

# Agenda Item 2

## ST NEOTS NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM PRIORY CENTRE ST NEOTS

Tuesday 26 January 2010

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Cllr A N Gilbert	-	Huntingdonshire District Council
	(Chairman)		
<b>Panel</b>	Mr R Dykes	-	Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue
	Mr P Dalton	-	Luminus Group
	Inspector M Greenhalgh	-	Cambridgeshire Constabulary
	Cllr C Hutton	-	Cambridgeshire County Council
	Cllr G S E Thorpe	-	St. Neots Town Council & Huntingdonshire District Council
	Cllr I Wilkie	-	Hail Weston Parish Council
<b>Other Representatives</b>			
	Cllr I C Bates	-	Cambridgeshire Police Authority, District & County Councillor
	R Benford	-	Great Staughton PC
	Cllr Mrs B E Boddington	-	Huntingdonshire District Council
	Cllr B S Chapman	-	St Neots Town Council
	Cllr K Churchill	-	District & County Councillor
	Cllr Mrs J Cleaver	-	Little Paxton PC
	M Curtis	-	Huntingdonshire District Council
	Mrs S Dean	-	Little Paxton PC
	Cllr P J Downes	-	District & County Councillor
	Sergeant S Evans	-	Cambridgeshire Constabulary
	C Gillam	-	Buckden PC
	J Griffin	-	Little Paxton PC
	Cllr A Hansard	-	Huntingdonshire District Council
	M A Hardy	-	Toseland PC
	Cllr D Harty	-	County and District Councillor
	Mr T Jordan	-	Cambridgeshire County Council
	Ms T Little	-	Cambridgeshire Police Authority
	Cllr J Matheson	-	Little Paxton PC
	Sergeant E McNeil	-	Cambridgeshire Constabulary
	L Mitchell	-	Toseland PC
	Gemma Payne	-	Luminus Group
	H Small	-	Offord Cluny and Offord D'Arcy PC
	Ms J Tomkins	-	Cambridgeshire County Council
	Cllr S Van de Kerkhove	-	St. Neots TC
	L Wallis	-	Luminus Group
	Ms C Way	-	Cambridgeshire County Council
	C Williams	-	Buckden Neighbourhood Watch
	Cllr R West	-	

**Public**

Seven Members of the public were present.

	<b>ACTION</b>
<p><b>1. WELCOME BY CHAIRMAN</b></p> <p>In his role as Chairman, Cllr Gilbert welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>The Chairman reminded those present of the purpose of the Neighbourhood Forums in Huntingdonshire as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ informing, consulting and involving the public on issues of local importance;</li><li>◆ enabling local communities and the public to raise issues of concern and highlight priorities for action to public sector organisations; and</li><li>◆ influencing the decision-making processes that direct service delivery.</li></ul> <p>The Chairman reminded those present that issues raised should relate to a local area or community. Individual issues should be discussed with the relevant agency at the end of the meeting.</p> <p>The Chairman noted that regular updates would be provided on issues raised at Forum meetings through the District Council's Web pages once the relevant pages had been set up and that those responsible for moving issues forward (normally Panel Members) would be asked to report back on progress at the next meeting. The Chairman also reported that if an issue could not be resolved it would be explained why.</p>	
<p><b>2. NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 28 SEPTEMBER 2009</b></p> <p>The Notes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.</p>	
<p><b>3. ST NEOTS NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM PROGRESS REPORT</b></p> <p>The following items had been raised as issues at the previous meeting on 28 September.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Northern River Crossing</b> Cambridgeshire County Council informed the meeting that a scheme to improve the bridge at this</li></ul>	

location would require capital funding of several million pounds. Currently funding of this magnitude could not be made available by the County, nor was this likely in times of severe financial constraint.

- **Weight Limits – Mill Lane and Town Centre**  
It was noted that Inspector Greenhalgh's team had passed this to the Roads Policing team who had spoken to a number of vehicle drivers, although it was recognised that this was not an easy matter to resolve.
- **Northern Footbridge linking Eaton Ford and St Neots**  
The meeting was advised that there had been an aspiration in the previous Transport Strategy for St Neots to provide a pedestrian/cycle bridge linking Eaton Ford with the Priory Centre. However, this had been reviewed a few years previously and a northern footbridge had not been considered to be of sufficiently high priority to be included in the current Transport Strategy.
- **Reinstatement of footways**  
It was noted that without details of which footways were affected, it would not be possible to progress this issue. If the information could be provided, the County Council's street works team would investigate.
- **School catchment areas**  
This issue was still being investigated.
- **Youth involvement**  
The issue had been raised at various Forum meetings and both the District and County Councils were considering how best to take this forward and also discussing the involvement of schools.

#### **4. CAMBRIDGESHIRE POLICE AUTHORITY – YOUR POLICE FORCE PRESENTATION**

The Chairman introduced Cllr I C Bates, a Member of Cambridgeshire Police Authority who delivered a presentation on the Police Authority's role, budget and priorities for 2010 and answered various questions from those present.

With regard to Cambridgeshire's crime rate in comparison with the rest of the country, Cllr Bates pointed out that this was relatively low which affected the level of grant made available by the Home Office to fund the work of Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

Councillor Wilkie asked about collaboration between local and county police teams to ensure that speeding was addressed, in response to which Cllr Bates suggested that

this be raised in the feedback forms as a priority for the area.

Cllr Churchill asked whether representations had been made by the Police Authority to central government to redress the balance in relation to policing numbers and was informed that this had been undertaken but with little response.

Cllr Bates asked those present if they would complete a short questionnaire on policing policies for 2010/11 which would be helpful in allocating resources within the Constabulary.

## 5. NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING PROFILE

Inspector Greenhalgh showed a brief DVD on policing in Cambridgeshire and the nature of the problems that the Police encountered on a day to day basis

Inspector Greenhalgh introduced his team and provided an update on the neighbourhood policing profile for the St Neots and Eynesbury area, copies of which were distributed at the meeting. Policing priorities for the previous quarter and action taken was reported as follows:

- **Alcohol related anti-social behaviour in St Neots Town Centre**

Dedicated high visibility patrols had taken place during the Christmas period. Monthly licensed premises checks and random checks with drugs wipes were carried out jointly with the District Council's Licensing Team. Close liaison had taken place with the local Pubwatch with 19 licence holders attending the last meeting. Following incidents of criminal activity, the premises licence of Club Unique (formerly the Kings Head Hotel) had been reviewed and suspended by the District Council for three months, following which violent crime had fallen substantially.

- **Anti-social Behaviour - Duck Lane/Whitehill Walk**

It was reported that several high visibility patrols and work to engage groups of youths had been undertaken in the area. Inspector Greenhalgh advised that a key individual had been identified and given a restraining order preventing him from entering the area which had resulted in positive feedback.

- **Underage drinking – Priory Park/Little Paxton/Buckden**

High visibility and plain clothes patrols had been undertaken which had been very successful. Test purchasing had been carried out in

conjunction with Trading Standards in known hotspots. Work to engage with groups of youths had taken place and there had been a reduction of anti-social behaviour in Priory Park/Little Paxton.

Inspector Greenhalgh reported that the crime hotspots were currently theft from shops in the High Street and the impact of the night time economy and anti-social behaviour in the Market Square. Other areas suggested as priorities were:

- Graffiti and litter in the Eatons
- Anti-social behaviour in Kimbolton.

Inspector Greenhalgh commented that through Police engagement with young people there had been interest in establishing a youth forum but that the young people had requested that another agency (other than the police) lead on this. It was agreed that this should be discussed with Cambridgeshire County Council's Locality Manager for St Neots.

A number of questions were raised about the policing profile and other community policing matters. A concerned resident raised issues about crime in Eynesbury and the need to ensure that this was identified in the priorities.

A resident of Buckden asked about the burglary figures for Gransden and the Offords, in response to which Inspector Greenhalgh commented that there had been a spike in the figures due to a recent spate which police intelligence believed to be linked to an organised group.

Cllr Thorpe asked what could be done about the issue of youths in vehicles in the Lidl car park but Inspector Greenhalgh suggested that the company who owned the car park did not appear to be interested in resolving the matter and that this was a problem that moved from location to location.

A Town Council representative commented about a lack of things for young people to do in the St Neots area and how this could be addressed. Ms Way, the St Neots Locality Manager advised that a number of youth clubs were running in the area but that these were not attractive to some young people. Detached youth workers could work with the police and local volunteers to help engage with young people. A local resident suggested the opening of a café where young people could go rather than to a youth club which she thought that volunteers might be prepared to run. Ms Way and Inspector Greenhalgh undertook to look into this with the resident.

Cllr Churchill raised concerns about issues in Priory Park and the need for a dedicated resource from the police. Inspector Greenhalgh replied that the Ward received significant attention from his team but pointed out that he

Inspector  
Greenhalgh/  
Cambridgeshire  
County Council  
Locality Manager  
St Neots

Ms C Way/  
Inspector  
Greenhalgh and  
local residents

<p>had to balance priorities to ensure that this was not at the expense of rural areas.</p> <p>A Great Staughton resident raised issues about speeding in the village and asked whether this constituted anti-social behaviour, to which Inspector Greenhalgh replied that the anti-social use of vehicles could result in those vehicles being seized.</p> <p>A representative of Buckden Parish Council asked why the police no longer attended parish council meetings. Inspector Greenhalgh replied that he had insufficient resources to attend every parish council meeting but that if there were specific issues a parish council/residents wanted to discuss he would arrange for the Police to be present as long as reasonable notice was given.</p>	
<p><b>6. NEIGHBOURHOOD ISSUES</b></p> <p>Mr R Reeves drew attention to a number of ongoing consultations :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Council advisory freight map, looking at primary and secondary freight routes for HGV traffic through the county,</li> <li>• District Council corporate plan; and</li> <li>• County Council Local Transport Plan – with exhibitions locally including St Neots Library on 19 February.</li> </ul> <p>Cllr Thorpe raised the issue of educational provision at St Neots Community College and Longsands School and the County Council's plan to merge the two schools. He suggested that this was causing significant concern to the parents of children from both schools which prompted comments from various other people present. Cllr D Harty offered to arrange for information to be presented at the next Forum meeting and to enable questions to be asked of the County Council concerning the proposals.</p> <p>A resident asked how the budgetary problems of both the County and District Councils might affect St Neots and neighbouring villages. Mr R Reeves advised that the District Council recently had undertaken a St Neots Health Check which would seek to address any deficit in facilities in the town. Those present were advised that there were no specific reductions in expenditure affecting the St Neots neighbourhood but that both authorities would be addressing the need to make savings in their budgets in the coming years.</p> <p>A Buckden Parish Council representative asked how the police intended to address speeding on Perry Road approaching the A1 roundabout.</p> <p>A number of other speeding/traffic related issues were raised:</p>	<p>Cllr Harty</p> <p>County and District Council information to next meeting</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to stop at Berkley Street/St Mary's Street junction, St Neots; and</li> <li>• Traffic calming installed recently in Monarch Road, Eaton Socon had not resolved the problem of speeding traffic.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>7. FUTURE ITEMS</b></p> <p>The Chairman invited suggestions for future agenda, arising from which the following suggestions were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The County Council's proposal to establish a federation involving Longsands College and St Neots Community College.</li> <li>• The possible implications, in terms of service delivery, on St Neots and the surrounding area of the budget reductions by the District and County Councils for 2010/11 and beyond.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>8. FUTURE MEETING PROGRAMME</b></p> <p>The Forum noted that the next meeting would be held on 8 April 2010 at a venue to be decided. Copies of the agenda would be made available at the meeting.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and asked that people take the time to complete and return the feedback forms provided.</p>	
<p><b>9. PANEL PRIORITISATION</b></p> <p>At the conclusion of the Forum meeting, the Panel agreed the following Policing Priorities for the three month period to March 2010:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Crime and anti-social behaviour linked to the night-time economy in Market Square, St Neots.</b></li> <li><b>2. Speeding on Perry Road, Buckden.</b></li> <li><b>3. Establishing a Youth Forum</b></li> </ol> <p>Panel Members were also asked to address those issues marked for their attention in the Notes of the Forum meeting.</p>	

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