

EAST DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

EAST DORSET YOUTH FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting held on 21st October, 2003 at 6.00 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Mrs T. B. Coombs - Chairman

Councillor A. N. Skeats - Vice-Chairman

Present: Councillors S. G. Flower and D. Morgan, D. Auburn (Youth Development Officer), J. Bell, Ms. M. Broughton, N. Coombs, S. Duckett, (Head of Community Strategy), Ms. L. Ellis (Committee Officer), N. Farmer (Head of Leisure and Tourism), Ms. J. Hardwick, J. Houldey, Ms. H. May, G. Munson, Mrs. C. Murray, V. Redpath, J. Revell, Ms. M. Shearing, Ms. K. Skeats, Ms. K. Smith, J. Smith, Ms. E. Snow and Ms. S. Teasdale.

1. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Ms. A. Whittle-Lord (Play Plus).

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8th July, 2003 were confirmed as a correct record.

4. Developing a Play Strategy

The Youth Forum was informed that Ann Whittle-Lord (Play Plus) was regrettably unable to attend the Youth Forum due to illness. However it was hoped that she may be able to attend the next meeting of the Youth Forum in January, 2004.

5. East Dorset Community Strategy

Members of the Youth Forum were provided with an oral update on the East Dorset Community Strategy. For those who were unfamiliar with the Community Strategy background information was provided, with an explanation given of how the Youth Forum would feed into the Community Strategy process.

The Head of Community Strategy explained that the Youth Forum would provide valuable input into the Community Plan and this meeting would provide an opportunity for young people in East Dorset to influence the Community Strategy.

The Youth Forum discussed the following Theme Action Groups

(TAG's):-

Crime and Safety:-

- Concern was expressed by young people that their issues were not taken seriously and felt that older people had more knowledge of how to complain and get their voices heard. Young people felt that they should be able to get their concerns recognised along with other members of the community.
- In addition, Members of the Youth Forum expressed concern at the lighting at Redcotts, Wimborne, although overall they felt pretty safe in the District.

Environment:-

- Young people commented that in general they were happy with the environment they lived in. However, concern was raised at the amount of dog fouling in the District and lack of dog fouling bins available, especially in the Three Legged Cross area.
- Young people were not aware that the District Council employed a dog warden and examples of successful prosecutions where owners had been fined for letting their dogs foul and not cleaning up after them. The Forum was informed of how to report dog fouling incidents and the information that would be required by the dog warden to proceed with a possible prosecution.
- Discarded cigarettes and chewing gum were also raised as a concern. Young people suggested the use of more cigarette bins and gum boards, as used in Bournemouth, to help keep the environment of the District tidy.
- Protection of the Green Belt was raised by Members of the Youth Forum. However, if Green Belt land was to be used for future development, could the need for facilities for young people be looked into, as very little was provided by developers at the moment.

Traffic and Transport:-

- Problems associated with a lack of public transport in both the urban and rural areas in general.
- Young people from Three Legged Cross expressed concern that new bus routes were either not being publicised or being publicised in the wrong places. Several Members of the Forum did not realise that a bus service was being run on Friday evenings to Tower Park, Poole. Those living in Three Legged Cross stated that they would use the service, if they had known it was available. It was suggested by young people that transport companies should advertise services at bus stops and other places where young people could be informed of them.
- The expense of public transport was raised, along with the inconsistency of company policies regarding when adult fares needed to be paid. Young people at the Forum believed that the age

should be 18 years and not 14 years as with some bus companies. At present there was no consistency with age policies across the District.

- Older people in the District should be educated about young people. It was felt that young people in the area were discriminated against, as older people didn't understand the issues and concerns of young people.
- It was again reiterated that young people needed to know how to address issues with transport or bus companies regarding the services they provided, customer, care, pricing policies, publicity, etc.

Affordable Housing:-

- Concern was raised that young people were moving away from the area for work, college, university, etc because of the lack of affordable housing. Subsequently, young people were unable to move back to the District due to rising property prices, as well as those young people who stayed in the District being unable to find affordable accommodation, when needed. For the purposes of this meeting affordable housing was defined as both buying and renting.

Youth Theme:-

- There was a lack of general facilities for young people, with those that were accessible to young people, being expensive or transport was need to get to them, eg Tower Park.
- A structure needed to be set up so that young people can voice their views and get them across to those living in East Dorset.
- A Youth Development Worker had been recruited as a result of the issues arising from the Youth Theme Action Group.
- The group discussed the problems of using cycles as a form of transport. Many young people were worried about safety issues, such as volumes of traffic, pollution, security, etc. Young people attending the Forum were unaware that it was illegal for them to cycle on pavements.
- Young people on the Forum suggested that an Under 18's type pub/club, that played music, be developed.
- Concern was raised over the presentation of the East Dorset Community Plan, as its style, jargon, layout, etc did not appeal to young people. It was suggested that young people design further publications based on the Youth Theme.
- Young people confirmed that they would like to be contacted and provided with information in alternative ways, besides the traditional letter. E-mails and texts were suggested, although young people thought the expense of responding to text messages may become a barrier to communication.

6. Youth Development Worker

Members welcomed the new Youth Development Officer to the East Dorset Youth Forum.

After confirming that the post had been created as a direct result of the Community Strategy, the Youth Development Officer explained to the young people on the Forum some of the aims of his role, these would be to:

- help partnerships and organisations secure funding
- co-ordinate the promotion of health activity
- out-reach work
- developing the East Dorset District Council website for young people
- act as a first point of contact for young people

It was emphasised by Officers and Members that young's people's input and suggestions would be crucial to the success of this role.

7. Local Democracy Week 2003 Update

A recap of the Local Democracy Week 2003 evening was given and the results from the Question Wizard were presented for those who were not able to attend the evening.

Young people felt that the evening had been dominated by the requests of skate groups. In response young people were assured that the results from the evening were not a definitive guide to which any future available funds would be allocated. There would still be opportunities for many other young people and groups not associated with skateboarding or BMX to have access to funding.

Whilst running through the results of the evening, after skate and BMX issues, the most requested event was a music festival. As a result of this a working group would be set up to look into the possibilities of holding a music festival in the District.

As a result of the Local Democracy Week evening it was suggested that, where possible, applications by young people for community grants should go to the next available Youth Forum meeting for consultation with young people. In addition, where possible, items affecting young people which would be presented to the Council's Policy and Resources Committee and which would have implications for young people in the area, would also be discussed by the Youth Forum.

Other suggestions from the Local Democracy Week included:

- Young people being interested in being contacted by various means, including text, mobile, phone, e-mail or CD-Rom as well as the more traditional methods.
- The Youth Forum should be split into smaller groups, as at the Local Democracy evening, as young people felt this worked better than the

present system and provided better feedback.

The Forum agreed that the evening had resulted in some relevant issues being raised.

The meeting ended at 8.05 p.m.

CHAIRMAN