyn Eva and Alan Wyle of Action in Rural Sussex outlined the project.

It is a two-year multi-agency project funded by The European Interreg money linking French and English partners to develop the local economy and promote the two regions as a sustainable tourism destinations.

The project aims to support 40 rural businesses via a cluster approach. One cluster is working with farmers and another is working in specific geographical areas to provide sustainable tourism.

A package of support is being offered to small businesses which includes financial advice, IT support, marketing, grant funding, French exchange visits & best practice swaps.

The work in Lewes District is supported by ESCC's Paths to Prosperity project, which encourages visitors to enjoy all that our countryside can offer and supports local businesses. AirS's role in this is to inform and network. Marilyn confirmed that 60 bridleways have been included in the project and that people are encouraged to leave their cars behind when enjoying the countryside.

Alan has been trying to map all the small businesses in the District, particularly in the North Lewes Cluster. So far he has identified 150-200 and he provided a few examples of the diverse nature of the businesses that he has come across.

The purpose is to establish with each business what support it needs from AirS with issues such as marketing, signage and IT.

It is hoped to provide a full list of these businesses whether tourism related or not.

Action: Inform Alan of any small businesses that would want to be included in the project at alanwyle@yahoo.co.uk

Marilyn advertised the Community Video Project, which is the production of short videos, based on stories & voices of local people reflecting their rural life. For more information contact leuan Sherwood at leuan.sherwood@ruralsussex.org.uk

Shirley James thanked Marilyn & Alan for their presentation.

4. Burgess Hill Health Check

Teresa Gittins circulated the new Sussex Food Finder booklet, which highlights sources of local produce & outlets.

She explained her role in working with towns to help themselves and how best to serve the hinterland that surrounds them.

The hinterland for Burgess Hill includes some of the parishes in the Lewes District, which were identified by those asked in Burgess Hill where they had come from. Teresa can still receive views on Burgess Hill and those present gave her some comments. Alternatively she can be contacted at teresa.gittins@ruralsussex.org.uk

5. Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership

Mark Cranley supplied a report on behalf of Sussex Police rather than the CDRP itself. He referred to a number of issues:

- i) District Support Vehicle – Mark is currently collating the responses received by parishes on its potential usage
- ii) Memo of Understanding – this has now been viewed by the Force solicitor. The memo will not be a contract but a statement of intent for parishes or clusters of parishes that will specify the minimum amount of police support.

Alex MacGillivray stated that the District Association of Town & Parish Councils would find it hard to comment on the proposals given that the current level of Police support is not known and therefore there is no benchmark to compare any new regime with.

- iii) All eight Police Community Support Officers will be in post by September and independently patrolling their areas on foot, bicycle or in vehicles. It is hoped that the officers will build relations with the communities.
- iv) The Police need positive feedback in order to respond to incidents of crime & disorder. A comment was made that skateboarders are congregating at the skateramp in Ringmer at 1am and causing a disturbance.

6. Housing Strategy & Housing Needs Survey

Unfortunately Roger Moore couldn't make the meeting to present on housing issues as he was at another meeting. Those present were encouraged to read the paper by LDC's Housing Strategy Manager, Laurie Priebe previously circulated with the agenda.

7. RVRC Transport/traffic issues & Lewes District Transport Group progress

Tom Hawthorne was not present to update the group on the progress of the Transport & Traffic issues.

8. Funding for an administrator & Terms of Ref

Graham Allen, the consultant employed by LDC on behalf of RVRC explained his experience in helping voluntary & community groups become established and to secure funding. He tabled a paper outlining his proposals for determining the terms of reference for the partnership.

The paper is quite detailed and needs careful consideration by parishes and RVRC members. This will take time for the parishes to achieve. Therefore a deadline of October 1st was set in order for parishes to discuss the paper at meetings and then to feedback to Graham.

A small working group will then meet with Graham to collate responses and to propose a way forward. Names for the group can be given to Shirley James which . currently consists of Pauline Lewis, Sally Harper, Shirley James & Alex MacGillivray.

Action: Sally to write to Parishes to circulate paper and ask for responses back to Graham

Action: All RVRC members to consider paper also and feedback to Graham at g.i.allen@ntlworld.com

Action: Any other names of potential members for the working group should be given to Shirley at shirley.james@lewes.gov.uk

9. Newick Parish Issues

Shirley James has made an appointment with ESCC's Speeding Officer, Colin Clark to discuss the speed of traffic, particularly Motorbikes, travelling along the A272 through the village.

10. Any Other Business

Sally Harper ran through some of the recent correspondence sent to RVRC, asked for confirmation of email addresses and referred to the Open House events coming up regarding the new Local Development Framework.

11. Agenda for the next meeting

There was considerable discussion on the content of meetings. Whilst presentations on key issues affecting the rural areas is appreciated, meetings also need to be proactive and task orientated.

Clarity is also needed on the remit of RVRC, its status to make strategic decisions and the future direction of the partnership. It is hoped that the piece of work on the terms of reference will provide this guidance.

Some of the future issues for RVRC will be to respond and be ready for the Local Development Framework, to securing money for administrative support and to progress issues arising from village plans.

All agenda items to Shirley James for the next meeting.

Action: Debbie Portchmouth be asked for key milestones, action coming up and guidance on what work RVRC can do now to be ready

Action: Shirley and Alex to make a visit to East Chiltington and Westmeston Parish Councils to discuss the role & work of RVRC. East Chiltington will email Shirley with dates.

Thursday September 16 – Westmeston Village Hall, 7pm (to be confirmed)
Thursday November 11