

MADELEY PARISH COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee of Madeley Parish Council held on Tuesday, July 4th 2006 at Jubilee House, High Street, Madeley, commencing at 6.30pm.

PRESENT: Councillors: C Muddiman (Chair), D Davies, R Evans, G Green
Deputy Parish Clerk, Madeley Projects Officer

E06/01.

Apologies

Councillor E Swift	-	Holiday	-	Approved
Councillor M Swift	-	Holiday	-	Approved
Councillor DP Taylor	-	Holiday	-	Approved

E06/02.

Declaration of Interest

There were none

E06/03.

Remarks from the Chair

There were none

E06/04.

Public Discussion

There were no members of the public present

E06/05.

Minutes

to confirm and approve

Resolved:

that the Minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on April 10th 2006 be confirmed and approved

E06/06.

Built Environment

to work in partnership with the Unitary Authority to monitor and improve public facilities and services. To report and play an active part in the resolution of areas of concern.

Business Plan Report

Councillors referred to the progress report on objectives for the Built Environment
Noted

- **Sites of Concern**

Next phase of web development begins July 2006. Task to improve web-reporting service allocated.

E-communication partnership meeting scheduled for 21.07.2006

- **Street Lighting**
Catalogues requested from outdoor lighting suppliers. Ideas for an urban, classic or modern, public street lighting scheme to be composed and illustrated for selection
- **Bus Shelters**
After trial, 5 anti-vandal specification bus shelters to be sited as replacements along Woodside Avenue quality bus route (11, 22, 44)
- **Redundant Signs**
Following Highways technician survey, removal programme in Madeley will commence in July 2006

E06/07.

Natural Environment

to work with partners and the local community to improve the wildlife value and public enjoyment of the natural environment in the parish.

Business Plan Report

Councillors referred to the progress report on objectives for the Natural Environment

Noted.

- Members were asked to consider projects for Partnership working with Borough of Telford & Wrekin, Environmental Maintenance, to enhance services and take advantage of funding opportunity:
 - continue installation of Litter & Dog Waste Bins
 - provision of public information boards
 - improve path sweeping for residential areas
 A copy of current service standards for Environmental Maintenance has been obtained
- **Footpath Obstruction**
Expediency of extinguishment of FP M07 (Park Street – South Drive) has been questioned by landowner. Since written consent is likely to be withheld, Borough of Telford & Wrekin does not consider it appropriate to publish the Extinguishment Order. If an order is not published, action will be taken to open the footpath across Wrekin Housing Trust property.
- **Modification Order (Meadow Pit Mound)**
Objector to the modified Order has exercised right to be heard at local Inquiry. Arrangements to be advised.

07.1 Vehicle

Deputy Parish Clerk had prepared a report setting out options for consideration of replacement of vehicle (Appendix A)

Whilst it was argued that the diesel vehicle specifications provided versatility of role, efficiency of use, manageable costs, outsourced vehicle management and servicing, and satisfied Madeley Parish Council strategy/policy of Partnership with Local Authority, it was considered that:

- the vehicle may be over-specification and, therefore, under utilised
- annual costs (£3,330) were high
- option to purchase second-hand had not been costed

After questioning the lease position at the end of its four-year term, and a comparison of base costs members concentrated on the electric vehicle options that would support Madeley Parish Council strategy/policy of environmental concern:

- maintains 'green' credentials and appropriate for work requirements
- low purchase and running costs, little depreciation
- assessment of 'invisible' costs (staff expenses, convenience, suitability, etc)

It was agreed that a costed report be prepared for further consideration at the earliest opportunity that included:

Diesel vehicle – lease/new purchase/second-hand purchase options

Electric vehicle – second-hand purchase option subject to satisfactory trial.

(both options to be accompanied by staff appraisal of job requirements and capability)

07.2 STROWP

Dawley Hamlets PC had submitted a proposal for consideration by member Parishes of the South Telford Rights of Way Partnership.

“that (STROWP should) ask the Borough of Telford & Wrekin if it would consider re-taking management responsibility and putting the funding that we, the PC's, put into STROWP into their footpath/rights-of-way initiative, on the understanding that BTW will provide matched funding”

Reasons:

- i) that STROWP could be duplicating work that is already being 'looked into' by BTW.
- ii) that the Borough has more and better resources than STROWP
- iii) that the Borough's expertise could be used to a greater degree
- iv) that when NTROWP finally runs it's course it could link
- v) that a layer of bureaucracy may be removed creating a more transparent method of working
- vi) that if 'Matched Funding' is achieved the residents of the Borough will get better value for money.
- vii) that if the above does come to fruition, more PC's may well feel that benefits were there to be had and 'Come-in-to-the fold' .

Due to the postponement of the of the original Environment Committee meeting date, it was reported that STROWP representatives had already discussed the proposal and determined its response

(See report – Appendix B)

Whilst experience caused scepticism, the proposal was acknowledged as an attempt to maximise available budget resource but with an emphasis on statutory duty. It was agreed that Borough Council representatives should be lobbied to support allocation of funding to the STROWP area and then to consider the outcome of the approach at the October 2006 meeting

07.3 Spring Clean 2007

The Deputy Clerk presented a report on 3-year term Contract renewal for the Drama Workshops programme as part of the annual Spring Clean campaign in Madeley (Appendix C) together with supporting documents.

Members, with experience of the value and sustainability of the workshop presentations and acknowledging the special circumstances:

Recommended:

that Financial Regulation 15.7 be suspended and that delegated authority be given to the Clerk to undertake negotiations on terms and conditions be undertaken with Playtrain for renewal of performance contract 2007/2009

07.4 Green Spaces

It was agreed that further information should be sought from Borough of Telford & Wrekin (Environmental Maintenance, Community Safety) on means to tackle the problems detailed in the complaint of use of Footpaths/Bridleways by unauthorised motor vehicles.

Report to next Environment Committee meeting scheduled for October 2006

07.5 Environmental Health

Referred for consideration by Finance & General Purposes Committee

07.6 Eco-Schools

Madeley Projects Officer submitted a request to approach school governors at Secondary schools to promote eco-schools initiative (Appendix D)

School Governor representation:

Madeley Court School – Councillors R Evans, E Swift

Abraham Darby School – Councillor G Green

It was suggested that the School Effectiveness & Governance Support (SEGS) together Schools Council co-ordinator be consulted to check the appropriateness and applicability of this proposal prior to formal approach to School Governors for adoption.

E06/08.

Planning

to protect community interests and where possible, gain community benefit through an active response to planning applications and preparation of a development brief for supplementary planning guidance.

Business Plan Report

Councillors were referred to the progress report on objectives for Planning
Noted.

08.1 Planning Sub-Committee

to receive reports submitted under delegated powers

Representations made in the period April to June 2006 were presented in written report.

Noted

08.2 Planning Applications

to make representations on planning applications received

08.2.1 W2006/0657

Representation submitted under delegated powers

08.2.2 W2006/0690

Representation submitted under delegated powers

08.3 Planning Enforcement

to consider prosecution status of Breaches of Condition in Conservation Area

Deferred for consideration until next meeting – October 2006

E06/09.

Heritage

to work with partners to promote, improve and protect the heritage of Madeley Parish in general and the designated World Heritage Site in particular.

Business Plan Report

Councillors were referred to the progress report on objectives for Heritage
Noted.

09.1 Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme

to receive final term report

Madeley HERS Officer submitted a written report for final quarter (January to March 2006) of scheme term.

Noted

E06/10.

Correspondence

There was none

E06/11.

Information

11.1 Borough of Telford & Wrekin

Tree Preservations Orders:

- Church Road, Madeley
- Wantage, Woodside
- Brockton Business Park, Halesfield 10
- Mayfield, Madeley

11.2 Jacobs Babbie

Neighbourhood Watch Scheme Signs Application

- Wantage, Woodside
- Willowfield, Woodside
- Woodcroft, Woodside

11.3 Borough of Telford & Wrekin

Telford & Wrekin Local Development Framework
Local Development Scheme

11.4 Borough of Telford & Wrekin

Telford & Wrekin Local Development Framework
Statement of Community Involvement

E06/12. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Environment Committee of Madeley Parish Council is scheduled for Monday, October 9th 2006 at Jubilee House, High Street, Madeley, commencing at 6.30pm.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.00pm

Signed:

(Chair)

Dated:

VEHICLE

During consideration of Environment Committee draft budget proposals 2006/07, Officers reported concerns that the electric vehicle was no longer efficiently carrying out its role. Repairs and Maintenance costs had significantly increased and its profile had decreased in terms of visibility and quality.

Requirements

Versatility, manoeuvrability, bulk capacity and size to cater for Environmental Maintenance and Garden Scheme roles.

Parish profile and Environmental ethos

Community partnership

Councillors requested that options be examined

Partnership

Officers suggested a partnership with Wrekin Housing Trust that would supply a purpose specific vehicle making use of an advantageous fleet leasing agreement whilst allowing low-key sponsorship promotion of housing authority as community partnership.

Proposal attached – value £13,333 over 4-years with full service support

Purchase

Equivalent purchase price of Class 2 light commercial vehicle to same specification (swb,l/r,2.2Tdi 85ps 1395kgs) would be £16,200 (Furrows Commercial Vehicles Ltd).

3 year warranty and AA cover

Note new model transit will be Euro 4 standard compliant on reduced emissions.

Fuel

Electric vehicles produce no emissions but need to be recharged frequently and are not capable of travelling long distances. Suitable for set routes or short trips

Hybrid vehicles use a combination of petrol and electricity to optimise vehicle's performance and produce lower emissions

LPG vehicles produce much lower emissions and fuel cost is half the price of unleaded petrol (though petrol is used for starting engine)

Electric vehicles are powered by batteries and an electric motor. This keeps noise and carbon dioxide to zero. Capacity of batteries limits range and significantly lower speed.

Modern developments in design & technology have produced first commercial vehicle to specification. The Modec van (launched April 2006) costs from £23,000

Running costs are, on a pence per mile basis, cheaper than a diesel vehicle (not subject to vehicle excise duty, less servicing). Rental for batteries is £400/month

Best value Class 1 LG Vehicle (Citreon Berlingo Electrique) would cost £15,350 plus monthly Battery lease – not considered suitable for requirements.

Hybrid vehicles use a combination of petrol or diesel with electricity. This cuts down on fuel and, thereby, emissions. Fuel efficiency is improved and provides considerable savings.

Purchase cost is approximately £1,000-£3,000 more than a conventional vehicle.

Maintenance may require specialist diagnostic equipment.

There are no Class 2 light commercial models available in UK.

LPG is most suited to use in cars and light vans and will require local refuelling site. (Budget Gas, Heslop, Halesfield)

Purchase costs are significantly higher (purchase £1,500-£2,000; diesel conversions are still at developmental stage and are prohibitively expensive) – running costs are approximately the same as diesel.

Funding

The Powershift grant programme has been closed
Madeley Parish Council has set aside £6,000 in earmarked reserves

Notes

Proposed vehicle could undergo factory conversion to LPG. However, in recent years the environmental advantages have decreased in comparison with diesel vehicles (CO2 10% higher). Vehicle needs to travel over 10,000miles pa to recover costs over 4yr period.

Additional fuel tank will affect load capacity.

It is stated that no engine modification is required for Bio-diesel but it should be noted that fuel costs are not lower. Fuels containing no more than 5% bio-diesel are recommended as vehicle warranty affected at higher levels. There are no Bio-diesel outlets in Telford.

Consideration

The inconvenience, limitations and age of the Electricar may be considered slight. Cost of maintenance is low. Battery condition is not known but has exceeded expected longevity – purchased in 1999 and financially depreciated over 5 years. Government, although ceasing grant funding, encourages alternative fuel use.

Both hybrid and lpg fuel options are dismissed due to cost and, taking into account Euro 4 compliance of diesel engine, environmental concerns on emissions.

New electric vehicle options, although desirable, are limited and costly. Additional funds could be created by sale of current vehicle and charger (valued at £1,000) – although, since running costs are minimal (2005/06 = £1,150) it would be possible to retain as promotional vehicle used at specific events. Second-hand cost of more up-to-date replacement for Electricar vehicle (registered in 1989) would be approximately £5,000

The partnership proposal benefits from subsidised cost and meets specified requirements
Vehicle management and servicing requirements would be outsourced

This vehicle would provide function and capacity, and would maintain Madeley Parish Council credentials as a Quality Parish Council with environmental concern.

Recommendation

that Madeley Parish Council enters into a lease agreement with Wrekin Housing Trust for vehicle

Recommendation

that Madeley Parish Council releases £700 from earmarked reserves to meet revenue cost 2006/07 and transfers £5,300 from earmarked reserves to a Community Projects/Partnership budget. Funds received from sale of Electricar vehicle and charger to be added to new budget

Recommendation

that Madeley Parish Council reviews the environmental credentials of commercial vehicle during 4-year lease period seeking a zero-emission solution

Alternatively

Recommendation

that Madeley Parish Council continues using Electricar vehicle until a more economic, zero-emission version is marketed

JMM

21.06.2006

STROWP

Dawley Hamlets PC was concerned that STROWP funding should be secured to provide long-term stability for the work of the project through 'matched funding' with Borough of Telford & Wrekin.

It was noted that the STROWP partners contributed £12,500 toward core funding in 2006/07 – Borough of Telford & Wrekin provided support funding of £2,000.

Dawley Hamlets PC representatives confirmed that the work of STROWP in its initial phases was commended and appreciated:

Phase 1	-	definition
Phase 2	-	access
Phase 3	-	promotion

However, it was considered that the lack of priority given to maintenance caused problems of public awareness and raised question of value for money.

It was noted that Countryside Agency funding had determined the roles of Phase 1 and Phase 2. Subsequently, the statutory duty for maintenance of the Rights of Way network lay with Borough of Telford & Wrekin – although STROWP undertook minor footpath clearance work using volunteer and contract workers (outwith the Severn Gorge Countryside Trust managed land). Borough of Telford & Wrekin terminated its partnership with STROWP in 2003 citing possible conflict of interest as STROWP developed a promotional role following concerns at the line management of the STROWP Officer when responsibilities were transferred from Leisure and Countryside Services to Highways Network Management.

Generally, the partners agreed that financial support for STROWP should not be conditional upon area-based outcomes. The work on promotion, education and events benefited all partners, the public and the environment of South Telford. However, it was argued that the Partnership could be enhanced by obtaining reciprocal funding from the Local Authority to meet the infrastructure needs of the local Rights of Way network.

Unfortunately, the experience of STROWP members was one of neglect and struggle to obtain any input in South Telford from a Highway Authority that regarded Footpaths as "non-vehicular routes" instead of a leisure and recreational amenity

- Reported sites of concern were unanswered; removal of obstructions required action under the Highways Act 1980
- Capital improvements under the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (£254,000 over 5 years) had been allocated to North Telford for 2006/07 and 2007/08; Revenue funding 2006/07 was to be concentrated in North Telford

It was mooted that the reluctance to invest in South Telford may be rooted in STROWP activities and contribution to maintenance. Nevertheless, the proposal sought to take advantage of the strength of STROWP in providing services that were complementary to those of Borough of Telford & Wrekin either through a joint funding mechanism or through direct management.

It was agreed that a letter be drafted for submission to Borough of Telford & Wrekin, Corporate Directors for both Environment & Economy, and Education & Culture, requesting consideration of a partnership with STROWP from 2007/08 that would highlight:

- Role
- Functions
- Management
- Development
- Inward investment

It was further agreed that STROWP should invite member Parishes to look at individual needs and then act in concert to take on these aspirations through its Business Plan.

JMM
30.06.06

SPRING CLEAN

Contract renewal – Playtrain

Drama Workshops programme 2006, description of school presentation, performance and activities, and feedback report appended.

Madeley Parish Council has developed a good working relationship with Playtrain and their feature as a central part of the education element of the Madeley Spring Clean campaign (the largest in the Borough) has been commended by Borough of Telford & Wrekin officers as an important creative tool toward improving the environment in a sustainable, consistent and long-lasting way. This service is not offered by the Local Authority.

Playtrain has used its experience to advise on preparation, communication and future objectives and it is considered that maintaining this maturing working relationship is essential to the continued success of Madeley Parish Council's environmental programme.

The cost of Playtrain for 2006 was £3,500. Its current 3-year partnership contract is subject to review for 2007.

Financial Regulation 15.7 states that "Orders placed for works, goods or services over £1,500 and up to and including a value of £10,000 before VAT shall be subject to obtaining three competitive quotes. The Clerk shall draw up the specification and seek three quotations for submission to the Finance & General Purposes Committee for its consideration"

It was established by Finance & General Purposes Committee (September 2003) that in special circumstances application could be made to suspend financial regulations stating grounds for exception.

Officers apply for suspension of Financial Regulation 15.7 on the grounds that:

1. The contract is complicated in nature as it involves all the different Primary, Infant and Junior Schools in the Parish. Playtrain now understands the particular working arrangements and requirements of individual schools and have developed good working relationships with them.
2. Positive feedback from schools – the established relationship and trust works both ways and has taken time to develop.
3. Working relationship between the Parish and Playtrain – as this is an annual event, within a three year contract there has only been three opportunities for the two organisations to synchronise and work together. We have now reached a stage where effective developments of the work could take place.
4. Playtrain have presented some exciting ideas (based on their local knowledge) on how this element of Spring Clean could be used more effectively. They suggest a children's consultation through drama. This would include all the fun elements that have been enjoyed and valued in the current programme but would extend the effectiveness by providing information for future work that could be developed by officers of Madeley Parish, Borough of Telford & Wrekin, the schools themselves or any combination of these organisations. This is an excellent development opportunity that has come about as a result of mutual understanding.
5. Cost and staff resource on tender process

Recommendation

that Financial Regulation 15.7 be suspended and that negotiations be undertaken with Playtrain for renewal of performance contract

JMM

21.06.2006

ECO-SCHOOLS

Madeley Parish Council has had a very positive relationship with Madeley Court in supporting their eco-group with activities and projects (I myself used to regularly attend eco group meetings).

Following the introduction of new management federation, there seems to be reduced interest and support for environmental work. A member of teaching staff is worried that the school will lose its green flag status.

It is now a struggle to get her "academically disinterested" group out of school on Friday mornings to do work in the Community Orchard and on the raised bed in Madeley Centre. She would like to resurrect an eco-group and would welcome any pressure from the Parish in getting this achieved.

The situation with Abraham Darby School is worse. It is considered that the school institutionally ignores environmental considerations - which is particularly worrying when it is their children, often during the lunchtime breaks, who are causing so much havoc on the adjacent Pit Mound and to the properties nearby (recently an oak tree has had to be cut down because young people had deliberately removing soil from the root base amongst other acts of vandalism).

If both Secondary Schools could be persuaded by their nominated or community governors that starting an eco-group/club would be a positive development, I could support both initiatives in partnership with Shropshire Wildlife Trust. This would raise and enhance the Parish's profile and hopefully enlighten some of the school pupils about the needs of our green environment and improve their relationship to it.

Pat McCarthy
Projects Officer
26.05.06