

CASTLETON AREA FORUM

Monday 11 September 2023
Castleton Community Centre, Manchester Road,
Castleton, Rochdale OL11 3AF

MINUTES

Present: Approx. 60 members of the public

Councillors: B Sheerin and AB Gallagher

Officers: R Hudson (Townships - Rochdale Borough Council)
V White (Townships and Communities Manager - Rochdale Borough Council)
A Whittaker (Team Leader Network Improvement & Development, Highways - Rochdale Borough Council)
Y Pickering (Community Safety - Rochdale Borough Council)
Insp J Partington (GMP)
Sgt D Hartley-Pickles (GMP)
PC Anderson (GMP)
PC Awais (GMP)

Apologies: PCSO S Pemberton (GMP)

1. INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES/CODE OF CONDUCT

The chair welcomed all in attendance, introductions were made by officers present to the meeting and apologies were noted. Attention was drawn to the code of conduct, a summary of which was read out and all were asked to abide by its requirements for the duration of the meeting.

2. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

As discussed at the last meeting, the Chair stated that all area forums rely on residents taking on the role of Chair of the meeting, supported by Townships Officers, and this has not happened in Castleton for a long time. Therefore as a result this was an Annual General Meeting to enable a Chair to be appointed.

Nominations were requested for Chair and one member of the forum was nominated and that nomination was then seconded by another member. The position was agreed upon and the Annual General Meeting was then closed. After the meeting the person nominated as Chair then chose to retract his place as Chair of the Area Forum.

As previously stated by the Chair; if the meeting did not succeed in identifying and voting in a Chair for the following 12 months, the meeting will close and the meetings planned for November and February will not take place.

3. AREA FORUM CONSTITUTION

A copy of the constitution was available for residents to refer to and attention was drawn by the Chair to the fact that the constitution relates to the governance of Castleton Area Forum as a non-party political organisation with its purpose to provide a focal point for residents and businesses in the ward to raise and comment on issues and be made aware of developments in the Castleton area.

4. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING/MATTERS ARISING/UPDATES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 June 2023 were approved and the following updates given.

Tyre Outlet - Manchester Road

Residents' concerns regarding the tyre outlet business at the site of the former car lot on Manchester Road were raised previously and an update requested on the action being taken by the Council's Planning Enforcement Department. The current update is that Planning Enforcement Officers hand served the enforcement notice today in relation to the use at the site. The notice will take effect from 12 October 2023 unless an appeal is made against it before this date. If no appeal is made, the notice will need to be complied with within three months of the effective date. The notice requires the use of the land to cease and for all associated materials and equipment to be removed from the site.

Section 106 Agreements

Residents previously enquired about Section 106 Agreements and developer's responsibilities to adhere to the planning conditions. A question was raised as to whether the Council has taken any developers to court for breaking the agreement or non-payment. Councillor Sheerin updated the forum that he raised the enquiry at full Council with the Council's Planning/Legal Department and he was informed that we do not have any powers as a local authority to enforce the compliance as we cannot pursue it legally.

5. GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE

Inspector Partington (GMP) provided the update with Sgt Hartley-Pickles and PCs Anderson and Awais also in attendance. Inspector Partington advised residents that the police team for the area is fully staffed now and PCSO Pemberton is also back in work.

Speeding Traffic

The Inspector advised that the previous issues raised regarding Keswick Street in terms of vehicles accessing the one-way system incorrectly and speeding, etc are very hard for officers to be onsite in the area 24/7 to witness and enforce. The neighbourhood team will do their best to pursue offenders when out and about in the area as best they can. There are plans for some targeted speed operations towards the end of this month and updates on statistics will be uploaded to Bee in the Loop afterwards. A resident requested an operation is conducted by GMP specifically in the area of the speeding loop being taken by some offenders, that being Manchester Road – Slattocks – A627(M) – Queensway, as it is a regular occurrence to witness in the area.

Off road motorbikes and quads were again raised as an issue on the roads and the Inspector again advised that GMP are working with the Council on the process to apply for a Public Space Protection Order to cover the whole of the Rochdale Borough which will enable them to enforce and issue fixed penalty tickets to offenders.

Drugs

Officers have previously had certain areas of concern brought to their attention via Crimestoppers, residents and Councillors and as a result there will be two targeted operations carried out this month in an attempt to tackle these issues using the intelligence received. Residents are urged to either email the neighbourhood beat officer with any further intelligence, including dates, times and registration details of incidents witnessed or ring Crimestoppers with information which could support officers in their attempts to issue warrants and seize the necessary individuals involved in this criminality.

Anti-social behaviour

Current statistics as reported to GMP do not depict there to be an issue in the ward of Castleton with regards to anti-social behaviour. There had been reports of issues at the playground situated on Heywood Road and as a result this area will be incorporated as part of a routine patrol now. By way of an explanation the Inspector added that statistics tend to increase in numbers due to the

summer holiday period and will now settle back down that the schools are back in.

Burglaries

Statistics reported in the period of 1 June – 31 August 2023 are as follows:

Residential burglaries – 7 reported – reduction of 53% on same period last year

Commercial burglaries – 4 reported – increase on last year's figures

Personal robberies – none reported – this figure was 3 in the last period

Business robberies – none reported

Vehicle crime – 21 reported – figure reported last time was 34 therefore a 40% reduction

Queries raised to officers included the lack of visibility of officers on patrol in the village to which the Inspector requested a chance for the new members of staff to start patrols once again and increase visibility. It was explained that neighbourhood officers rotas do not provide 24/7 cover as response officers have. GMP urged residents to report everything they feel relevant in their attempts to tackle crime, as the more evidence that is built up, the more resources can be applied.

A resident raised concerns regarding youths witnessed standing on roofs and abusing residents in the Keswick Street/Moorpark Avenue areas and they were prompted by officers to report all incidents witnessed. A resident stated there were regular reports of drivers ignoring the three no entry signs on Smalley Street in order to avoid the road works, particularly around 4-6pm every day and a request was made for officers to up their patrols. Similar issues were reported in the areas of Heywood Road and Beswick Street with regards to traffic offences.

Councillor Sheerin thanked GMP for their attendance at the meeting.

'Bee in the Loop'

Cards were distributed to residents in attendance for this new initiative by GMP which is a messaging service, in addition to their social media channels, to communicate with residents/businesses in each area regarding incidents/emergencies, to pass on crime prevention advice and to help shape local priorities for officers to concentrate on. Residents can sign up to it via the website www.beeintheloop.co.uk

6. OPEN FORUM

Castleton Bee Network Scheme

The matter was discussed by residents in attendance at the area forum again, and an officer was present from the Council's Highways Department to answer all queries raised.

Residents reported wrongly signed bus stops situated near Tesco and the former Castleton Post Office for the No 17 bus route. The Highways Officer advised this is a matter for TfGM and not the Council, but he could pass on any complaints that were forwarded to him accordingly; Alex Whittaker on 01706 924534 or alex.whittaker@rochdale.gov.uk

Residents again discussed the one way system on Keswick Street, stating coaches are still struggling to get through to the rugby club due to parked cars, etc. The Highways Officer advised the Council's Highways Department are looking into the possibility of using small sections of double yellow lined areas to alleviate the congestion and he advised there will be an extra 20 car parking spaces made available with the future re-lining works of the Castleton Community Centre car park.

A discussion was held regarding issues at the junction with refuse vehicles, coaches and trucks, etc exiting on to the main road and having to swing-out into the traffic to make the turn. The Highways Officer advised that all new road schemes are consulted on and agreed prior to the works commencing with the Traffic Unit, formal Road Safety Auditors and the emergency services. Signals at the junctions will alleviate the issues when they are activated in the near future.

A query was raised about the lack of disabled parking facilities on Manchester Road to which the Highways Officer advised that there is still availability on side streets, at Durban Street car park and

disabled users can park on double yellow lines for up to three hours when displaying an approved disabled badge. Concerns were further raised stating shop workers park their vehicles in these areas prohibiting customers from accessing these spaces. The Highways Officer advised they had sent out leaflets to local businesses to encourage their employees to use the car parks facility. A question was asked as to when will works start to the new car park facility on Railway Approach and the forum was update that this will commence in November. All junctions and crossings associated with the scheme will also be activated from November and temporary traffic lights will then be removed.

Castleton Sidings - proposed housing development

In response to previous queries from residents regarding the proposed access roads in/out of this housing development, the Highways Officer advised the forum that the Council's Highways Department have escalated their concerns at length with the developer, requesting they amend their proposals. A query was raised by a resident as to whether local infrastructure will be increased due to the extra volume of residents and whether there will be a public planning consultation in future, to which the Highways Officer stated the Council's Highways Department can endeavour to look into this issue with the Planning Department.

Royle Barn Road potholes

A resident raised a query regarding potholes on Royle Barn Road.

Action: Highways Officer to escalate this matter to the Council's Highways Maintenance Service

7. MEMBERS/WARD FUNDS

No update.

8. REPORTS

Castleton EC Residents

No update.

Friends of Carnegie Castleton

No update.

Friends of Castleton Station/Support the Oldham, Rochdale & Manchester Rail Lines/East Lancs Railway

No update.

St Gabriel's

No update.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

Councillors' Surgeries

New proposed method of contact with residents:

First week of the month - Tuesday at 2pm at the Old Carnegie Library. All three Councillors will be present for a chance to catch up on local issues - any residents can drop in with their concerns.

Second Saturday of the month – 10.30am at Castleton Community Centre (appointments only for any Councillor who has been approached to be available).

Third Wednesday of the month - 5pm early evening street surgeries in the village (all Councillors being available).

Forth Saturday of the month – Castleton Community Centre drop-in - Councillors will be present on a rota basis.

Commencing October 2023

If any resident has an issue that needs immediate attention an email is possibly the quickest way to make contact:

Councillor Billy Sheerin	billy.sheerin@rochdale.gov.uk
Councillor Aisling Gallagher	aisling.gallagher@rochdale.gov.uk
Councillor Aasim Rashid	aasim.rashid@rochdale.gov.uk