

**NORTH AREA POLICE AND
COMMUNITY SAFETY
CONSULTATIVE FORUM**

in

**West View Community Centre
Miers Avenue, Hartlepool**

on

**Wednesday 23rd July, 2008
commencing at 6pm**

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for absence
2. **MINUTES**
 - (a) To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 9th April 2008 (*attached*)
 - (b) Matters arising.
3. Update from the Police
4. Public Question Time
5. Update from the Fire Brigade
6. Anti-Social Behaviour Unit Update
7. Crime and Disorder Co-ordination Update
8. Any issues to be raised by Councillors and Resident Representatives
9. Any Other Business Agreed by the Chair

WARDS

Brus
Dyke House
Hart
St Hilda
Throston

***NORTH POLICE &
COMMUNITY SAFETY
CONSULTATIVE FORUM***

9th April 2008

MINUTES OF THE MEETING



The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm. at Throston Grange Community Centre, Hartlepool

PRESENT:

Chair: Councillor Mary Fleet – Dyke House Ward

Vice Chair: Resident Representative Linda Shields

Councillor Caroline Barker	- Hart Ward
Councillor Rob Cook	- Hart Ward
Councillor Tim Fleming	- St Hilda Ward
Councillor Sheila Griffin	- Brus Ward
Councillor John Marshall	- St Hilda Ward
Councillor Edna Wright	- Hart Ward

Resident Representatives:

John Cambridge, Mary Power, Joan Steel, Robert Steel and Maureen Waller

Residents: John Lynch and Liz Torley

Officers: Denise Ogden, Head of Neighbourhood Management
Nicholas Stone, Senior Anti Social Behaviour Officer
Katie Sheehan, Anti Social Behaviour Officer
Garry Jones, Neighbourhood Services Officer
Ann Callaghan, Neighbourhood Development Officer (North)
Jo Wilson, Democratic Services Officer

Police Representatives: Chief Inspector Phil Veitch and Sergeant Stuart Porritt

Fire Brigade Representatives: Stuart Simpson

Housing Hartlepool Representatives: Natalie Dove and Janis Ledger

21. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Steve Allison and Reuben Atkinson and Resident Representative Irene Nelson.

22. MINUTES

The minutes for the meeting held on 9th January 2008 were agreed.

23. MATTERS ARISING

“CCTV” – A Councillor asked if this issue had been forwarded to Scrutiny. The Vice-Chair advised that the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee had recently undertaken site visits in connection with this issue and a full enquiry would commence in the new municipal year. No details were available as to which individual Forum would be covering it.

Following queries from a resident it was reported that the Spion Kop camera was still out of order and would require major work to repair. The camera outside the Central Estate Post Office would be examined for possible night blindness.

“Illegal parking” – A Councillor referred to the practice of people parking in their gardens and illegally crossing the pavement using dropped crossings to do so. He requested that this be included within the general illegal parking discussion. A Resident Representative supported these comments, asking that illegal parking be prosecuted robustly. The Neighbourhood Services Officer confirmed that this was an illegal practice and as such warning letters were sent out where appropriate. Resident Representative Maureen Waller supported this approach and requested consistency between the offences, querying which organisation was the enforcer in these matters.

“Fire alarms for the hard of hearing” – A Councillor thanked fire brigade officers for repairing her fire alarm promptly. She further advised those present that the previously discussed criteria stating that everyone living in a property had to be registered deaf to qualify for an appropriate alarm was incorrect. Each case was decided on its individual merits.

24. UPDATE FROM THE POLICE

Chief Inspector Phil Veitch gave a brief presentation on crime figures for the North area between April 2007 and March 2008. These showed that the total amount of recorded crime had decreased by 3.8% over the last 12 months while the total detection rate had increased by 5.4%. In terms of individual types of crime all had decreased apart from vehicle crime (up 3.5%), other theft (up 15%) and drugs (up 17.6%). However the Chief Inspector qualified this by explaining that these increases were fairly small and in the case of drugs this increase was as a result of increased detection and seizures.

Details were also given of the performance by the neighbourhood police teams over the last 12 months, primary actions being taken by police and other items of interest. Crime prevention advice was also given to help protect property and cars.

The following issues were then raised:

“Police access to beaches – do the police still have a bike which enables vehicular access to the beach” – The Chief Inspector indicated that the police off-road policy was that police vehicles were not driven onto the beach unless it was an urgent situation. Officers would monitor the action of individuals on the beach and pursue them when they left.

“Car parking – in new areas can this be built into gardens” – The Head of Neighbourhood Management reported that all new development applications requiring planning permission were surveyed by the Technical Services Division and parking provision was recommended.

“Car parking at bus stops – causes a problem for people with disabilities, especially with the increase in low-loader buses” – These comments to be forwarded to the appropriate person.

“Dog fouling – what about police horses fouling the roads – who cleared this up” – This was felt to be a particular problem in Church Street on weekend nights when the police horses were deployed. The Chief Inspector advised that each complaint was dealt with on its individual merits.

There were no anti-social behaviour statistics. Were these included in other categories? The Chief Inspector indicated that anti-social behaviour complaints were not put through the crime process as they were so difficult to measure. It was always a matter of perception. However he did recognise this as a problem and the police were mindful of the effect and impact of it.

Could police officers help with the eradication of anti-social behaviour and theft at the Central Estate? A multi-agency approach was needed. The Chief Inspector to forward this to the appropriate person.

During the ‘items of interest’ King Oswy and Clavering were mentioned in relation to anti-social behaviour. However there were also problems on the Brus Ward. The Chief Inspector acknowledged that there were problems in many areas of Hartlepool. King Oswy and Clavering had been used purely as

examples. A Resident Representative commented that the situation in King Oswy and Clavering had improved greatly over the last 3 years, mainly due to excellent work by Joe Royal. He asked that his replacement be in place as soon as possible.

Police were advising that home owners avoid stone or gravel drives. However recent advice from the Countryside Alliance supported gravel as helping to prevent flooding. Government legislation banning stone slabs would soon be put in place for this reason. The Chief Inspector advised that the advice to avoid stone or gravel drives was so these items could not be used as missiles. Sergeant Porritt commented that he understood porous bricks would have to be used on new driveways from September 2008.

How much is the reduction in crime a result of good police work? Also was there any information regarding the seizure of drug assets and where this would go? The Chief Inspector indicated that the reduction in crime was a result of police working with their partners and the community as a whole. Any seized assets would go to a central point. A Resident Representative suggested more publicity be given as to how this money was used.

Why was there no police representation at the last North Area Consultative Forum? The Chief Inspector apologised for this, advising he would look into it.

The Chair thanked the Chief Inspector and Sergeant for attending the meeting and answering questions.

25. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A resident referred to a question she had asked at the previous meeting – (**“of the**

2355 arrests how many had led to prosecutions?”) – indicating that she had not had a response. The Chief Inspector advised that he had no figures available at that time.

Would the Chief Inspector be prepared to attend a multi-agency meeting to discuss the increase in criminal and anti-social behaviour on the Central Estate? There had been 2 muggings in the last 4 months – The Chief Inspector noted this request.

26. UPDATE FROM THE FIRE BRIGADE

Cleveland Fire Brigade representative Stuart Simpson gave a brief update on recent performance by the fire brigade. In the North area there had been increases in all categories of fire with the exception of one. In order to reverse this trend the Fire Brigade representative reported that there would be a number of initiatives taking place in the coming weeks. These included an Easter Strategy involving Brus, Dyke House and St Hilda wards, “Play with a football not a fire”, aimed at young people and “Operation Eggshell”, a home fire safety and arson initiative.

The following issues were then raised:

Are the Steetley, Barnshaw and CJC sites part of the St Hilda or Brus wards? There have been a lot of fires there recently and the area is classed as the Central Estate – The Fire Brigade representative advised that these sites were part of the St Hilda ward. Any fires needed to be reported to the fire brigade as the figures provided at the meeting only referred those fires which had been reported.

A request was made for CCTV provision at Clavering play area owing to a spate of recent fires there.

Had there been any criminal convictions in relation to recent verbal and physical abuse directed at fire officers? The Fire Brigade representative indicated that he was aware of an incident but was unable to give any details. A Resident Representative referred to the large number of deliberate fires in one area of the town, advising that suspects’ names had been given to the police but no action had been taken thus far. The Fire Brigade representative indicated he would speak to her on this matter following the meeting.

Do the fire units have the ability to contact community police while responding to a call? The Fire Brigade representative reported that they were able to contact police in an emergency. Furthermore fire pumps were equipped with CCTV. This footage could be given to the police in the event of an incident occurring.

Do fire officers attend local schools to advise children of the dangers of fire? The Fire Brigade representative advised that they did. A particularly graphic presentation was given to slightly older children. However he stressed that given the recent decrease of funding to the fire service they could not guarantee that officers would be able to remain at the school in question for the duration.

Police communications seem to be breaking down. How could matters be improved? Concern that suspects names were not being passed on to senior officers. The public needed to be reassured that if they called the police something would be done. The Chief Inspector advised that there were good links between the police and fire brigade at the local and strategic level. However there was not always a necessity for the police to attend fire calls.

The Chair thanked the Cleveland Fire Brigade representative for attending the meeting and answering questions.

27. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR PERSPECTIVE

The Senior Anti-Social Behaviour Officer and the Housing Hartlepool Representative gave a brief presentation on the issue of working in partnership to tackle anti-social behaviour. Detailed statistical information was provided showing the number of anti-social behaviour cases in Hartlepool between January 08 and March 08. This was broken down between individual wards and category of cases. Further figures showed the amount of cases dealt with by the anti-social behaviour unit and by Housing Hartlepool.

Details were also given of a range of initiatives being carried out by the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit including Anti-social Behaviour Awareness Day, a new Anti-social behaviour Action Plan and a Good Tenant Scheme. The latter would have three levels of membership and would speed moves through pre-referencing. Over the coming year officers would be exploring options for co-location, developing a parenting Protocol and improving links with schools to ensure early intervention.

The Housing Hartlepool representative reported the results of their recent Audit Commission Inspection. Housing Hartlepool had been awarded 2 stars with promising prospects for improvement. Their anti-social behaviour service was seen as a particular strength, specifically their response to domestic violence, partnership working and prevention and support. Details were also given of recent activity over the past 3 months including the drafting of a statement of anti-social behaviour policy, the

development of Good Neighbourhood Agreements, the securing of funding for a Drug and Alcohol Worker and plans to extend furnished tenancies.

The following issues were then raised:

Is there any overlap between your figures and those held by the police?

There was an overlap but no figures were available. All anti-social behaviour issues picked up by the Anti-social Behaviour Unit and Cleveland police were fed to the Anti-social Behaviour Action Group.

2441 AS13 forms had been processed but only 1094 letters were sent to parents. Why the discrepancy? Many of the 2441 incidents would have been dealt with at the time the incident occurred (arrest, removal of alcohol etc) so a follow up might not be appropriate or necessary. Also 1 individual could have 10 AS13 forms attached to them.

500 referrals had been made by other agencies but less than 100 contracts or agreements had been signed. What happened to the other 400? The Senior Anti-social Behaviour officers advised that referrals did not necessarily lead to contracts.

Details had been given of various groups the Anti-social Behaviour Unit worked with to achieve their objectives. How many individuals did this encompass? There were no individual figures available but the numbers were high.

Only 8 Anti-social Behaviour orders had been signed in the last 3 months. The Housing Hartlepool representative felt this was a positive figure, indicating the problem had been dealt with before it escalated.

Was it necessary for the Anti-social Behaviour Unit to be entwined with so many outside agencies? There was a risk that by diversifying in so many ways they would cease to be effective in any. The Senior Anti-social Behaviour Officer felt that partnership working was the key to a successful anti-social behaviour strategy.

There had been 1269 cases of anti-social behaviour in Hartlepool. Information regarding action which had been taken in all these cases should be available to the public. Only 8 Anti-social Behaviour orders had been made in the last year. It was misleading merely to say that appropriate action had been taken. The Senior Anti-social Behaviour Officer commented that a complaint did not automatically lead to an anti-social behaviour order. The appropriate action was always taken but the ultimate step needed to be backed up by evidence which was often not available.

When would the Good Tenant Scheme be launched? The first week of May 2008. Involvement in the scheme would be offered to every landlord in Hartlepool.

How many drug/alcohol workers would be employed and where would they be based? One mobile worker.

How many residents and young people are invited to partnership meetings? The Senior Anti-social Behaviour Officer advised that generally only statutory bodies and professionals were invited to partnership meetings. Neighbourhood Forums and Neighbourhood Action Plans provided a platform for the public to express their views.

A Resident Representative referred to the upcoming European Neighbourhood Day on 27th April 2008, urging everyone to help with the launch. Another Resident

Representative commented on the low number of anti-social behaviour orders given out against young people. The media had a distinct bias against the young and it was commendable that the Council were taking this final step only as a last resort.

The Chair thanked the Senior Anti-social Behaviour Officer and Housing Hartlepool Representative for attending the meeting and answering questions.

28. NEIGHBOURHOOD ISSUES / ANY ISSUES TO BE RAISED BY COUNCILLORS AND RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVES

A Resident asked when action would be taken against a range of issues in the North area including anti-social behaviour, taking without consent, burglary and under-age drinking. The Head of Neighbourhood Management commented that a large number of the issues raised at this meeting had been raised at the North Neighbourhood Consultative Forum meeting on 26th March 2008 and there was a limit to how quickly officers were able to resolve issues. Another Resident Representative advised that the reason these issues kept recurring was because answers were never forthcoming.

A Councillor requested that the inclusion of King Oswy play area on the list of areas designated as no drinking zones be implemented as soon as possible. It had been left off the current list in error by officers.

29. ANY OTHER BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

The Chair referred to the forthcoming elections and this possibly being her last meeting as Chair. Her predecessor, Councillor Rob Cook, paid tribute to her charring skills under often difficult

circumstances. His comments were supported by the Forum.

CHAIR