

ALDRIDGE SOUTH AND STREETLY LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP

Tuesday 6 December 2005 at 7.00 p.m.

**at the Goodsell Hall, Aldridge School – A Science College, Tynings
Lane, Aldridge**

Present

Councillor John O'Hare (Chairman)
Sergeant Martin Brown
Councillor Brian Douglas-Maul
Mr. Michael Harrison
Mrs Pauline Heydon
Mr. Ron Perks
Mr. Dusan Popratnjak
Mr. Peter Roberts
Councillor John Rochelle
Ms. Sarah Witheridge

In attendance

Mr. Andy Burns
Ms. Parveen Sangha
Mr. Paul Wilde

81/05. Introductions

Each member of the Partnership and the officers present introduced themselves and explained in brief the organisation they represented.

82/05. Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance at the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillor Ansell, Councillor Clarke, Chief Inspector Byrne, Mr. R. Gilham and Mrs J. Henney.

83/05.

Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Local Neighbourhood Partnership held on 6 September 2005, a copy having previously been circulated to each member of the Partnership be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

84/05.

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest at this meeting.

85/05.

Petitions

There were no petitions submitted for consideration at this meeting.

86/05.

Briefing note on Fair Trade

The Chairman (Councillor O'Hare) read out a briefing note explaining the Council's policy on fair trade and the use of fair trade goods at meetings such as this one.

Resolved

That the Fair Trade briefing note be received.

87/05.

Public forum

88/05.

Mr. King - Streetly resident

Mr. King expressed concern that residents names and addresses appeared in the minutes. He was concerned that if the minutes got into the wrong hands then speakers could be the subject of victimisation or their property vandalised.

Resolved

That minutes be anonamised in future to protect the identity of speakers.

89/05. **John Smith – Scouts Association**

Mr. Smith referred to the scout hut in Blackwood Road. On Friday evening during the scout meeting the area was invaded by 30 – 35 youths. There was some pushing and shoving going on, so the Police were called through the 999 system but took 30 minutes to arrive by which time the youths had dispersed. He asked why it had taken the Police so long to arrive? He asked if Blackwood Park could be fenced to improve security and the pathway to the scout hut lit to improve safety?

Sergeant Martin commented that 30 minutes to attend a 999 call was unacceptable. The guidelines required a response within 10 minutes.

A local resident confirmed that local youths were trying to break into the scout hut and that the scout leader had been injured when his fingers were trapped in a door. He added that cars had been vandalised with radio aerials being removed and thrown away. He stated that the situation had been very intimidating with youths from 10 -16 being involved. Many had been carrying cans of lager and were the worse for drink.

Chris Allen stated that there were youth problems throughout Streetly. Throughout the last two months, Police officers had appeared on the beat in the area, and he asked if the provision of beat officers could be extended between 8.00 pm and midnight when most of the trouble occurred. He added that it appeared to be the same people every night who were looking for trouble. He referred to the fact that a number of the youths drove high performance vehicles and at times up to 70 youths were hanging about.

Mr. Wilton, a Streetly resident advised the meeting that Friday night was drinking night. On the 4 November a number of drunkards had been arguing on his driveway and his grandson had been frightened and reduced to tears. He stated that the Police did drive through the area regularly, for which residents were grateful, but never on Fridays. He felt that the method of policing was wrong and that under age drinking had gone unchecked for too long. He asked whether any parents had been prosecuted for failing to control their children or for allowing them to drink when under age?

90/05. **Mr. King – Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator**

Mr. King felt that there had been a definite deterioration in the Streetly area. He was concerned at the amount of graffiti and vandalism occurring in the area. He was appalled by the cheek of youngsters and to the fact that they were carrying around carrier bags of drink as early as 6.30 pm. He stated that when he called the Police he was put through to Walsall and told “we are very busy.” By the time the Police had arrived the youths had dispersed and the damage had been done.

91/05. **Miss Withers – Shop owner**

Miss Withers reported that her shop windows had been scratched and broken. Eggs had been thrown at the shop front. She referred to the anti-social behaviour of young people at the rear of the shop and to the fact that she had found weapons hidden behind the dustbins. She added that there were regular fights where people were badly beaten and property was smashed.

92/05. **Mr. O’Leary – Streetly resident**

Mr. O’Leary stated that the level of criminal activity was rising. His shop windows had been damaged and cost £2000 to replace. He was concerned that the Police were too slow in responding to requests. The dust bins at the rear of the shop had been set alight resulting in the fire service attending. Locks had been smashed and padlocks had been cut. Handles on doors accessing the maisonettes above the shops had been broken off preventing residents getting into and out of their homes.

A resident asked if CCTV cameras could be provided at the shopping precinct to assist in identifying those responsible for vandalism and damage.

A Streetly resident referred to the fact that the garage housing the red cross ambulance had been vandalised costing £600 to repair. Her car windows had been smashed and stones had been thrown at her home.

Mr. Smith a Streetly resident referred to the drinking ban in Chester Road/Bridle Lane and asked how far it extended. Sergeant Martin replied that there were at least 19 signs in place advising of the drinking ban which covered a much larger area than Slims corner. He added that the signs were not very large being the same size as the dog fouling signs. He advised that there were a similar number of signs on the Pheasey Estate.

Mr. Taylor, a local shop keeper, stated that he had spoken to Chief Inspector Byrne about children hanging around outside his shop. He indicated that since August more and more children congregated outside the premises from 5.30 pm onwards. The situation was now so bad that customers were deterred from visiting the store. He asked if the fencing at the perimeter of the site could be removed so that youths had no where to sit. He added that dustbins had been set on fire; signs had been covered with graffiti and a meter cupboard was used as a toilet.

Councillor O’Hare drew attention to the common themes expressed by all the speakers in the public forum which related to youths having nothing to do and nowhere to go. This was exacerbated by alcohol and drug abuse

and a lack of Police response. He requested a report to the next meeting of the Local Neighbourhood Partnership on the fencing of Blackwood Park to provide security; the lighting of the pathway to the scout hut to provide safety and a report from the Police on policing activities within the Streetly area.

Mr. Perks referred to a letter from the Walsall Safer Borough Partnership dated 28 November 2005, which advised that Streetly was not a "crime hotspot".

Councillor O'Hare reported that the Walsall Safer Borough Partnership obtained information from the Police to help them to plan and resource additional activities in a particular area.

Councillor Douglas-Maul stated that this was a long standing problem in Streetly. He also referred to the fact that Kingstanding had a heavy Police presence so jobs were moving from there into Walsall to cause trouble. He felt that if the playing fields were fenced and gated then the potential escape routes for youths would potentially be reduced.

Brian Holland, Interim Director for Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership, reported that the Partnership could help with the provision of CCTV. The Partnership could also arrange for test purchasing of alcohol to be carried out to curtail underage persons from obtaining alcohol.

Brain Holland referred to the changes occurring in community policing with community safety officers assisting ordinary Police officers. He indicated that this might well improve response times.

Sergeant Martin advised the meeting that up to December 2004, there were disposal orders in place in both Pheasey and Streetly but they had not been renewed in 2005.

With reference to the scout hut, Sergeant Martin commented that he would support the lighting of the pathway and the fencing of the park to improve security. He advised the meeting that he had been a beat sergeant for 3 years and during this time he had seen youth problems escalate. It started with underage drinking on the "party field" then the youths moved to Blackwood Road and then Lindrosa Road. He agreed that the children needed something to do but they did not want organised youth clubs preferring to drink and cause trouble. He added that officers could not arrest youths for public order offences if they were not committing any.

Referring to the suggestion that youths were coming to Walsall from Kingstanding, Sergeant Martin indicated that this was unlikely as youths were very territorial. He added that the provision of CCTV cameras would provide some deterrent but base ball caps and hoods meant that hard evidence could not be provided in many instances.

Resolved

- (1) That officers prepare a report on the fencing of Blackwood Park and the lighting of the pathway to the scout hut;
- (2) That the Police produce a written report on policing in the area to the next meeting of the Local Neighbourhood Partnership.

93/05. **Pauline Heydon**

Pauline Heydon reported the activities of the BRAG on the Redhouse Estate in Aldridge. She indicated that a successful clean up had been carried out and hoped that the area would be kept clean and tidy in future.

94/05. **Mr. Henney – Streetly resident**

Mr. Henney referred to Section 106 agreements and the use of monies created by such agreements. Councillor O'Hare read out the contents of a letter stating that £17,500 of Section 106 funding was being spent in Doe Bank Park, Blackwood Road and Goodwood Drive. He added that further Section 106 monies would be generated from the former Rawlins Tip development. This money had been earmarked for Streetly School.

Resolved

That the contents of the letter be noted.

95/05. **Walsall Beacon Gateways**

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Glen Buglass reported to the meeting on the project. He explained that new signs would be provided at the entrances to the borough and the old signs would be removed. He added that a standard sign was proposed with photographs attached to explain the areas of the borough. The town centre sign would contain text explaining the history of Aldridge.

Mr. Harrison asked if there was any reference to Aldridge Youth Theatre. Glen replied that it had been included.

Glen stated that if the signs were well made, vandal proof and fit for purpose, then people would respect them.

Councillor Douglas-Maul said that the concept was excellent but that the Streetly pictorials needed amendment as a number of the photographs referred to sites outside of Streetly.

Resolved

- (1) That the signs for Aldridge be supported;
- (2) That the signs for Streetly be amended to reflect places within the Streetly area.

96/05. **Partnership Plan and Feedback from Task Groups**

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Resolved

That LNP members:-

- (1) Continue to attend workshop meetings;
- (2) Continue to encourage wider participation from community members within task groups
- (3) Note the dates for future task group meetings.

97/05. **Funding Priorities for Action**

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Referring to the Streetly Association, Mr. Henney stated that the work on the refurbishment of the changing rooms would commence shortly. He added that there was also good news from the national lottery but it had been embargoed until 14 December.

It was reported that people were not receiving Walsall Pride in the Streetly area. A report on non-distribution was requested for the next meeting of the Partnership.

Reference was made to the project to provide planters on the Redhouse Estate. The building of the planters would be carried out by youngsters aged from 16 – 25 under a youth training scheme.

Resolved

That the Local Neighbourhood Partnership:-

- (1) Supports the Redhouse Estate Environmental Scheme and notes the project will be formally assessed by the Local Neighbourhood Partnership Team to ensure it meets all of the agreed criteria;
- (2) Notes the progress of the current projects to date;
- (3) Agrees to review progress at the next meeting;
- (4) Requests a report on the non-distribution of Walsall Pride in the Streetly area to the next meeting.

98/05.

Local Area Agreements

Brian Holland gave a powerpoint presentation on the Local Area Agreements. He stated that to correct Walsall's decline it would be necessary to encourage people to move back into Walsall. At present the population was declining as people moved out of the area. He indicated that Local Neighbourhood Partnerships focused on strategy; the Community Empowerment Network would focus on empowerment and Walsall Voluntary Action would support voluntary groups. He added that this provided an exciting opportunity for Walsall.

After detailed discussion it was:-

Resolved

That the presentation be received.

99/05.

Improving Security in Local Neighbourhoods: Programme Update Report

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Mrs Witheridge asked how crime "hot spots" were drawn up. Sergeant Martin replied that they were selected on reported crime. However, complaints made did not always result in crimes occurring.

Resolved

That the Local Neighbourhood Partnership:-

Notes the report and agrees to continue to submit requests for further interventions as part of the rolling programme for next year. A request form has been developed as part of the policy (available upon request) which Partnerships are encouraged to use when submitting reports for situational interventions. As much information on the levels of crime and anti-social behaviour experienced and additional supporting information should be attached to the form in support of the request, as this may help to identify the site as a priority during prioritisation for future financial years; and agrees to identify any priority sites based on crime and disorder reported to the Partnership or other local representatives, that they would like to take forward this financial year funded by the Partnership itself. These schemes would be implemented subject to officer capacity and deliverability.

100/05. **Termination of meeting**

The meeting terminated at 9.25 pm

Chairman:.....

Date:.....