

Skelmanthorpe Community Action Group

Minutes of 2009 Annual General Meeting

7.00pm Wednesday 14th October 2009
St Aidans Parish Church Skelmanthorpe

Chairman's opening remarks

Helen France, as Chair, welcomed those present, stating she had received a number of apologies for absence. She particularly thanked the local residents, representatives from other Community Action groups, Kirklees Councillors, and Simon Reeve, Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for the Dewsbury Constituency (the newly constituted Constituency that will represent Skelmanthorpe at the next general Election) for their attendance.

Annual Report 2008-09

This was presented by the Chair, and supported by Pat Oliver with a very professional power point presentation. Each section of the report was commented upon and at the end of the presentation the meeting was invited to comment and discuss the report. The highlighted and discussed items were as follows:

- *LDF (Local Development Framework)* Robert Bamforth (Slaithwaite - Lingards Community Association) who has been a key player in the opposition to LDF, coordinating the various Groups through out Kirklees, stated that although the KMC policy to the LDF appeared to be dead and that any further KMC housing policies would not be published until after the General Election and next local elections, we need to be on our guard as KMC appeared to be at work on other plans. This was reinforced by the Chair, who stated that 4 specialist planners were currently being recruited with the specific mandate of creating a new housing policy. Robert reinforced the point that the creation of a Federation' of Kirklees Action Groups had to be a priority and that the Federation needed to be in place in the near future, ready to deal with whatever the next KMC proposals might be.

Simon Reeve confirmed that if a Conservative Government was to be formed in 2010, the whole LDF structure and its proposals would be scrapped. A root and branch approach to the precise needs and requirements of individual communities such as Skelmanthorpe would instead be implemented.

- *Bovis Homes* - The fact that Bovis had still not complied with the S.106 condition within their original planning consent with regard to 'traffic calming' on Cumberworth Road was discussed at length. There appears to be millions of pounds outstanding to KMC from Bovis and other developers with regard to their S.106 conditions. The Chair stated that she understood that KMC had now appointed an officer specifically to recover these monies on behalf of the ratepayer, but that in spite of this, enforcement had still not taken place with Bovis on the question of 'traffic calming'. Cllr Jim Dodds undertook to investigate and come back to SCAG with the up to date position on the enforcement with Bovis on the traffic calming and where KMC stands regarding recovery of the outstanding S.106 charges. Cllr Dodds stated his personal view that Developers should be made to pay the charges up front and prior to the commencement of building.
- *School Crossing*. Questions were raised as to the current position on the implementation of the crossing, which is a priority for the 3 schools and college in terms of road safety. It was reiterated by the Chair that KMC, following the 2007 traffic survey, had confirmed, through the Highways Department, that the crossing would be in place during the 2009-10 financial year, therefore they had until the 31st March 2010 to complete the work. Cllr Dodds undertook to speak to the Highways Department as to when they would be installing the crossing.
- *Flooding at Parkgate*. Christopher Ward and Pat Oliver confirmed that, due to the lack of the Environment Agencies funds, the residents had, to date, spent in excess of £22,000 of their own monies on the installation of flood prevention measures. However that KMC, who are responsible

for the clearance of debris from under the Station Road Bridge, had stated that having once cleared underneath the bridge in year 2009-10, they did not have funds to clear the current debris and until the EA has finally removed the up stream debris, problems will continue to exacerbate the situation. The Parkgate residents, regardless of health and safety and cost issues, have been told by KMC that they will have to clear the current debris under the road bridge themselves.

- *Poor Road Surfaces.* The Chair was able to confirm a major victory for SCAG on the Station Road - Park Lane to Emley Road. In that KMC have now finally confirmed that a major re-surfacing contract is being entered into with an external contractor for the rebuild of this stretch of road, she continued that SCAG will now pursue KMC on other poor road surfaces within Skelmanthorpe.
- *Wood Street Junction.* The Chair, who lives in Wood Street, stated that the promises and results of action by KMC in conjunction the Parish Council were, to say the least, disappointing. The highways department was favouring the local traders' parking objectives, rather than the road safety issues involved. SCAG will urgently pursue with Highways Engineer, Joe Malik, to finally resolve this long outstanding issue.
- *Liaison with other action Groups.* It was discussed and agreed that following the resounding success over the issue of LDF that SCAG would enter into the Federation with other Groups and would appoint two members to represent SCAG within the new organisation.
- *Skelmanthorpe Stones.* It was confirmed that having handed this project over to the Denby Dale Area Committee, the matter is now proceeding under the assistance and liaison provided by Cllr Elaine Ward. The foundations are now in place and it is anticipated that the end of 2009 will see the work completed.
- *Skate Park.* A major debate ensued on this issue, inputted by Molly Batty (a Cross Lane resident), Howard Singleton, and Cllr Jim Dodds. Mrs Batty outlined the position for the residents of Cross Lane and particularly raised the issues of both noise from the skate boarding and foul language and anti social behaviour of the older young people using the park. Of particular concern are the intimidation problems caused by a proportion of the park users, exacerbated by the fact that the majority of the residents facing the park were either single and/or elderly. Mrs Batty added that moving the park some 30 yards down onto the existing Football pitch area would not solve the problem, but could increase the potential for anti social behaviour due to being out of sight from Cross Lane.

Both Cllr Dodds and Howard Singleton, who had been heavily involved in the original installation of the park, acknowledged that combining a play area with a skate park had not worked and that another solution had to be found. It was therefore resolved that the meeting propose that the park be moved to an entirely new and more suitable location. It was suggested that the proposed site for the community centre and playing fields at Station Road be investigated, and, if the Station road project could be implemented within the current KMC Financial year, that the costs of £20,000 allocated by KMC for the move should relocate the park to this site. Cllr Dodds undertook to investigate and report back on this proposal.

- *Parking at Shelley College.* The Road safety issues were discussed in detail, especially the problems at arrival and departure times. It appears that the matter for on-site parking due to the advent of the new 6th Form Block is for KMC Highways and Education Departments to discuss and agree with the College. The matter urgently has to be resolved. Exceeding the speed limit on Huddersfield Road passing the college is currently being dealt with by the Police, with camera detection patrols in place. It was reported by the Chair that, following the recent police exercise, that the installation of a permanent camera be installed. It was moved by the meeting that, if a camera was installed outside the college, that a further one be installed on the hill on Huddersfield Road approaching the village. SCAG has demonstrated to Highways that Cameras on 'B' roads are permissible, citing the ring road in Nottingham as a precedence as they have been installed there for over 5 years.

- *Village Notice Board.* Thanks were recorded for the financial aid given by the Denby Dale Area Committee in funding the board, which is of great benefit to the village. Cllr Dodds raised the question of the direction the board faced and the safety issues when viewing the board from within the car park. Christopher Ward stated that when the board was originally proposed KMC Highways objected to the board facing towards the road again on the basis of road safety. Cllr Dodds stated that due to the regular damage to the wall on accessing the car park that KMC were to redesign the wall arrangement, including a viewing alcove for the board, which would then be re-sited.

Election of Officers:

Chairman: It was proposed and agreed that the rotating system would be continued with Helen France continuing to the November meeting, with Richard Graham then taking the Chair till the March 2010 meeting. Christopher Ward would then be Chair until the July meeting when Helen France would again complete the year up to October and the AGM

Secretary: There were no proposals for this vital post, and therefore it remains vacant. The Chair asked the meeting to use their abilities to find a suitable and willing person for the role.

Treasurer: *Carole Broadbent*, though unable to attend the meeting, has stated she was willing to continue in this role, and the meeting proposed and agreed Carole's reappointment.

Committee: The Chair report that we had two resignations within the year, and that we would welcome further members to serve for the coming year. The Committee proposed and agreed for the coming year is therefore:

Carole Broadbent
Helen France
Richard Graham
Jacob Haigh
Elaine Knight
Susan McDonagh
Pat Oliver
Wilf Ryden
Howard Singleton
Anne Ward
Christopher Ward

Federation Representatives:

Pat Oliver
Christopher Ward

Future Plans. It was determined that we pursue the outlined and agreed 'Federation' Liaison and action. That we will closely monitor the KMC actions and plans, especially regarding their new plans in replacement of LDF & SHLAA (Strategic Housing & Land Availability Assessment, which is to assess land availability within KMC over the next 15 years. Three times they have promised to publish their proposals and three times it has gone back on ice!)

We will additionally work with all our village residents on all relevant issue, which are for the benefit of Skelmanthorpe and fight those which are not!

Any Other Business. Just one item was raised and that being parking within the village limits. It was stated that people be encouraged to walk to the village when not having to carry items home with them. It was also stated that when carrying out major shopping, which has increased with the re-vamping of the Co-op and its range of goods, that cars and parking places were vital, especially for the elderly. Another suggestion was that retail outlets be encouraged, as the 'Green Grocer' currently does, to offer a free delivery service on the basis that they might obtain more local trade.

