

SOUTH AREA POLICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY CONSULTATIVE FORUM

**in
Greatham Community Centre, High Street,
Greatham
on
Friday 12th January, 2007
commencing at 10am**

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for absence
2. **MINUTES**
 - (a) To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 8th September, 2006.
 - (b) Matters arising.
3. Update from the Police.
4. Update from the Cleveland Fire Brigade.
5. Presentation on the new Security Guard Contract – Community Safety Team
6. Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy – Community Safety Team
7. Update on Neighbourhood Policing and the Joint Action Groups (JAGs) - Police
8. Public Question Time.
9. Any issues to be raised by Councillors and Resident Representatives.
10. Any other business agreed by the Chairman.

WARDS

Fens
Greatham
Ow ton
Ross mere
Seaton

***SOUTH POLICE &
COMMUNITY SAFETY
CONSULTATIVE FORUM***

8 September 2006

MINUTES OF THE MEETING



PRESENT:

Chair: Councillor Michael Johnson - Ross mere Ward

Councillor Steve Gibbon - Fens Ward
Councillor Geoff Lilley - Greatham Ward
Councillor Arthur Preece - Fens Ward
Councillor Maureen Waller - Ow ton Ward

Resident Representatives:
Joan Smith and Iris Ryder.

Residents: Pat Brotherton, Dorothy Clark, Rose Kennedy, Mr Massey, Mr Oxley and Michael Ward.

Officers: Sally Forth, Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator
Ken Natt, Landlord Registration Officer
David Cosgrove, Principal Democratic Services Officer

Cleveland Police Representatives:
Inspector Alastair Simpson, Sergeant Dave Galloway.

Cleveland Fire Brigade Representative;
George Pendlington.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Dave Frame, the South Area Manager.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2006 were confirmed. There were no matters arising.

3. SELECTIVE LICENSING OF PRIVATE LANDLORDS – PRESENTATION BY THE LANDLORD REGISTRATION OFFICER

The Landlord Registration Officer gave a presentation on the proposed Selective Licensing of Private Landlords initiative. It was explained that this allowed local authorities to require private landlords in designated areas to be licensed, with the

aim of improving the standard of management of housing in the private sector.

Details were given of when and where selective licensing would be applicable, licence requirements and enforcement powers officers would have. Members were advised that consultation would continue to the end of September, the results of which would be reported to Cabinet before the end of the year. The south area had not been included in the distribution of the consultation document as there simply wasn't any real numbers of private landlords in the area. The consultation documents were available on the Council's website. The following issues were then raised:

A Councillor commented that many of the tenants causing antisocial behaviour problems were in receipt of Housing Benefit. It had been raised in the past, but would this legislation allow their benefit to be stopped if they caused persistent problems. The Landlord Registration Officer indicated that this may be possible in 2008 but all it would lead to was the tenant being evicted rather than ending the antisocial behaviour. It was felt that the tenant referencing system would have more effect.

Was this legislation being applied across all the Councils in the Tees Valley area? The Landlord Registration Officer stated that it was, but there were obviously different local conditions. If an agency or landlord was deregistered in another area they wouldn't get a licence here.

Councillors noted that the voluntary scheme the Council had been operating was much more stringent than this new legislation. The Landlord Registration Officer indicated that while the scheme was more stringent it was only voluntary.

A Councillor asked how the conditions of properties could be improved if they would not be inspected. The Landlord Registration Officer stated that there would be new conditions and a Hazard Rating System. Condition would be assessed against a scoring system, if it was in the highest category, then the landlord had to act.

A resident commented that it would be better to make the landlords responsible for the people they let their properties to. Could they vet tenants before letting property? The Landlord Registration Officer stated that in licence areas landlords would have to take references. The government did attempt to introduce the regulation where landlords would be responsible, but this was proven to be inappropriate by the High Court.

4. POLICE UPDATE ON NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING

Inspector Alistair Simpson reported that as part of the national initiative on community policing a Police Constable (PC) and a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) was now in place in the fifteen neighbourhoods across the town. These staff were ring-fenced so as not to be drawn into other operations. This did happen occasionally, though this 'abstraction' rate was very low. The single point of contact was working very well (235811) and people could be put directly through to the PC if they were available. The surgeries were being reviewed but would be kept where people still wanted them. Leaflets would be distributed showing who each area's neighbourhood officers were.

There had already been successes. The new patrols at The Fens shops had significantly reduced reported incidents. Crime figures in general were down 11%

with detection rates in Hartlepool at 45%, the highest in Cleveland.

Councillor and Members of the public welcomed the new officers. There was concern expressed that antisocial behaviour wasn't measured as part of the statistics and there had been a recorded increase in crime figures in Greatham and the Fens over the summer. Inspector Simpson indicated that there did tend to be a peak in Greatham every now and then. The village tended to have 5-6 offences recorded each month, in June it was 18. The recording and classification system changed due to new national standards so there was no comparator information available. A Councillor commented that he considered it was expecting too much of two officers to patrol that area. The Inspector acknowledged the point and commented that the implementation of the neighbourhood police officers would be reviewed after 12 months.

Councillors asked for a breakdown of the crime statistics for the three Neighbourhood Forum areas and Inspector Simpson indicated that this would be available for the next meeting.

A resident reported problems with parents parking around Fens School. Inspector Simpson stated that there had been a successful parking enforcement exercise around the school, though it was perhaps time for it to be repeated.

Residents asked about the Police office at the Fens Shops which was closed. Inspector Simpson was aware the office at Fens Shops offered peace of mind for residents. The Police were working with the shop owners but this mainly a financial issue.

A resident representative raised issues of antisocial behaviour and violence in Seaton Carew which was forcing

residents in Queen Street out of their homes. Inspector Simpson indicated he would take this matter up.

Residents did feel that problems had been at their peak during the school summer holidays. Greatham had suffered particular problems and residents highlighted the need for more patrols on evenings as this was the real problem period. Inspector Simpson indicated that he would take these comments on board.

There was concern at the lack of powers that the PCSO's had and most people stated that they would rather have a PC visit as they felt they could do more about any incidents and make arrests if necessary. Inspector Simpson commented that this was being reviewed by the government. People needed to be aware that there was a significant amount of administrative work linked to an arrest that keeps any PC off the beat for quite some time after making an arrest. PCSO's were not encumbered by the same restriction and could spend more time on patrol where they did have a positive affect. People had to also bear in mind that the additional central government finance was for PCSO's.

The meeting unanimously welcomed the introduction of the new PCSO's in the town but there was still some residents who indicated that they would have preferred PC's to have been introduced.

Inspector Simpson was thanked for his presentation to the forum.

5. UPDATE FROM CLEVELAND FIRE BRIGADE

Station Officer George Pendlington gave a brief presentation and circulated information on fire calls and comparisons between 2005 and 2006. There had

been a drop in the number of vehicle fires, accidental house fires and where damage to property had occurred with no change in the number of deliberate house fires. However, the number of small fires (e.g. rubbish etc) and malicious false alarm calls had increased.

S.O. Pendlington indicated that there had been press reports recently on one tender being taken out of service. This was not the case. The crew were being utilised to highlight the preventative measures all households and businesses could adopt. The tender was still in service, and it and the crew could be called into action if needed.

The Brigade was focusing its resources towards attending life risk situations rather than property risks. The brigade was working with the Police and the Council to raise awareness of fire risks and were targeting children and young people. The Brigade would also be focussing resources in the Owton Manor area as it had a very high level of accidental fires. This was welcomed by Councillors and residents.

Councillors raised the issue of communications between the Fire Brigade, the local authority and Housing Hartlepool which appeared to have broken down recently following a fire in Fraser Grove. S.O. Pendlington stated that he was aware of this issue and it had been addressed. The proper processes did exist and usually worked very well, on this occasion there appeared to have been a mistake in the control room.

A resident representative raised concerns in relation to what she thought was change in Fire Brigade policy relating to the retirement age of drivers. S.O. Pendlington indicated that there had been a change and the statutory age regulations of the past had been removed and all officers underwent an assessment

of their physical capabilities and all had to pass a set standard.

Station Officer Pendlington was thanked for his presentation to the forum.

6. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR STRATEGY – PRESENTATION BY ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR CO-ORDINATOR

The Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator, Sally Forth, gave a presentation on the proposed Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy for Hartlepool. Details were given of the following

- Mission Statement
- Strategic objective 2005/8
- Local Area agreement commitment
- Task Group action plan
- RESPECT agenda
- Supporting families
- Strengthening communities
- Effective enforcement and community justice
- Legal powers
- Resources

It was anticipated that the draft strategy would be in place by the end of October and finalised by December.

A Councillor questioned how realistic it was that areas would get funds for diverting young people. In the Fens area there simply wasn't any facilities to set up groups in. Sally Forth acknowledged this and indicated that the opening up of the school to community groups would make a significant difference.

A resident commented that many older people simply did not know or recognise the difference between antisocial behaviour and crime.

A Councillor commented that many people simply saw these kinds of schemes as something for the 'bad lot' and nothing was done for the vast majority of children and young people who didn't get into trouble.

Councillors noted that Sally Forth had reported that there had been 9000 incidents of antisocial behaviour reported and asked how many acceptable behaviour contracts, ASBO's and CRASBO's had been used. Sally Forth reported that around 25 acceptable behaviour contracts had been introduced, 9 ASBO's and 16 CRASBO's. Many present commented that most residents wanted to see a hard line taken with these low level offenders.

Sally Forth was thanked for her presentation to the forum.

7. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The following questions were submitted from members of the public: -

Mr Hudson asked – "Youths playing football in Newholme/Lealholme Road, up against the Sure Start roller shutters, striking golf balls into the forecourt at Newholme Court and using the gates at Newholme Court as a shortcut. This has been reported to the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit but its no deterrent. What's to be done?" As Mr Hudson had already left the meeting, the Chair requested that the Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator send a written response.

Resident Representative Iris Ryder submitted the following three written questions.

"A Taxi driver has queried what happens when kids have to use booster seats. This would mean that they are unable to pick up passengers with children as they

wouldn't have the boosters seats. People often have more than one child with them so carrying a seat in the boot is not an option. What is the legislation covering taxis and the use of these seats?" The Chair asked that a written response from the Police and the appropriate Council officer be sent.

"Bus drivers have complained that after 7.30 people are allowed to park across the disabled bus access on Hartlepool Roads. They ask if handicapped and disabled people aren't supposed to go out later than that?" The Chair asked that a written response from the appropriate Council officer be sent.

"Can something be done about the speed of traffic on lower Brierton Lane? Cyclists are using the pavement to avoid it and this means that pedestrians often step out onto the road to avoid the cyclists. Inevitably they will get run over stepping off the pavement into the road as there is a BUPA Home half way down the road. Many of the pedestrians visiting the home are already mobility impaired and the complaint about speeding cars has come from them." The Chair asked that a written response from the Police and the appropriate Council officer be sent.

8. ISSUES RAISED BY COUNCILLORS AND RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Councillors and Resident Representatives raised the following issues:

Antisocial behaviour and underage drinking were becoming very problematic in the Fens and Greatham Village area. It was highlighted that Antisocial Behaviour Team Officers were aware of the problems and were being proactive in these areas.

The elderly residents in Wynyard Mews were suffering incidents of criminal

damage and were becoming frightened in their own homes. Inspector Simpson stated that he had become aware of the issues over the weekend and PCSO's were now regularly patrolling the area and would speak to residents to reassure them.

Residents on Campbell Road adjacent to the alleyway to the rear of the shops were complaining of youths gaining entry to their gardens and asked for more regular PCSO patrols in the area. Inspector Simpson noted the problem.

Michael Johnson

Chair