

NEW DEAL : NEW HORIZONS

Company Number 4582937
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**Minutes of a Housing and Environment Theme meeting
 held at the Blakenall Village Centre
 on the 23rd February 2006 at 7.00pm**

In attendance

- John Jones - Patch 3 Representative
- Mick Taylor - Patch 4 Representative
- Albert Hodgkins - Patch 5 Representative
- Debbie Marshall - Patch 12 Representative
- Charlie Robertson - Patch 14 Representative
- Stan Lyons - Patch 16 Representative
- Alan Venables - Patch 17 Representative
- Cliff Webb - Patch 18 Representative
- Margaret Rowley - Patch 20 Representative
- Doug Gill - Patch 21 Representative
- Paul Wright - Patch 23 Representative
- Bill Smith - Bloxwich Business Representative

Officers

- Steve Pooni - Housing and Environment Theme Leader
- Mike Brice - Neighbourhood Manager
- James Daniels - Administrator

Partners

- Maxine Pitt - Walsall MBC
- Tom Brown - Walsall MBC
- Alex Whomsley - Walsall MBC

1. Apologies

- Mervyn Stonard - Patch 7 Representative
- Roy Jones - Patch 13 Representative
- Ray Walters - Patch 22 Representative
- Cllr. Ian Robertson - Local Councillor
- Steve Lewis - Walsall MBC
- Darshan Chatha - Walsall Housing Group

Agenda item		Action
2.	Declaration of interest BS declared an interest in item 6, Bloxwich Townscape Heritage Initiative.	
3.	Minutes of the previous meeting The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record. Proposed:- Charlie Robertson Seconded:- Cliff Webb	
4. 4.i.	Matters arising Road Sweeper SP confirmed that there were adequate funds available in the	

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4.ii.	<p>BLEAP project to purchase the Road Sweeper without having to request a variation. He added that Tim Wakelin had ordered the sweeper. SP advised the theme that the town centre steering group would like to request the theme to agree that the old sweeper be used to sweep Bloxwich and the other local centres. The theme agreed that when the new Road Sweeper arrives that they will review the use of the old sweeper.</p> <p><u>Well Place</u> PW asked about the plans for the development of Well Place. In response SP stated that at the last theme group, Darshan confirmed that WHG were going to shortly submit a detailed planning application for the site.</p>	
5. 5.i.	<p>Housing Development <u>Sites ABC – NDC</u> SP stated he had spoken to Paul Rowlands who had confirmed that contracts had now been completed on New Deals part and Bellways should be on sites A and B, in Blakenall Heath in April 2006 and start on site C approximately three months later. SP added that he and Bob Crundwell had agreed a local labour agreement with Bellways who would be employing local people via Steps to Work to work on the developments where possible.</p>	
5.ii.	<p><u>Site D – BHT</u> SP reported that the site was progressing well, the sales office was now open and show homes should be ready in the next few weeks.</p> <p>SL asked why New Deal was so far behind. In response SP stated that this was for several reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) WHG submitted planning permission 6 months before New Deal. b) WHG didn't have a consultation period whereas New Deal did. c) The Housing Steering Group made several key design changes that took several months to finalise. 	
6.	<p>THI Presentation MP gave a presentation and talked through the Townscape Heritage Initiative project and what had been achieved thus far. CR asked why only the tower of Blakenall Church had been restored. In response BS stated that the brief only included restoration to the tower as funds were limited. BS added that every shop keeper in Bloxwich had been asked if they wanted to apply for the heritage grants and there was little interest, however, now there was a visible impact on the High Street all the traders wanted to be involved.</p>	

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	<p>MP gave details of the variation being requested. She stated the variation was to increase the New Deal contribution by £40,000 which would be matched by WMBC. SP added that if the theme agreed the variation would be submitted to the next Approvals Sub-Committee due on 14th March 2006.</p> <p>The group discussed and agreed to fund the THI variation for the project for a further £40,000.</p> <p>Proposed: Mick Taylor Seconded: Stan Lyons For: 11 Against: 0 Abstentions: 1</p>	
<p>7.</p> <p>7.i.</p>	<p>Update of approved projects</p> <p><u>Blakenall Village</u> MP updated the group on the Blakenall Village Improvements project. She stated that the toilets had been inspected by Buildings Control on 6th February 2006 and had failed on a number of minor issues. As a result of this a meeting had been requested with Barhale and £10,000 withheld from them. The meeting went well and Barhale apologised and will be meeting with Tim Wakelin and Buildings Control to discuss what work needs to be carried out. JJ asked how and when the toilets would be opened and closed once they were operational. In response MP stated there was a Service Level Agreement in place and the toilets in Blakenall would be added to the wider Walsall schedule and opened and closed daily.</p> <p>MP confirmed that a Road Safety Audit had been undertaken and several issues had been raised, the majority of which only required very small remedial work. However the audit did highlight a more serious concern on the corner next to the play area where the pavement is at the same level as the road. The audit recognised that the placement of a planter had helped but recommended the further use of street furniture. She added that a design had been received from Capita and the work would be carried out in the first quarter of 2006/07.</p> <p>With regard to the Bus Shelter MP confirmed that both shelters would be maintained by Centro.</p> <p>CW expressed his concern regarding that the door to the toilets opening outwards onto the pavement. In response MP said this was because of disabled access. She added that the door was designed and had a mechanism that prevented it from springing open quickly.</p>	

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<p>7.ii.</p>	<p><u>Bloxwich Centre</u></p> <p>AW updated the group on the Bloxwich Town Centre project. He stated that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The use of a scarifier on the granite slabs had been approved in order to remove any loose surfacing,• an electrician had visited the site on 22nd February to look at the lighting issues,• he had met with Ameys who now had a safe solution and would be installing a central electrical supply as soon as possible,• he was in the process of negotiating with Broxap regarding the price for guttering and metal bars, but had informed by the procurement team at the council that three quotes must be obtained before any further action could be taken,• Street Pride had been approached regarding the purchase of two additional benches and he was awaiting a response from them and• the Steering Group agreed that Glenn Buglass would lead on the arts projects <p>AW informed the group that an 'opening event' was being planned and asked the group for suggestions on an appropriate date. The group discussed and decided that the VE day celebrations on 8th May 2006 would be a good opportunity.</p> <p>AW explained that a time variation was necessary in order to transfer the unallocated money into the next financial year. The group discussed and agreed the variation.</p> <p>Proposed: Mick Taylor Seconded: Stan Lyons</p>	
<p>7.iii.</p>	<p><u>BLEAP</u></p> <p>TB updated the group on the BLEAP project. <i>Please refer to project update for details.</i></p> <p><u>Canal project</u></p> <p>BS asked whether they were able to dredge the canal while they were working there. TB stated this was not possible as the barge that was used by the workers was not capable of this. He added that dredging would be taking place but only by the bridges as part of the project.</p> <p>BS asked whether the surface used as a car park by the contractors could remain after the work has been completed. In response TB stated that he would be putting planning permission in for a 'turning circle' which would be large enough to be used for parking.</p> <p>SP explained that because the date of the next Approvals meeting</p>	

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	<p>had been brought forward by New Deal to 14th March 2006, the NDC would not now know whether match funding was available for the next phase of the project from WREN and British Waterways by this date as their Board meetings will take place towards the end of March 2006. He asked the theme whether they wanted to support the second phase of the project going to Approvals Sub-Committee on 14th March 2006 subject to other funding being secured. After discussion the group agreed to recommend the submission to the Approvals Sub-Committee on the understanding that the project would continue only if the other funding was secured.</p> <p>Proposed: Bill Smith Seconded: Mick Taylor</p>	
<p>8.</p> <p>8.ii.</p>	<p>Neighbourhood Management / Local Centres Following consultation with residents and shop owners redesign is currently being undertaken on proposals for local centres which will be bought to the Theme group.</p> <p>Proposals for Leamore Park are also currently being worked up in consultation with local people to rejuvenate the park. Discussions are underway with WMBC over the management and maintenance of the Park. Full details are to be bought to a future Theme meeting.</p> <p><u>Blakenall Heath Car Park</u> The group discussed the lack of parking facilities in Blakenall Heath and the problems that would be created once site work by Bellways commenced on the site next to the BiC. The following possible solutions were highlighted by the group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Temporary Car Park (on the site of the now demolished WHG office), b) BVC Car Park (allow BiC staff to use BVC car park), c) place a time limit on parking on the Heath, d) agree with the BCA to make use of their facilities, e) extend the Sure Start car park on Ingram Road or f) take no action and let staff and shoppers park on the road side <p>After discussion of the pro's and con's of the various options the group agreed the construction of a temporary car park on the former WHG office site.</p> <p>Proposed: Doug Gill Seconded: Cliff Webb</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>Housing Strategy Action Plan The group discussed a 'Housing Needs Survey' and the various methods of carrying it out. It was decided that undertaking such a survey now would be pointless as it would not take into account the various new builds currently underway. The group agreed to use the next MORI poll as a vehicle in order to carry out this study.</p>	

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10.	<p>Delivery Plan SP stated that no feedback had been received to date.</p>	
11.	<p>Goscote / Elkintons Site SP informed the theme that he and Paul Rowlands attended a meeting with Walsall Council recently and that the outcome of the EA Study was that a further more intense detailed study was needed and the study would be over 12 months. The timeframe for this work to be completed would be between 2 to 3 years depending on whether a reclamation study could be done simultaneously or the latter would follow once the remedial works study had been done. We are waiting for the council to negotiate through pollution control with the Environment Agency.</p>	
12.	<p>Any other business</p> <p><u>Master Plan</u> SP stated that a Landscape Architect had been advertised for and only one application had been received. The applicant was interviewed and turned down the position. Attempts were made to second one from Sandwell but that option was also unsuccessful. SP advised that one option was to get a consultant to do it but this will cost more. The theme were not supportive of this option</p> <p><u>Christ Church</u> SP informed the theme that Andrew Rainsford had met with Christ Church and he was progressing the matter.</p> <p><u>Eco-fair</u> SP gave details of an Eco Fair which would be held on Monday 27th February 2006 at the Council House, Walsall.</p> <p><u>Smith and Thomas House</u> SP stated that he had had a meeting with Jo Toft and Julia Morris regarding the possible refurbishment of the play area at Smith and Thomas House and other potential environmental improvements. The group discussed this and concluded the play area and the grounds were Walsall Housing Group's responsibility. The theme did not want to support or pay for any improvement as they felt that it was WHG's responsibility.</p> <p>TB informed the group that he had met with Peter Brown earlier that day and there were indications from him that the blocks may altered into mature / elderly persons blocks in the future.</p>	
13.	<p>Date and time of the next meeting 20th April 2006 commencing at 7.00pm at the BVC.</p>	