

Joint Working Group

RMBC and Parish and Town Councils

15th October 2009, Town Hall, Rotherham

Present:-

Councillor Jane Austen (JA) Chair
Councillor Eric Shaw (ES)
Councillor Gary Cooper (GC)
Councillor Ted Kelsey (TK)
Councillor Pat Wade
Councillor Richard Swann (RS)
Paul Griffiths (PG)

AGENDA	ACTION
<p>1. Apologies</p> <p>Councillor Mahroof Hussain</p>	
<p>2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising</p> <p>.</p> <p><u>Freedom of Information Requests</u></p> <p>PG advised that he had received an excellent response to a survey regarding the need for training to deal with Freedom of Information Requests. The group agreed that this topic would be addressed by a workshop or presentation at the next parish network meeting.</p> <p><u>Review of the Charter</u></p> <p>PG showed the group a brief questionnaire devised to look at specific commitments in the Charter following the disappointing response to the initial consultation over the Summer. It is hoped that the questionnaire will identify any key areas for improvement and will be distributed during November 09 with responses back in early 2010.</p>	<p>PG to contact Sarah Corbett.</p> <p>PG to distribute questionnaire to parish clerks.</p>
<p>3. Letter from the YLCA.</p> <p>PG distributed a letter from the Yorkshire Local Councils Association sent initially to Councillor Hussain. The letter explains to work of the association and requests funding support for the next financial year.</p>	

<p>A number of comments were raised by the Group with regard to the YLCA:-</p> <p>How many parishes in Rotherham are paying members?</p> <p>ES commented that he felt the association was more concentrated on issues in North Yorkshire.</p> <p>RS had found any training very helpful particularly those done at a local level.</p> <p>The joint working group agreed that in the present financial climate, and with so little resources available to the group itself, they are not in a position to offer any financial support.</p> <p>Despite this they would be happy to invite the YLCA to promote its work at the next Parish Network meeting either through promotional information or actual attendance to try and increase the numbers prescribing to the Association.</p> <p>Further to this it was suggested that an invitation could be extended to Parishes within the Doncaster and Barnsley areas to the next parish network meeting. This would encourage cross regional joint working and offer a further opportunity to the YLCA.</p>	<p>PG to contact Ian Strong and send invite to the YLCA and explore contacts in Barnsley and Doncaster.</p>
<p>4. Feedback from the Parish Network Meeting</p> <p>PG went through the feedback sheets from the Parish Network meeting on the 23rd September 2009.</p> <p>The feedback was positive in tone and the majority had found the presentations helpful and informative.</p> <p>A couple of suggestions for future Agenda items had been received which included:-</p> <p>The Sustainable Communities Act The Value of Parish Planning</p> <p>ES advised that following the Network meeting he had received information from Deborah Bragg regarding the cost (£1014 for three years) of renewing a licence for a public building. The group agreed this information was not widely known and it would be useful if it is placed on the parish councils website.</p>	<p>PG to place info on the parish website.</p>

<p>5. Clerks Meeting</p> <p>PG advised the group that several Parish Clerks had requested a venue to meet independently to discuss relevant issues relating to their role, any support needs and share good practice.</p> <p>The meetings have been scheduled at the Town Hall during Oct-Dec 09 and the Joint Working Group facilitated this by paying the small charge for the room hire.</p> <p>PG had received feedback from the first meeting during October and it had been a positive event.</p> <p>A review will be carried out at the end of December based on attendance and feedback as to whether to continue meeting after the Town Hall closes.</p> <p>The group welcomed this development and thought it would be a useful agenda item, possibly at a Network meeting, to explore a typical day in the life of a Parish clerk.</p>	<p>PG to keep the joint working group updated.</p>
<p>6. Rotherham News</p> <p>PG advised the group that he had been contacted by Tracy Holmes (RMBC Head of Communicatlons) regarding raising the profile of parish and town councils through the Rotherham News publication.</p> <p>The group had a number of first thoughts on this including:-</p> <p>A structure/profile of each parish council done over a period of months.</p> <p>Provide key information and then look at the more 'human' side e.g positive work/improvements & and the hard work of parish councillors on a volunteer basis.</p> <p>Could parishes have an insert to promote their services as part of the delivery schedule.</p> <p>Would be a useful future agenda item for the Network.</p> <p>The group agreed it would be helpful if Tracy attended the next meeting.</p>	<p>PG to invite Tracy Holmes to the next meeting.</p>
<p>7. Any Other Business</p> <p><u>Total Place Pilot</u></p> <p>JA advised the group of 'Total Place' pilot schemes taking place in the Borough. The purpose of the scheme is to plot all spend from statutory partners within an area with a view to exploring value for money.</p>	

<p>JA has queried if this included spend by Parish and Town Councils as clearly the impact of this contribution within an area needs to be taken into consideration as part of this exercise.</p> <p>The group agreed it would be useful to receive further information about this pilot, if possible in the form of a briefing paper.</p> <p><u>Finance Training</u></p> <p>RS requested that information is obtained about the recent Finance training open to parish councils and the number who attended the course.</p> <p><u>Waste Strategy</u></p> <p>RS requested further information on how the green bin scheme has been rolled out across the borough and thought that an update in the general waste strategy would be useful for parish councils.</p>	<p>PG to contact Colin Earl</p> <p>PG to contact Sharon Crook</p> <p>PG to contact Adrian Gabriel for further information.</p>
<p>7. Date and Time of Next Meeting:</p> <p>3rd December 2009, 4.30pm, Town Hall.</p>	