

East Area Committee – 16 September 2009

Minutes of the meeting of the **East Area Committee** held on **16 September 2009** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr C G Seagers
Vice-Chairman: Cllr M J Steptoe

Cllr J P Cottis
Cllr T G Cutmore
Cllr K J Gordon

Cllr Mrs G A Lucas-Gill
Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins

ALSO PRESENT

Cllr Mrs P Shaw, Ashingdon Parish Council
Cllr Mrs I Knight, Barling Magna Parish Council
Cllr N Wallace, Canewdon Parish Council
Cllr Mrs J McPherson, Great Wakering Parish Council
Cllr D Whittingham, Paglesham Parish Council
Cllr J Bond, Rochford Parish Council
Cllr A Coulson, Stambridge Parish Council
A Prophet – Essex Police

OFFICERS PRESENT

Y Woodward - Head of Finance, Audit & Performance Management
M Power - Committee Administrator

210 AREA COMMITTEE – INITIAL BUSINESS

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from District Cllrs Mrs T J Capon, T E Goodwin, Cllrs P A Capon (Stambridge Parish Council), Mrs K Perring (Great Wakering Parish Council) and Mr B Summerfield (Barling Magna and Sutton Councils).

Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to including Cllr D Whittingham, Paglesham Parish Council, in the list of those attending the meeting.

At this point the Committee adjourned the formal meeting to move into the community forum to hear contributions from members of the public.

211 COMMUNITY FORUM

A request for information regarding parking and traffic problems in Rocheway, Rochford, which had been received in advance of the meeting, had been

circulated and is appended to the Minutes. In addition to the written response provided by County Highways, it was confirmed that the issue had been added to the 'wish list' under Localism in terms of a request for a one-hour parking restriction either side of the road from Mondays to Fridays.

At this point the Committee re-convened into formal session.

212 SPOTLIGHT ISSUES

(1) Update on Crime and Disorder in the East Area

Chief Inspector Prophet provided a verbal update on crime and disorder within the east of the District. A summary sheet of reported crime statistics for the East Area had been circulated to all those present.

Chief Inspector Prophet stated that, historically, there were higher levels of crime and increased calls on police time during the summer months. However, recorded crime had reduced significantly in the east of the District during July and August this year compared with the same period in 2008. There were 64 recorded crimes in July/August this year, compared with 100 in the same period in 2008 and 149 incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) reported in July/August 2009, compared with 205 in July/August 2008. The east area of the District has seen a clear reduction in crime, which had been particularly noticeable in Rochford town. Over the 2-month period there had been 3 house burglaries (compared with 5 in July/August 2008), 36 incidents of criminal damage (compared to 50 the previous year), 9 instances of theft from motor vehicles (compared to 15 in 2008) and 12 common assaults/woundings (compared with 26 the previous year). There had been no especially violent assaults in the District during the period and the District showed the lowest amount of crime and disorder, when compared to similar Districts in the country, according to IQuanta, the statistical reporting system used by the Police.

Chief Inspector Prophet advised that a funding initiative has provided three additional Police Constables (PC's) in Rochford town, as well as three in Rayleigh town. Although the three PC's would focus their activities in Rochford town centre, they would be available to support the east area of the District as a whole.

Halloween plans for policing would be similar to those last year, namely duties and rest days would be rearranged to ensure that all possible policing staff would be working that night. The Police would also be liaising with shop owners and schools to get additional support for the night.

The Police were attempting to expand Neighbourhood Watch schemes across the District and funding was now available to enable leaflet and letter dropping and advertisements to be undertaken over next few months. At present, schemes were strongest in Rayleigh and Hockley and less so in Rochford. However, it was suggested that a lower take-up of schemes was often more

common in rural areas. It was noted that Neighbourhood Watch schemes were run by volunteers and that the Police were talking with the Neighbourhood Watch coordinator to try to extend the schemes further into the District.

Chief Inspector Prophet advised that in order to reduce the number of house burglaries in the District, which would often rise at this time of the year, work was being undertaken around increased police patrols and public awareness. In addition, selective DNA test packs had been purchased, at a significant discount, from the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP). The selective DNA system was an invisible, permanent marking system, which was household specific and which could be applied to any or all items within a household. The test packs would be targeted around particular streets identified as high risk and signage would be erected in Rochford advising that the District is covered by the system. The use of the system should assist in identifying burglars and deterring 'travelling' burglars. In response to a Member question, it was confirmed that selective DNA kits were available to private buyers at a cost in the region of £40-50. If the system proved successful in the longer term, further batches may be purchased through the CDRP at the reduced rate.

In response to questions, the following was noted:-

- Regarding the issue of speeding motorbikes from Paglesham Boatyard and along the sea wall in both directions throughout the summer holidays and at weekends, Chief Inspector Prophet advised that although the Police were aware of the problem, these people were often difficult to apprehend. Community intelligence was needed to identify people. It was requested that the Parish Councillor for Paglesham contact the Chief Inspector directly with details.
- Chief Inspector Prophet was advised of a problem of anti-social behaviour in Rochford by two distinct groups of young people: a group of teenagers and also a group of children of junior-school age. The disturbance and damage, which was occurring every night of the week from about 5pm until after 12pm, had been reported to Rochford Police station. Chief Inspector Prophet advised that significant efforts had been made by the Police around the square but that problems continued. The specific concerns raised would be passed to PC Michelle Rawson, the Neighbourhood Specialist Officer (NSO) for the Rochford ward. Any very young children who were apprehended would be taken home and their parents made aware of the situation. It was noted that, with the new funding in place, PC Rawson would now have the support of three additional officers in Rochford.
- No specific Neighbourhood Watch in St Mark's Field, Rochford had been set up.
- The Barling Magna wild life sanctuary has been subjected to instances of vandalism and a burglary of tools from the locked shed on the site. The

area is currently on the police patrol plan for Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights; however, police personnel would be made aware of the problems occurring in this area.

- The report of vandalism and anti-social behaviour by youths around the old fire station in Great Wakering would be passed on to PC Steve Thomas, the NSO for Great Wakering.

213 EAST AREA UPDATE

The Committee received the East Area Update.

32/08 – Sutton Ford bridge scheme - funding

County Highways has approached the landowner for compulsory purchase of the site.

36/08 – Resiting the bus stop in Great Wakering

The scheme to install a pedestrian crossing outside the Great Wakering school will be put forward for consideration under Localism for 2010/11.

It was requested that the bus stop sign be moved to where the new bus shelter had been erected outside the Great Wakering Medical Centre; currently the sign was in its original position outside the bungalow next to the Medical Centre, which caused confusion to members of the public.

A similar situation had occurred with the new bus shelter that had been erected in Mason's Way, Great Wakering outside the new flats. The bus stop needed to be moved from its original position to where the new shelter was.

5/09 Speeding motorcycles through Great Stambridge village

In response to comments that a Police presence had not been seen in the village, Chief Inspector Prophet advised that a number of Police checks had been conducted over the course of 3 weekends, during which time no speeding had been recorded. The Police would contact County Highways to request that static road strips be laid, which would provide a breakdown of vehicular activity in the area.

7/09 Proposed street lighting improvements

Unless notification to the contrary is sent to County Highways, lights will be turned off from March 2010.

A license from County Highways granting permission to suspend hanging baskets on lamp columns was dependent on County Highways receiving further information from Rochford Parish Council.

In response to a Member question about the cost of area committee meetings, it was noted that while there was a need to provide value for money, the

Council had an obligation to involve the public in decision making. It had been agreed that the Area Committees were a suitable way of giving members of the public more direct contact with the Parish, District and County Councils, as well as representatives from the other external organisations, such as the Police, who attend the meetings. In addition, to facilitate the effective operation of the Localism agenda it is useful to have Area Committee meetings in different venues across the District and, naturally, some areas are better attended than others. It could also be argued that low attendance by members of the public at certain meetings may be because there were no particular issues that the public wished to raise at that time; often large public attendance was seen when issues of general interest to the public were on the agenda. The option of reducing the number of Area Committee meetings had previously been raised at Council but it had been decided to keep number of meetings the same.

The issue of publicising Area Committee meetings was raised. It was noted that Area Committee meeting dates and venues are published in Rochford District Matters and on the Council's website. Notices are also sent to Parish/Town clerks for display in the area where each meeting is to be held.

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm.

Chairman

Date

If you would like these minutes in large print, braille or another language please contact 01702 546366.

Appendix

Question

Ivan Dodds – 1 Rocheway
Keith Clifford – 2 Rocheway
Andrew Clare – 3 Rocheway
Les Downes – 8 Rocheway
Steve Campen – 10 Rocheway

We are residents of Rocheway, Rochford and would like to ask if there is any help you can give us in easing the parking and traffic problems we have.

Since the parking restrictions and cost of parking have been increased in Rochford and the station, (and Rocheway being the first road outside the restrictions) we are now experiencing daily problems with cars being parked inconsiderately all day over our driveways (preventing us from getting on and off our properties) and cars parking on the pavements causing problems for pedestrians. Added to that, we also have Rocheway Adult Education Centre and Norman House and the prospect of the Essex Disability Centre and the associated traffic that comes with these facilities (minibuses all day ferrying people to and from the sites). The increased parking has meant that these minibuses and larger vehicles now struggle to get down the road – Rocheway is quite a narrow road and has a blind bend at the Rochford end of the road. One resident has had his front wall demolished and manhole covers broken due to large vehicles reversing onto his property because they are unable to get down the road. The other problem we have is the excessive speed that cars drive along the road. These are non-residents who have been using Rocheway school facilities and do not appreciate the blind bend. It is only a matter of time before a serious accident occurs. Can you help us?

Response

Rocheway has been considered previously for parking restrictions. However, there are a number of properties with no off-street parking facilities and so the installation of any restrictions has not been progressed. If the residents wish to discuss this in greater detail they should refer the matter to Essex County Council on 01268 297500 when they will be directed to the appropriate officer.

The matter of inappropriate speed would best be discussed with colleagues as well. The geography of the road makes it unlikely that vehicles are travelling well in excess of the 30 mph limit and we would need to get specifics as to the nature of the problem (time of day etc) to best gauge a response.

Cars parking over driveways and blocking footways for pedestrians is a matter for Essex Police.