

## March 6, 2014

### MINUTES OF MEETING

Title:	<b>Basingstoke District Association of Parish and Town Councils</b>	
Held On:	Thursday 6 <sup>th</sup> March 2014	
Present:	Julian Jones Martin Slatford Martin Biermann Les Fryer Mike Jenkins Fraser Brown Peter Bloyce Brian Langer Philip Kingston Sandy Johnston Alan Ball Vanessa Richards	Dummer (Chair) Baughurst Chineham Chineham Highclere Mortimer West End Old Basing and Lychpit Overton Pamber Sherfield on Loddon Sherfield on Loddon Silchester
Guests:	Alex Howison Russell Swift Alison Edwards	Scottish and Southern Energy Scottish and Southern Energy Secretary
Apologies:	Alan Cox Sarah Bosley Chris Pottinger John Jervoise R H Nicholson Lorna Cuthill Robert Cooper David Leeks	Ashmansworth Burghclere Hannington Herriard Litchfield and Woodcott Mapledurwell & Up Nately North Waltham Tadley

### 1 Minutes of the last meeting – 19<sup>th</sup> September 2013

1.1 There was uncertainty as to whether the minutes of the last meeting had been circulated and they had not yet been placed on the website. Copies were available at the meeting and the minutes were approved as an accurate record.

## **2 Apologies for absence**

2.1 Noted as above.

## **3 Presentations from Alex Howison, Stakeholder Engagement Manager and Emergency Planning and Resilience Group Coordinator, and Russell Swift, Petersfield Depot Storm Manager, both of Scottish and Southern Energy Power Distribution, on network resilience**

3.1 Alex began by expressing apologies on behalf of Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) for recent power cuts, including those over the Christmas period. SSE would normally expect two or three severe events across a winter. This winter they had 23. The extent of the damage was very severe in the Basingstoke area which made it harder to get faults restored quickly. SSE undertake a tree cutting programme which has been stepped up in light of the recent storms. They have over 200 designated tree cutters and extra contractors have been called upon. A usual cut is around 6m which is usually sufficient to prevent interference with power lines but during the recent storms whole trees were coming down due to saturation of roots, which was disrupting cables even when they didn't come down. SSE has also been replacing old lines with bundled cables to make them stronger.

3.2 Even over the worst two days of the recent storms 97.6% of customers had power back on within 24 hours. SSE's emergency line usually takes around 1000 calls a day. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> December it took 10,000 calls. SSE had 420% more staff on standby across December, January and February. They are now spending more time talking to communities and have introduced welfare vans with phone charging facilities, hot tea and coffee.

3.3 Russell Swift's 'day job' is planning and investment for SSE, but on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2014 he started work for three weeks as the Petersfield Depot Storm Manager. He informed the meeting of a number of projects planned by SSE over the coming years. SSE plan to lay a new 33kv cable between Basingstoke and Overton at a cost of approximately £5m, due to the growth in housing in the area. SSE is looking at underground cable as it won't come down in bad weather, although it is more expensive and it can be difficult to get a route through. Underground cables often have to go under roads which causes disruption to traffic. There are plans for new transformers at Oakridge due to increased loads, and Arborfield will be taken off the Bramley group and passed to the Reading group. In terms of 11kv cables (those that feed into transformers on housing estates), some cables will be installed at the Jays Close Substation to allow management of the network if there is a 132kv or 33kv fault. In Preston Candover there is work to rebuild some open wire line going out to Micheldever, and on the Great Binfields Copse estate some cables will be undergrounded. Some open wire cables will also be undergrounded at Houndmills and in north Popley. Pole mounted circuit breakers are also being installed in some areas with smaller circuit breakers installed along the line. This reduces the number of people affected by a power outage and means SSE can install tele-controls along the line so that the control centre is alerted as soon as there is a problem.

3.4 Brian Langer informed the SSE representatives that the road between Basingstoke and Overton was currently flooded and that could cause a problem for the laying of

cables underground. The railway route, which is on higher ground, may be a better alternative. He also said that, because Overton is on a number of different power circuits, some people in the village were without power when others were not. It would be useful if the council could have a map detailing the different circuits serving the parish. He also asked whether SSE informed BDBC of power cuts in the area. Alex Howison said that SSE is currently working with councils to develop a set of agreed criteria which would trigger SSE alerting the relevant council of an outage. He also spoke about SSE's Priority Services Register. You are eligible to join the Register if you are: dependent on electricity for home medical care; have a chronic illness or short term medical condition, for example if you are recovering from a major operation; are disabled; have special communication needs e.g. blind, partially sighted, deaf or hard of hearing; have a young baby; receive a state pension. Being on the Register entitles you to a free priority service including information, advice and help in the event of a power cut.

3.5 In response to other questions, Alex informed the meeting that 17% of an electricity bill goes to the distribution company for investment, and Russell said that SSE were duty-bound to offer new houses the cheapest supply option that the relevant planning permission allowed. SSE has powers to clear trees but a legal process can be started by the landowner which can prove both lengthy and expensive. They have to be selective on tree cutting given how time-consuming and expensive a process it is. With regards to flooded substations, there were processes for preventing water getting in to the stations, but if water did manage to get in at a depth which posed a problem, the substation would be isolated and customers switched to another circuit. SSE are carrying out flood risk assessments for higher voltage stations but councils needed to consider improving drainage channels in the affected areas too. SSE do have agreements with neighbouring distribution companies to share engineers when necessary, but it is expensive and such contractors have to go through an induction process each time, so it is easier and cheaper for SSE to bring their own engineers down from Scotland to the South when demand is high. Poles are inspected yearly, when the lines are walked and a hammer is used to check the condition of the pole (a good condition pole will ring) as well as a visual inspection. SSE are looking at improving the way that they use social media and text alerts, etc, to keep the public informed during disruptions to supply, etc. **Alex Howison said he was happy for his contact details to be given out ([alex.howison@sse.com](mailto:alex.howison@sse.com); 07825 015191) and would try to find a map of power circuits for Overton parish council.**

#### **4 Matters arising from the minutes of 19<sup>th</sup> September 2013**

4.1 There was no meeting held in December 2013 as there was insufficient information available on matters such as precept and grants that the group wished to discuss. Agricultural determinations were discussed at the Mayor's meeting in January 2014.

4.2 **Julian Jones will raise the issue of parish and town councils being formal consultees in the licensing process at the next HALC meeting. Julian will also put the value of HALC membership on the next BDAPTC meeting agenda.**

#### **5 REPORTS**

##### HALC

5.1 Brian Langer reported that the last HALC meeting had a useful presentation from Councillor Sean Woodward, the Highways Cabinet Member at Hampshire County

Council (HCC). It was agreed that the minutes of this meeting would be circulated to all BDAPTC members when available. Brian also advised the meeting that NALC will soon be getting a new Chief Executive, and that the Bill enabling the establishment of electronic signatures and electronic payments has faltered in the House of Lords. The Parish Conference had taken place on the 5<sup>th</sup> March, discussing localism and the Sustainable Communities Act.

5.2 The HALC model Standing Orders and Code of Conduct were raised. The view was raised that they were not all that practical (requiring, for example, agenda items to be agreed two weeks in advance of parish council meetings and everything to be documented in hard copy books rather than moving to electronic record keeping) and that, given they were produced behind schedule, most parishes had already adopted another model such as the BDBC version and would now be unlikely to adopt HALCs model. Furthermore, BDBC have stated that they will find it easier to support councils who have adopted their model Code of Conduct.

#### Community Safety

5.3 There has not been a recent meeting. The fire station is about to undergo improvements which should take around 18 months.

5.4 Councillor Clive Sanders, Leader of the Council at BDBC, has invited all parish and town councils in the District to a meeting where Chief Constable Andy Shaw will be giving his views on the changing face of policing in Hampshire and how residents are likely to feel the impact of change in the future. This is taking place on 26 March, 6.30pm – 8.30pm at BDBC, in the Council Chamber.

#### Disability Forum

5.5 The Forum is now on the register of charities. Mews Consulting, who are masterminding the redevelopment of Basing View, including the new John Lewis and Waitrose developments, met the Forum to discuss how the development will affect disabled people. They will check back with the forum when they start building. The Disability Forum will also be involved in the development of the masterplan for the top of the town centre.

#### Voluntary Services Forum

5.6 Julian Jones did not attend the last meeting as it was about the commissioning system, which he already knew a lot about. He will circulate the minutes of the last meeting. The commissioning system still appears to be a fairly heavy system for bidding for grants.

5.7 Brian Langer informed the meeting that Overton has been given a village agent, who gives advice to people in the parish on who to contact in HCC on various issues. She is very useful. **Brian Langer will ask her whether parishes can request a village agent and will see if BDAPTC can have a presentation on the scheme.**

#### Speedwatch

5.8 Martin Slatford reported that there are now 10 community speedwatch schemes in the district and he would like to bring them all together to share ideas and information and publicise results. **Can all community speedwatch leaders please contact Martin Slatford at [martin.slatford@googlemail.com](mailto:martin.slatford@googlemail.com).**

5.9 The vetting process for volunteers has changed. It is now done online and is much simpler. Responsibility for many schemes is now being handed down from the police to

PCSOs who don't always know as much about the schemes.

5.10 There was recently a 'thank you' presentation at the police station for volunteers at which the volunteers were given a certificate and a photograph was taken by the Gazette, which is available to view online.

## **6 AOB**

6.1 It was agreed to stay with a 7.30pm start for BDAPTC meetings.

6.2 People like the Mayor's reception to be held in January, so it was agreed that BDAPTC should hold a meeting in the first week of December. **Julian Jones will look into a suitable date, and will send round a questionnaire asking for preferences for which day of the week BDAPTC meetings should be held.**

6.3 Brian Langer requested that the agenda for the next meeting allow time to comment on the quality of input from Borough Councillors on planning issues. He felt that they were often making inane comments based on poor knowledge of the area in question. He believed more use should be made of available IT for visual displays, etc, at planning meetings.

6.4 The partnership between parish and town councils and BDBC on open spaces and playing fields was requested as an agenda item, and it was queried whether there was still technical and professional help available from BDBC on tree work, e.g. identifying potentially dangerous trees. Julian Jones and Martin Biermann advised that they still had good contacts with Frank Wright at BDBC regarding trees.

## **7. Date of next meeting – 19<sup>th</sup> June 2014**

**Meeting closed at 10 pm.**