



Osgoldcross Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 4th October 2007 at Fairburn Village Hall.

Members present: Councillors E Beechey, P Macartney, A Croft, B Crossdale, J Adams, R Stephenson, F Blackburn, J Mitchell, K Westwood, S Gilbert, M Whittles, H Bickerton, L Amerigo, D Pointon, J Davie, K Walton, A Pound, and G Ivey and Mr J Vause.

Due to the absence of the Chair, John Vause chaired the meeting.

Item 1. The Future of Selby District Council

John Vause introduced Councillor Mark Crane, the Leader of Selby District Council.

Councillor Crane said that he had lived in Selby, by choice, since 1987.

He said that when he and his Conservative colleagues came to power at Selby District Council in 2003, 20% of services provided by the Council were rated in the top two quartiles. Now, 65% of services are in the top two quartiles. There were few black or minority ethnic residents of Selby but now there is a large number of Poles. The Police report that the crime rate in the Polish community is very low.

Recycling is very important to the Council. At the moment, over 30% of rubbish is recycled. This figure is excellent considering 41% of households in the district do not recycle anything. However, we have to recycle more.

The planning service is not good enough at the moment but we are looking to form partnerships with other organisations to improve matters. We are looking to form partnerships with neighbouring authorities to provide back office staff in order to reduce costs.

In my view, Selby will become a commissioning authority to provide services. Maintenance will be joined with Parks and Environmental Services. The Benefits Service is already provided in conjunction with the East Riding County Council.

The Renaissance Project has been around for over seven years. £5 million is to be spent on two of the three towns (not Tadcaster yet as there are problems with a local landowner). Selby town centre will undergo a transformation. Selby Memorial Hospital will become state-of-the-art, providing facilities that it does now as well as many more. Selby District Council would occupy one of the floors there. If Selby District Council does not put any money into the project, the PCT would not be able to afford the improvements.

Councillor Crane said that he was not against unitary authorities – it is the best way. With the two-tier system, there is some confusion as to who is responsible for the different services. He said that he is a realist and that he had not seen a good workable suggestion for a unitary authority covering the Selby area. Selby could join with the East Riding but we don't want them and they don't want us. If it joins with York, Selby will be seen as second-class citizens. There are more councillors in York and so they would grab more for their area. Incinerators would not be sited next to the Minster. A unitary North Yorkshire would be too big and Selby is too far from Northallerton. Councillor Crane reiterated that he

was not against unitary authority covering Selby but no numerically or geographically satisfactory plans have been put forward.

Selby District Council is going ahead as if Selby District Council will exist for the next twenty years. The East Riding has similarities in some villages but we would be “bolted on” to the existing infrastructure.

The meeting was then thrown open to members to ask questions.

A member said that she had recently had a meeting with John Grogan MP about flooding. She said she had concerns that building is still taking place on floodplains. Surface water is causing flooding but it had emerged that Yorkshire Water Authority was not a statutory consultee on planning applications.

Councillor Crane said that YWA are consulted on every application and that if they objected, the application would be refused. However, he had hardly seen an objection by YWA to any application. Selby DC is not responsible for water supplies, the same as it is not responsible for highways.

A member said that all residents pay their council tax and asked why some villages do not have green bins for garden waste.

Councillor Crane said that by the end of this financial year, all properties apart from a few outlying residences, of which there are less than one hundred, would have the green bin facility.

Another member asked why they did not have the facility now. Councillor Crane said that the green bins were supplied to the areas that recycled more, first.

A member asked why parish council comments were not taken into consideration when planning applications were decided and how do we know that they have even been received.

Councillor Crane replied that it may seem that the comments are not considered but they are. Sometimes, the comments are not a planning reason for refusal. He said that to write acknowledgment letters to all persons concerned, another three persons would have to be employed.

A member asked, stating that he was not being sarcastic, who runs Selby District Council – the councillors or Dransfield Properties?

Councillor Crane said that Dransfield Properties have developments in Selby. There is the Three Lakes Retail Park, which is very good. Argos has just moved there from the town centre. If it had not been available, it would have left Selby. Dransfield Properties approached Selby District Council to improve the town centre. No other developer has done this. Obviously, money is critical but Dransfield Properties is treated in exactly the same way in the planning process as any other developer.

A member said that one thing that bugged him about recycling was that there was no way to recycle plastic.

Councillor Crane said that he had just left the Overview and Scrutiny Committee where he had been asked about this. There is no facility in the Selby area to take plastic. Transporting plastic to outside the area would have a negative carbon impact, as about 90% of it is air. A member said that Mono Plastics at Whitley export plastic and was looking for a site to use for recycling it.

A member asked why parish councils do not receive amended plans for a planning application.

Councillor Crane said that they should but that he knew from experience they did not always receive them. He said that he would “take it on the chin” and have a word with the Head of Planning.

The same member said that sewage is a problem in Fairburn due to the number of new houses being built.

Councillor Crane said that there is a similar problem in Barlow where YWA say there is not a problem. The parish council are going to employ a private contractor to examine the drains. Their reports will then be taken into consideration in future planning applications for the village.

A member said that Selby District Council's Deputy Leader has stated that we will shortly have fortnightly waste collections and that it only costs £60 per year per household in France. He asked how that compares to Selby.

Councillor Crane said that he believed that figure did not include recycling costs. County Councillor Ivey pointed out that rubbish is not collected from households in France – it has to be taken to centres. Councillor Crane said that he did not know the figure but would investigate and report back.
(Councillor Crane has subsequently produced a figure of £60 per household in Selby)

A member said that street cleaning takes place all the time in the towns but in the villages, residents are lucky if they have the streets cleaned once a year.

Councillor Crane said that there were a greater number of people in the towns and so the streets needed cleaning more often. He said that there was a new sweeper in Selby town and the older one is being sent out to the villages. However, the streets will still not be swept as often as in the towns.

A member asked if Selby District Council has regular meetings with Tadcaster Town Council and Councillor Crane replied that they did not. The member suggested that a member of Selby District Council has a regular meeting with the Osgoldcross Forum.

Councillor Crane said that if members of the Osgoldcross Forum want to arrange a meeting on a particular subject, he could organise that the relevant officer attends.

A member commented that there are several different types of grass-cutting contracts and litter-picking contracts organised by the County Council, the District Council and the Parish Councils. There is no co-operation between them. Grass-cutters cut the grass and spread the litter everywhere and the litter-pickers then have a more difficult job to do. Grass-cutting companies overlap their work.

Councillor Crane said that he was aware of this and assured members it was being resolved.

A member asked if there was any possibility of a unitary authority for North Yorkshire being put back on the agenda.

Councillor Crane said that it was now a “dead duck” and that Selby District Council will have to work with North Yorkshire County Council.

On behalf of the members, the Chair thanked Councillor Crane for his attendance and his presentation.

Item 2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors M Shepherd, D White, R Dunning, L Ruxton, A Neto-Claringbold and K Ronksley.

Item 3. Minutes of the last meeting

Passed as a true record.

Item 4. Matters arising from the Minutes

Rita Stephenson has been elected to the Selby Area Committee.

Item 5. The Osgoldcross Forum's Sub-Committees

The Chair reported that the foundation for a Highways Committee was now complete. Funding had been identified and a project to improve road safety had been instigated.

The Chair reported that a meeting was to be held with the local Youth Worker after which a Youth Committee could be formed. Councillor Ivey asked that, as Selby District Council's Champion for Youth, she be kept informed of its work. The Chair said that the Committee would welcome her input.

A member asked what area the Highways Committee would cover. The Chair said that it would cover the local area to begin with but as it worked under the remit of Highways North Yorkshire and North Yorkshire Police Traffic Division who cover a larger area, the area would be enlarged at a later date.

The Chair stated that more members were needed from the member associations to form the sub-committees and asked volunteers to come forward after the meeting.

Item 6. Payments

Paper - £9.98

Room hire and refreshments (4/10/07) – £40.00

All agreed to pay.

Item 7. Any Other Business

The Chief Executive reported that a nomination to the Board of Trustees of the NYFVO had been asked for. It was decided that John Vause should be nominated.

The Chief Executive reported that Eggborough Police House was still occupied by the Community Policing Team but should become vacant shortly. Ten Community Police Volunteers had come forward and training had begun.

The Defibrillator/First Responder project was going ahead as enough responders had volunteered but more were needed.

Item 8. Date and venue of next meeting.

The next meeting of the Forum will take place on Thursday 13th December 2007 at 7.00 pm in the Surestart Building in Brotherton.

Meeting closed at 9.05pm.