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## SWALE RURAL FORUM

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**MINUTES** of the Meeting held in Badlesmere Parish Hall, Ashford Road, Badlesmere Lees, Faversham on Tuesday, 25 August 2015 from 7.00 - 8.10 pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Mike Baldock, Bobbin, Lloyd Bowen, Bowles, Duncan Dewar-Whalley, Nicholas Hampshire, Ken Ingleton, Prescott (Chairman) and David Simmons (Vice-Chairman).

**Other Organisations:**

Kevin Attwood (Swale National Farmers Union), Peter Blandon (Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE)), Mr Ross Goatham (Swale National Farmers Union), Keith Harrison (Action with Communities in Rural Kent) and Canon Caroline Pinchbeck (Diocese of Canterbury).

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Philippa Davies, Janet Hill, Bill Ronan and Emma Wiggins.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Dr Sarah Anderson, Mrs Joyce Della Casa and Councillor Mike Henderson.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Monique Bonney, Tina Booth, June Garrad, Gerry Lewin, Padmini Nissanga, Richard Palmer (Kent Association of Local Councils), Rollo Parsons (Swale National Farmers Union), Mrs Pamela Prescott (SEESwale), Councillor Ben Stokes, Sara Tucker (Kent Association of Local Councils), Inspector Gavin Wade (Kent Rural Police Force), Councillors Mike Whiting and John Wright.

**157 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 May 2015 (Minute Nos. 29 – 37) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**158 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Mike Baldock declared an interest in item 7 on the agenda (Quiet Lanes) as he may be approached for funding for this in the future.

**159 PUBLIC SESSION**

Borough Councillor Mike Henderson queried the membership of the Swale Rural Forum. He considered, as the definition for inclusion in the Forum was those areas that qualified for Leader+ funding and this area had been extended, that Priory Ward in Faversham should also be included.

The Leader responded and advised that there was a review of the Rural Forum being carried out at the moment, and this would need to be referred to the General Purposes Committee and Full Council in order to make any changes to the membership of the Forum.

A Member raised concern, on behalf of a resident, on the damage to trade as a result of the large horse drives riding in convoy on the eastern end of the Isle of

Sheppey. It was suggested that the Licensing Department at Swale Borough Council (SBC) would be able to provide further details of the license that would have been applied for the charity collection to take place.

**160 UPDATE FROM KENT POLICE**

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

**161 KENT ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY**

The Chairman welcomed Dr Sarah Anderson, Sustainable Business and Communities, Kent County Council (KCC) to the meeting.

Dr Anderson gave a presentation on the Kent Environment Strategy 2015. She referred the Forum to the website [www.kent.gov.uk/kes/consultation](http://www.kent.gov.uk/kes/consultation). Dr Anderson explained that the Strategy was under review in light of the previous version coming to an end, but in addition, changing policy and Government and Local Government priorities.

There were three themes within the Strategy, with ten high level priorities. The approach was evidence-based, taking into account Health and Wellbeing, Economy and Environment. A steering group would be central to this and report to high level groups.

Dr Anderson advised that the Consultation is running from 21 July 2015 to 25 September 2015, amendments would be made in October/November, with agreement set up in December and the Strategy launched in March 2016. She requested that members of the Forum fed back to the Climate Change Officer at Swale Borough Council by 4 September or responded direct to the link above by 25 September 2015. In addition, members of the Forum, if they preferred, could feedback direct to [sarah.anderson@kent.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.anderson@kent.gov.uk).

The following comments were made which Dr Anderson responded to.

The Strategy was very basic and obvious, with no detail; rural areas had less public transport, so not always possible to be sustainable; how can Parish Councils and smaller groups get involved?; what was being consulted on?; housing and the issues that it contributed to, such as congestion and flooding impacts should be considered; why was permission given to housing on areas known to flood?; Central Government should be included as a partner; people may want to comment on specific issues, such as localised flooding, or additional priorities not included within the consultation.

Dr Anderson advised that there were more details in the Strategy and there would be an Implementation Plan that would provide the detailed activities. It was the high level priorities that were being consulted on. Flooding and housing were key issues and Member comments would be taken back to ensure this came through. In response to a question, Dr Anderson explained that the intention was that the strategy supported planning and opportunities for sustainability, supporting health and wider outcomes. The consultation asked whether the priorities were the right

ones and for further feedback on any gaps, but if preferred people could feedback directly to ensure that any concerns were addressed.

The Chairman thanked Dr Anderson for attending the meeting.

#### 162 "QUIET LANES" CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND

The Chairman welcomed Joyce Della Casa to the meeting.

Mrs Della Casa spoke to the Forum on a proposal for Munsgore Lane, Borden to be considered as a quiet lane. She explained that the lane had hedgerows on both sides, was wide enough for only one vehicle, there was no lighting, and it was not a main access route. She considered it would help increase safety if the lane became a quiet lane. Mrs Della Casa suggested a speed limit of 20mph on the lane, and drivers be given the opportunity to be re-directed to more suitable roads. Cars often used the lane when there were traffic issues on more major roads.

Members of the Forum spoke in support of the proposal. Issues raised included that SatNav would still show the lane, so would still direct vehicles to it; CPRE recommended decrease in street clutter, not more restriction signs; co-operation from the local community was encouraged; and the lane should ideally be self-policed.

Members agreed that more information be sought and a case be built-up to support the proposal.

Councillor Nick Hampshire proposed that the proposal to consider Munsgore Lane, Borden as a quiet Lane be referred to the December 2015 meeting of the Swale Joint Transportation Board. This was seconded by Councillor Mike Baldock and on being put to the vote the proposal was agreed.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Della Casa for attending the meeting, and she thanked the Forum for their assistance.

***Resolved: That it be recommended that the proposal to consider Munsgore Lane, Borden as a quiet lane be referred to the 7 December 2015 meeting of the Swale Joint Transportation Board.***

#### 163 HORSE AND RIDER AWARENESS ROADSIGNS

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

#### 164 RURAL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

A Member considered the recent bad odours across Swale should have been included in the report.

The Head of Economy and Communities stated that the report had been published prior to the odour issue. She explained that the matter was being looked into further by the Environmental Team at SBC and the Environment Agency (EA). It was the EA's responsibility to resolve such issues and SBC worked in partnership with them to do this.

***Resolved: That the Rural Business Opportunities be noted.***

**165 SWALE RURAL FORUM MEETING DATES AND VENUES FOR 2015/2016**

Tuesday 17 November 2015 – Rodmersham Village Hall, Rodmersham Green, Rodmersham, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME9 0PS

Tuesday 23 February 2016 – Leysdown Village Hall, Wing Road, Leysdown, Isle of Sheppey, Kent, ME12 4QR

Chairman

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All Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel