

## ST NEOTS NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

Monday, 29 March 2010

### PRESENT:

<b>Panel</b>	Councillor A N Gilbert	- Huntingdonshire District Council
	(Chairman)	
	Inspector M Greenhalgh	- Cambridgeshire Constabulary
	Mr R Dykes	- Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue
	Mr P Chatterton	- Luminus
	Parish Cllr I Wilkie	Hail Weston PC.

<b>Forum</b>	36 members of other authorities, organisations and the public
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**APOLOGIES:** Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of County Councillor C Hutton and St Neots Town Councillor G S E Thorpe.

	<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;</li><li>◆ and 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><b>2. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2010</b></p> <p>The notes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record with the following amendments – Ms C Way to progress youth issues not Insp M Greenhalgh. Ms C Way requested that the notes be amended around the possibility of a youth café.</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 26 January 2010.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Youth Involvement</b> Ms C Way provided an update of work undertaken in the area around youth involvement and noted the following key actions had taken place so far: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All current youth groups and projects involve young people in their planning and delivery.</li> <li>2. Preliminary work has been undertaken to engage young people in Eynesbury.</li> <li>3. Detached youth work is now in place two evenings a week, working in partnership with the police.</li> <li>4. Area Youth Voice Conference attended by 16 young people from 3 schools in the area</li> <li>5. Discussions with Head Teachers at all three schools are positive</li> </ol> </li> </ul> <p>Ms Way also noted that there were plans to discuss youth involvement with the St Neots Schools forum to look at inclusion of younger pupils and that work was ongoing around the launch of the Bargroves venue for the Forum in the autumn term.</p> <p>There were no further questions for Ms Way. The Chairman noted his thanks to Ms Way for the update.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>St Neots Community College/Longsands College Federation</b> Item on the meeting agenda for discussion later</li> <li>• <b>Budget Issues</b> It was noted that when specific proposals come from Huntingdonshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council which affect the area these will be brought to the forum.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>4. NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING PROFILE</b></p> <p>Inspector M Greenhalgh introduced himself to the Forum as the Sector Inspector for the local area.</p> <p>Inspector Greenhalgh gave a presentation on the Neighbourhood Policing Team and the Jan – March 2010 Profile for St Neots, Eynesbury and area (circulated to the audience).</p> <p>Inspector Greenhalgh provided an update on the priorities identified at the previous neighbourhood</p>	

forum meeting:

- **Alcohol related issues – Night Time Economy St Neots Town Centre**

Insp Greenhalgh noted a 37% decrease in issues and noted the ongoing work with 27 pub landlords through the pubwatch scheme. Dedicated officers and hi visibility operations have been undertaken including random drug wipe checks in premises. Insp Greenhalgh noted the implementation of the traffic light scheme with pubs which relates to the number/severity of incidents on premises and added that if a premises gets to red there will be a review of the license. He also noted there is only one premises currently on Amber within the scheme. Insp Greenhalgh also noted the police have formally objected to the opening of "The Works" nightclub.

- **Speeding – Perry Road, Buckden**

Inspector Greenhalgh noted that Perry Road is part of the dedicated patrol route for his team in addition speed monitoring and enforcement had been carried out resulting in 5 prosecutions (highest speed 53mph) and 1 prosecution which may result in a ban.

Inspector Greenhalgh noted that overall crime in the neighbourhood is down by 11% but increases within that had been seen in theft (14% increase) and burglary (39% increase relating to items being taken from sheds and garden stores including power tools and fishing equipment in the Gransdens, Offords and Paxtons). The Inspector noted that they have a lead in relation to this issue.

It was noted that current information identifies the following areas as crime hotspots:

- St Neots Priory Park (Priory Lane)
- St Neots Priory Park (Market Square)
- St Neots Priory Park (High Street)

In terms of Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) Inspector Greenhalgh noted a decrease in ASB had been seen in the neighbourhood overall with a particular decrease in Priory Park and Eaton Ford wards but increases in Kimbolton and Staughton wards.

ASB hotspots were identified in the following areas:

- St Neots Priory Park (Cambridge Street vehicle nuisance and rowdy behaviour)
- St Neots Priory Park (High Street – related to the Night Time Economy)
- St Neots Priory Park (Market Square – related

- to the Night Time Economy)
- St Neots Priory Park (New Street – alcohol related)
- St Neots Socon (Peer Road – neighbour issue)
- St Neots Eynesbury (Barford Road – general rowdy inconsiderate behaviour)

Inspector Greenhalgh noted the recommendations for policing priorities for the coming quarter in S Neots Neighbourhood as:

- High Street/Priory Lane – theft from shops
- High Street – Night Time Economy related crime and ASB
- Cambridge Street/New Street – Rowdy ASB
- Eatons – Graffiti and Litter
- B645 near Kimbolton – motorcycle traffic

The Chairman asked if the decrease in ASB was significant and if so how it had been achieved. Inspector Greenhalgh noted that one key individual had been given a restraining order which had made a significant difference to the issue.

The Chairman thanked Inspector Greenhalgh for his report.

**5. EDUCATION PROVISION - ST NEOTS COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND LONGSANDS SCHOOL - PROPOSAL BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL TO ESTABLISH A FEDERATION.**

As Portfolio Holder for Learning of Cambridgeshire County Council, Councillor D Harty gave a presentation on proposals to establish a federation between the two secondary schools at Longsands College and St Neots Community College.

The forum was informed that a combination of factors had resulted in a need for the County Council to review secondary education provision in St Neots. In particular problems had been experienced at St Neots Community College with low educational attainment, financial pressures and a falling school roll which had resulted in the school becoming classed as a national challenge school in September 2008 and being placed in special measures with effect from March 2009.

The situation, together with forecast growth in St Neots, had resulted in the County Council reviewing the situation as a matter of some urgency over the past year. Councillor Harty stressed that the status quo had not been an option and that a wide ranging consultation had therefore been embarked upon by the County Council in the previous autumn. Having

considered the responses, the County Council's Cabinet had decided in January to propose a federation of the two schools with a single governing body but retaining their separate identities. In addition, the budget deficit that had arisen at the Community College had been written off.

Councillor Harty advised that the governing bodies and head teachers of both schools supported the idea of a federation with the anticipation being that this would raise standards at the Community College without affecting the existing levels of performance at Longsands. An action plan had been formulated to take the Community College out of special measures and reverse the situation as to falling rolls at the school and it was hoped that it would also change the perception that the public and parents had about comparative standards at the two schools.

Councillor Harty concluded by explaining that the County Council had now embarked upon a further consultation exercise on the proposal for a federation with a closing date of 26<sup>th</sup> April to enable the new measures to be implemented in September 2010.

In response to questions, Councillor Harty advised where the explanatory information on the proposals which had been prepared by the County Council could be obtained and where comments should be addressed.

## **6. OTHER NEIGHBOURHOOD ISSUES**

The Chairman asked those present to raise any issues which of a local concern.

A local resident raised a concern about ASB in St Neots Cemetery, primarily in the summer months with youths congregating in the middle of the cemetery and causing damage in the past. Inspector Greenhalgh agreed to look into the matter and make his neighbourhood policing team aware of the concern.

A resident raised the issue of parking problems around Priory Primary School which was exacerbated by commuters parking on the highway and travelling by rail to London. (An issue was also noted with "boy racers"/speeding vehicles in the same area. Arising from which Inspector Greenhalgh agreed to increase patrols in the area).

The Chairman commented on ongoing efforts to try to resolve the issue of on street parking by commuters with on street restrictions being considered and discussions ongoing with First Capital Connect.

In response to a question about how the forum had

been publicised, Mrs Squires, the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator advised that posters and publicity information had been circulated to all parish councils, local libraries, surgeries, community venues and supermarkets and to the local press and radio stations.

A resident raised the question of a proposal by the District Council to introduce parking charges at the Riverside car park in St Neots and Councillor K Churchill of the District Council explained that one of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panels had proposed that a period of three hours free parking be retained in the car park but that the Cabinet had now consulted on retaining free parking for up to 2 hours on 38 spaces at the car park with charges introduced for the remainder. Those present were informed that if members of the public wished to express any views on the proposal, they should do so in writing to the District Council before the end of April.

Concerns were raised by a resident about congestion on the A428 and the pressure on local routes through villages in the neighbourhood in the event of accidents on the A428 itself and the A14. Councillor Churchill commented on the plans for the A14 realignment and for the possible dualling of the A428, although the latter was at a very early stage.

Attention was drawn to the problems of pot holes in the highway following the bad weather over the winter period. It was reported that the County Council were undertaking emergency repairs as quickly as possible and were lobbying the Government to make additional resources available to address the problem and make more permanent repairs.

A resident commented on the traffic calming measures in the Monarch Road area of St Neots which it was suggested had not resolved the problem of motorists travelling too fast and 'rat-running' to avoid the A1. As this was the responsibility of the County Council's Highways Team, Mrs Squires indicated she would liaise with officers from that Division to provide information on traffic calming measures to a future meeting.

Councillor Wilkie commented on the problems caused by an excessive number of motor cyclists using the B645 which could rise as a result of a motor cycle outlet being opened in Great Staughton. He explained that this was a favourite route for motor cyclists in summer months and anticipated that the problems could increase in the coming weeks. Inspector Greenhalgh indicated that he was aware of the problem and would liaise with his colleagues in the County Police Traffic Unit.

<p>Arising from recent media reports, Mrs H Rawden of Druglink spoke about the dangers of 'legal highs' and especially mephodrone which had recently been classed as an illegal substance by the Government. She explained the effects that they could have on a user's health and made available a number of leaflets on the subject which contained advice and further information on the topic.</p>	
<p><b>7. FUTURE ITEMS</b></p> <p>It was agreed that future agenda items should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The outcome of the education consultation on Longsands and St Neots Community Colleges' federation</li> <li>• Ms C Way agreed to bring a further update on youth work to the October meeting.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>8. FUTURE MEETING PROGRAMME</b></p> <p>The Chairman informed those present that the next meeting of the St Neots Neighbourhood Forum would take place on 26 July 2010 at the Mandeville Hall in Kimbolton.</p>	
<p><b>9. PRIORITISATION</b></p> <p>At the conclusion of the Forum meeting, the Panel agreed the following Policing priorities for the three months to June 2010:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Motorcycle ASB on the B645 near Kimbolton</b></li> <li><b>2. ASB related to the Night Time Economy in St Neots</b></li> <li><b>3. Theft from shops – St Neots town centre</b></li> </ol> <p><b>Inspector Greenhalgh also agreed to investigate the situation with regard to ASB in St Neots Cemetery.</b></p> <p>Panel members were also asked to address those issues marked for their attention in the notes of the forum meeting and actions/update sheet.</p>	