

Minutes of a meeting of the Rural West APB

Held on: Thursday, 3rd February, 2011 @ 10.00 am

Venue: Neston Youth and Community Centre, Neston

Present

Alison Armstrong – CW&C Council

Debra Brown – CW&C Council (Rural West Area)

Rob Callow – CW& C Council, (Rural West Area)

Elaine Grant – CW&C Council (Rural West Area)

Steve Kent – CW&C Council

Cllr. Kay Loch – CW&C Council

Gordon McGuinness – Link Up Faith Audit

Julia Nundy – Chester District Housing Trust

Cllr. Stuart Parker – CW&C Council

Roger Parkin – Chalc (Observer)

Cathy Reynolds – Age UK Consultant

Alison Roylance-White – Cheshire Community Action (Chair)

Colin Rutter – CW&C Council

Paul Watts – Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service

Carol Weaver – Rural Parish Council Representative

Jane Williamson – CW&C Council

Apologies

Carol Berry – 3rd Sector Assembly Representative

Phil Hodgson – Cheshire Police

Pat Johnson – Western Cheshire PCT

Martin Dowle – Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service

1. Welcome and Introductions

Alison Roylance-White welcomed everyone to the Rural West Area Partnership Board meeting, introductions were made and apologies noted.

2. Notes & matters arising from the last meeting

The notes were agreed as an accurate record of the last meeting apart from the omission of Cllr. Stuart Parker's apologies.

Matters Arising:

Neston Transport Initiative – Update

The Neston Transport pilot had ran for two evenings a week over the four week period up to Christmas in partnership with Ellesmere Port & Neston Community Transport. Despite being extensively advertised only twenty-two registered requests had been received by EP & N Community Transport with nine residents using the service over the period.

3. Update Report

The January edition of the Rural West Update Report highlighted the broad range of activities undertaken by the APB over the last year. The report also covered the new jobs created by Sainsbury's in Neston and drew attentions to other issues such as the Rural Regeneration Strategy and the impact of the Localism Bill.

The update report was commended by the Chair for its user friendly way of updating on the activities of the Rural West Area Partnership Board.

4. Rural Day Care Proposals

Cathy Reynolds briefed the APB on the proposals for the continuation of services for the rural day care centres. Cathy explained that she had been contracted by Age UK after the unfavourable reaction to the closure of the existing day care centres in Tarporley, Helsby, Kelsall, Tattenhall and Malpas (3 of which are located in the Rural West area). All five areas had the shared issue of volunteers wanting to continue running the service but needing support to do this.

A new model of working in the form of a charitable company called Rural Community Services (Cheshire West) had been endorsed by the parish councils in the affected areas which will act as the umbrella organisation for community services in the area. Below that would sit 5 management committees responsible for running the 5 individual schemes.

Although the day centres would be self funded from client contributions resourcing the umbrella organisation was still an issue. A bid to fund 3 part time staff in secretarial and administrative roles was currently being looked at by CW&C.

Age UK were keeping the Day Centres running until the 16th April with Rural Community Services taking over on the 9th May. Cathy also reported that her contract with Age UK was just about to end.

In the discussion that followed the following points were noted:

- The cost of the new model was £36k per annum compared to the £121k running costs of Age UK.
- The model was a positive way forward and a great example of parish councils working together.

The day centres were also looking for available places to meet and Craddock Court, Malpas was immediately offered by Julia Nundy (CDHT). Jane Williamson also reported that she would ask her team of Asset Managers to search for property in the other areas

Action:

The APB was asked to consider ideas for modest funding to the 3 local centres based in Malpas, Tattenhall and Kelsall to cover initial start up expenses during the first 3-6 months of the transitional period of the new company. (**ALL**)

5. Faith Sector Audit

Rev. Gordon McGuinness, presented the Rural West element of the results and key findings of the Faith Sector Audit recently undertaken across the West Cheshire area. Led by "Link Up", a network of Churches and Church leaders drawn from all denominations from in and around, West Cheshire, the survey had achieved a response rate of 56% with the largest response coming from within the Rural West APB area.

The purpose of the Audit (which had been conducted before the General Election) was to try and identify where there could be joined up thinking and connections with the wider community in terms of projects and assets, e.g. buildings/rooms available.

Findings from the Faith Sector Audit can be found on the CW&C Partnership web site or www.linkup.uk.net.

6. Reshaping the Partnership Landscape

Alison Armstrong gave a presentation on the future challenges that may be faced by the APB's with the new approach to locality working. The national context of the Big Society, the changes within partner organisations and the range of local reforms and changes that were currently underway would affect all partners.

Ellesmere Port was currently piloting a new approach to locality working (Local Integrated Services) which aimed to deliver multiple services at a local level co-ordinated by one team and one budget.

The next steps included changes to the ways that partnership work is governed and this would be discussed at the next Local Strategic Partnership Board meeting on the 14th April 2011.

It was noted that as rural communities already had identified parish councils that the new Local Integrated Services approach may be easier to adopt.

7. New Wards and Area Working Opportunities

Rob Callow presented a paper to consider the Rural West Area Partnership's Board response to the new ward boundary changes and the opportunity to discuss with parish councils ways that the APB can provide improved support to address shared issues and priorities.

One suggestion was for the parish councils located in the new wards to identify opportunities to work together on shared priorities.

Carol Weaver reporting on behalf of Tattenhall stated that this cluster approach was already occasionally being used within the Tattenhall ward. However using current parish plans to identify shared priorities was not always a good idea as some of the community aspirations had moved on from the time of publication of the plans.

Action:

It was agreed to move this approach forward and to have informal discussions with the rural a number of parish councils (**ARW/RC**)

8. Community Forum Update

The two most recent community forums at Neston Town Hall and Farndon Primary School had engaged a large number of people and had both been drop in sessions and held in the day. The Forum at Neston had a sustainability theme with footpaths and cycling being the priority issues. The theme at Broxton had been Wildlife and an owl rescue stand complete with owls had attracted the children and therefore their parents and grandparents.

The Gowy forum is due to take place on Tuesday the 8th February in Ashton Hayes and the Mickle Trafford forum is due to take place on the 16th February in Saughall. There is also an additional Willaston and Ledsham forum which is due take place at the Little Sutton Library on Saturday the 5th February

9. Dates of Future Meetings

It was agreed that Friday morning was a suitable day and time for future APB meetings and due to the coming local elections, the next APB meeting should be scheduled for late May/early June (date and venue to be confirmed).

