

KENT AREA COALFIELDS COMMUNITIES CAMPAIGN

Minutes of Core Group Meeting

Dover District Council Offices

Tuesday 10th April 2007 – 4.00pm

Present:

Cllr S Manion	Dover District Council (Chair)
Cllr L Ridings	Kent County Council
Brin Hill	Dover District Council
Chris Inwood	Canterbury City Council
Cllr Mrs E Rowbotham	Kent County Council
Cllr L Knight	Dover District Council
Gordon Harris	SEEDA

Apologies:

Cllr M Nee	Canterbury City Council
Joan Dixon	Coalfields Communities Campaign
Keith MacKenney	Kent County Council
Cllr Mrs H Bartolo	Dover District Council

1. Introductions & apologies for absence

See above.

CI said that Cllr Mike Nee would not be standing as a Councillor at the next elections. SM paid tribute to LK for work on behalf of the community.

2. Minutes of last meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 15 January 2007 approved and copy signed by SM.

3. Matters arising

ER asked whether Barham had got funding – CI confirmed that they had not put a bid forward but that they are covered under CRT area.

BH said that the CRT map had been scanned but the reason it had not been sent out was because it was not good quality – work will be done on the map and a copy will be circulated.

Letter of support for the National Mining Museum had been sent to Treasury and DCMS.

No further information on KCCC website. KM is to be replaced as officer on CCC by Dave Hughes. BH said that DH is currently involved in all major projects in Dover.

ER asked for a breakdown of areas which had been funded by the Bridging the Gap grants. ER said that some funding had been given to an area for work on their village hall and was concerned that this was happening as KCC had a village hall fund. LR said that KCC do have this fund but it only totals £450k over 2 years. LK thought that it was needed to identify areas of deprivation as if funding going to areas with no need this is bringing the funding into disrepute. BH reassured the group that a framework has been set within CRT boundary and that the applications are scored at a professional level, these then go to the BtG panel who ratify the funding.

ER felt that a democratic thread was needed through the Development Agencies. SM said that KCCC had a good relationship with SEEDA.

4. SQW Report on the National Coalfield Programme

LK said there had been criticism by CCC over SQW report. There had been nothing on the coalfield and felt that RDA's did sometimes get it wrong for the community. LK felt that the report did not give hope or way forward at Snowdown and that opportunities are being missed.

ER had concerns that the information on new jobs in Tilmanstone was flawed as these were jobs that were relocated and not new and this should be recorded. BH said that the stats were provided to SQW by SEEDA and that Chris Moore stands by these figures. The report looked at the whole national picture and Kent was lost within this. A letter had been sent to CCC about this.

5. Future of the CCC

The merger will be discussed next week at a meeting in Copeland. New CCC from 8 June 2007 which will include steel and textile. Possibly Shepway Council would come in with Kent CCC.

Gordon Harris joined the meeting.

6. Fowlmead Country Park / Betteshanger Business Park

Country Park will be open to public on 27/28 May. 2 day event has been organised which will split the park into sections with individual tents. The 1st day will be associated with the past and activities and on the 2nd day there will be fun runs, activity day.

The park is going to be opened by David Bellamy. Sports England will also be attending.

Formal opening is being held on 24 May. BH confirmed that all KCCC members should have been invited.

Work to complete the park is being undertaken in next 4-5 weeks. There will be a new entrance gate and a temporary visitor centre is also being put up which will include changing rooms, showers, kitchen and display area for maps etc. Health & Safety, parking, disabled, interpretative and local information signs are also being put up. A permanent visitor centre will be constructed and SEEDA are currently looking for residual funding. It is hoped that a planning application will be put forward in next couple of months. ER enquired whether this had been funded by CRT – GH confirmed that it had not.

A resident of Circular Road had approached ER and said that they could not access the site. GH confirmed that the site had not yet been formally handed over by the contractor so there was currently no access due to security, health & safety reasons. GH said that the public right of way is open through the Community Park. GH said that they are still waiting for adoption of the access road to the business park by KCC which is still with Highways to be signed off. GH said that the original area was known as Fowlmead Marsh and that the community selected to change the name to Fowlmead (Fowl – bird, Mead - meadow).

LK said that a report from Deal Town Council in the Dover Express and the feeling in the wider community was that maybe the name does not sit lightly and did not think many people would have chosen Fowlmead. GH said that the name was nothing to do with SEEDA, the Regeneration Team had gone out to the community and 80% of those who responded to the questionnaire had chosen Fowlmead.

CI felt that discussion at these meeting should be at a strategic level – ER felt that as CRT was government funded these questions needed to be asked so that did not have to ask them at National CCC meetings.

ER left the meeting.

The new Visitor Centre has been part funded by SEEDA and they are currently looking for gap funding – discussions have taken place with Sport England for majority of funding but this could not happen until the park had been opened.

LK asked who the site would be managed by. GH confirmed that the contract had gone out to tender this week, there had been a delay on this because it needed to be advertised through the European Union and this was done on the website. SEEDA feel that the management company should be local.

LK enquired whether KCC are interested in this project. LR did not know but was seeing Roger Gough the following day as this would come under his portfolio.

The management contract had been reduced to 3 years after seeking further advice on Estate Aid. SM asked whether this would have an effect on the opening – GH said that the park would still open.

Business Park is complete but SEEDA are having difficulty marketing the park without the road being adopted. LR asked whether there were any plans showing this unadopted road. GH did not have one but said it is from the A258 to the site.

CI felt that an Innovation Centre would work well on the park and asked whether SEEDA would be building on priority sites. GH said that a manufacturer of timber framed houses would be on plot 7 near to the boiler house. They will reuse the waste timber in the boiler house. All others will be going out to tender.

BH suggested inviting Mike Terry to the next meeting to discuss Snowdown.

BH said that the Country Park was a good opportunity for Kent as a whole and hopefully will be one of the best country parks in the region.

LK said that there are low skills in the Dover area and is there a strategy by SEEDA to set up training. GH confirmed that SEEDA have got a strategy for this, the Kent Team are looking at training and skills in regeneration. SEEDA is also currently looking at sustainability for areas they work on.

SM thanked GH and looked forward to the opening.

7. **Correspondence**

Letter from ER circulated. In response to the letter SM said that pit villages are represented by Councillors and that the KCCC meetings do co-ordinate with both Midland and National dates.

BH said that he had an e-mail from Sophie Chadwick at Thanet District Council to ask to be removed from the KCCC mailing list. There was currently no relevant officer available from Thanet to attend these meetings. CI agreed and said it was the same when Canterbury was Chair. SM to write to Chief Executive and pass copy onto LR for forwarding onto Leader of KCC.

BH felt needed to get involved with strategic agenda and how can make a difference. It may also be useful to look at inviting SEEDA to all meetings and include on agenda.

8. **Update on Sub regions**

Canterbury

Community Development Team had met with Heidi and identified that Barham is part of CCC area for CRT funding. Currently talking to Parish Council about needs.

Contract has been signed with developer on start up units. 2/3rd of the money has been handed over. Occupation of the units would start from August/September.

LR asked what is happening on Montgomery School. CI had received information from John Simmons at KCC on what their ideas were. Need to know how National and KCCC can assist KCC in pushing preferred school forward. CI passed the information from JS on to LR. CI happy to go back to JS and find out what is happening and report back to KCCC.

LK felt that White City (Womenswold) area should be looked at as there was a probable need here.

9. **Date of next meeting**

TBC