

ALDRIDGE SOUTH AND STREETLY LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP

Monday 23 October 2006 at 7.00 p.m.

at The Streetly Association, Foley Road East, Streetly

Present

Councillor John Rochelle (Chairman)
Ms. Johanne Newens (Vice-Chairman)
Mr. Peter Roberts (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Tom Ansell
Councillor Gary Clarke
Mr. Andrew Dickson (West Midlands Fire Service)
Councillor Brian Douglas-Maul
Sergeant Andy Hill (West Midlands Police)
Mrs. Pauline Heydon
Councillor Eddie Hughes
Mr. Ron Perks
Mrs. Sarah Witheridge

In attendance

Karen Adderley
Parveen Sangha
Paul Wilde

150/06 Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance at the Partnership meeting were submitted on behalf of Mrs. Jenny Henney and Mr. Mike Harrison (Locally Appointed Partners).

151/06 Introductions

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

152/06 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

153/06 **Petitions**

No petitions were submitted.

154/06 **Minutes**

Councillor Clarke stated that he had submitted an apology for the last meeting which had not been recorded.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Local Neighbourhood Partnership held on 12 September 2006, a copy having previously been circulated to each member of the Partnership, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the addition of an apology for Councillor Clarke.

155/06 **Update on items from last meeting**

Referring to minute 140/06, Councillor Rochelle stated that the meeting with Chief Superintendent Gilbert had been very informative. He reported that the police received over one million telephone calls a year which had to be prioritised than dealt with. This volume of calls meant that Officers were handling them and could not be released to walk the streets. He added that Chief Superintendent Gilbert had agreed to attend the December meeting of the Local Neighbourhood Partnership after undertaking a Ward Walk with Members and Officers.

Ron Perks referred to minute 145/06 and indicated that the figures quoted for litres of alcohol confiscated and the number of individuals receiving cautions was incorrect.

Councillor Rochelle reported that 190 litres of alcohol had been confiscated rather than 260 litres and 125 people had been cautioned, but this was over several weekends and not just during one night.

Councillor Clarke indicated that the meeting with the police had been useful and he was looking forward to Chief Superintendent Gilbert's visit to the Partnership. He added that it was essential that the Local Authority worked more closely with its Partners.

Referring to minute 138/06, Pauline Heydon reported that Redhouse Youth Club was currently operating from Aldridge Manor House, but was looking forward to moving to Aldridge School once the pavilion had been restored.

Aldridge Manor House

A representative of the Aldridge Manor House Community Association informed the meeting that a new group of trustees had been appointed, but they were getting little help from the Council in securing funding for classes for elderly people. She added that assistance was also needed with the redecoration of the premises.

Councillor Ansell advised the trustees to contact Tim Challans in Lifelong Learning and Education and register as a Community Association to obtain additional funding.

Resolved

That the Trustees contact Tim Challans in Lifelong Learning and Education to register as a Community Association in order to attract funding.

Dave Linn – Sheffield/High Heath Youth Group

Mr. Linn referred to the provision and training of youth workers in the Streetly area. Councillor Rochelle reported that youth workers could only be used for educational purposes now. Discos or sports events could not be undertaken any more. He indicated that attempts had been made to keep the Friday discos going at the Manor House by using youths as marshalls. This had worked in Walsall so it could also have worked in Aldridge. Unfortunately, the attempt had been unsuccessful.

Etelka Kollar

Mrs. Kollar expressed concern at the lack of progress being made by the Local Neighbourhood Partnership. She stated that she had joined a Community Action Group and tried to improve communication between the various partners but with little apparent success. She asked what the Local Neighbourhood Partnership had achieved for the people of the Aldridge South area and what the Community Action Groups had produced to date.

Councillor Rochelle reminded the meeting that the Local Neighbourhood Partnership only had a limited amount of money to spend. He listed the schemes which the Partnership had funded and added that these meetings provided an opportunity for residents to express their concerns.

Councillor Hughes explained that he had been invited to join a police patrol of the Streetly area on a Saturday evening. It had been relatively quiet and most of the hot spots visited had been deserted. He indicated that other Ward Councillors would be given this opportunity and it would allow the police to develop a list of “hot spots” to be regularly targeted by police

patrols. He added that it had largely been a quiet evening and youths who were spoken to had been polite. Later in the evening, there had been a call to a hot spot in Pheasey and the attitude of youths there had been different, more confrontational and aggressive.

Sergeant Hill reported that trouble usually occurred between 8.00 p.m. and 8.30 p.m. On one occasion, 5 youths had been spoken to and no alcohol had been found. On another occasion, 11 youths had been addressed and 2 litres of alcohol confiscated. On a further occasion, 2 youths were arrested for being drunk and disorderly.

John King – Blackwood Road Neighbourhood Watch

John reported that 5 youths had been fooling about in Blackwood Road and it was obvious that they had been drinking. One was pushing a motorcycle and was so drunk that he could not stand up or hold onto his machine. He indicated that these incidents had been reported, but police had not attended the scene. On another occasion, a 999 call had been made after youths placed a wheelie bin and other obstructions in the road but, again, Officers had not attended. He added that youths used shop doorways and rear service areas as toilets which was particularly disheartening for proprietors. Sergeant Hill accepted that there were youth problems in Streetly but, with the resources he had at his disposal, his officers could not be everywhere. He indicated, however, that 999 calls were always responded to.

Councillor Ansell referred to the problem of under age drinking and stated that this meeting could not resolve the problem. He felt the police should be able to go out and fine under age drinkers as hitting their pockets would prove far more successful than existing deterrents.

Ron Perks expressed concern that the police were following national guidelines and refusing to prosecute young people in order to avoid giving them criminal records.

Myatt Avenue Shops

Pauline Heydon reported that the 2 litter bins in the Myatt Avenue Shopping Parade were not being emptied. As a result, they overflowed and litter blew everywhere making the area look a mess. She added that Street Pride had agreed to empty them 3 times a week, but this was just not happening.

Sarah Witheridge stated that the entire area looked untidy. She requested that Street Pride take appropriate action to keep the area clean and tidy.

Resolved

That Street Pride be requested to keep the area around the Myatt Avenue shops clean and tidy and empty the litter bins regularly.

157/06 **Presentations**

Increasing Life Expectancy

Johanne Newens made a PowerPoint presentation on increasing life expectancy. She indicated that the Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership had commissioned the project. A handout of the presentation was available to those present at the meeting.

Resolved

That the presentation be received and noted.

Primary Health Care Needs Assessment – Streetly Ward, Walsall

Barbara Watts made a PowerPoint presentation on the health needs assessment for Streetly. She indicated that new housing developments in the area were increasing the pressure on the existing health infrastructure.

Councillor Douglas-Maul requested that the presentation be placed in Streetly libraries so that members of the public could access it. Barbara agreed to investigate this.

Resolved

That the presentation be received.

Councillor Rochelle thanked Joanne and Barbara for their presentations.

159/06 **Boundary Court**

Councillor Hughes indicated that he had requested a presentation to this meeting on whether compulsory purchase order powers could be used to acquire Boundary Court. He had been advised that Legal Services could not report to the Partnership as providing advice to third parties was prohibited. He added that it had been proposed that a Legal Officer, an Estates Officer and himself should undertake a site visit to Boundary Court on 30 October to assess the current situation there.

It was reported that a petition was being collected regarding Boundary Court which would be submitted to the next meeting of the Partnership.

Resolved

That a site visit be undertaken to Boundary Court on 30 October 2006, and a further report be submitted to the next meeting of the Partnership.

160/06 **Street Champions**

Councillor Rochelle advised the Partnership how people could become Street Champions for their area. He added that volunteers would receive appropriate training from the Local Authority. He asked what signal crime was. Sergeant Hill advised that signal crimes could be a broken window or an abandoned vehicle.

Resolved

That the verbal report be noted.

161/06 **Greenspace Services**

Councillor Rochelle reported that £100,000 was available to improve the infrastructure of parks and greenspaces. Groups could apply for grants to assist them with their projects. The funding could be used to provide litter bins and benches, sign boards or information boards and improvements to footpaths and paved areas. It was suggested that this should be referred to the Community Action Group to be held on 24 October 2006, as the deadline for applications was 31 October 2006.

Resolved

That the funding for the schemes from Greenspace Services be referred to the Community Action Group to be held on 24 October 2006.

162/06 **Neighbourhood Policing**

Sergeant Hill reported that by 2008 every area would have a designated Neighbourhood Team. Walsall had begun neighbourhood policing in April 2006 with the objective of having "the right person in the right place at the right time". He was responsible for the policing of the Streetly area with 7 Officers. He stated that the police received over 1 million calls annually, so prioritising them was a major problem. He added that subtle changes in staffing would mean that his officers were solely responsible for the Streetly area. Aldridge police would be getting 6 community officers, 2 of which would be allocated specifically to Streetly.

Referring to the action plan for the area, Sergeant Hill reported that neighbourhood priorities were identified and assessed and implemented and evaluated then the process was repeated.

Sergeant Hill indicated that on-going neighbourhood issues should be forwarded to him through the work of the community Action Groups, To control anti-social behaviour, officers would patrol the area and work with other partners to give young people something positive to do.

Referring to the crime statistics for Streetly from April 2005 to April 2006, Sergeant Hill stated that offences generally were down by 70 (18%); burglaries were down by 115 (33%) and there had been no robberies (5 in 2004/05). Assaults were running at a similar level to the previous year. He reported that fear of crime was greater than the actual crime rate in Streetly and communication needed improving to help remove this fear. He added that officers would work with residents to gain their confidence. He was pleased to announce that Streetly had the lowest crime rate in Walsall in September. He asked the Partnership to remember the distinction between youths and yobs, that youths hung around on street corners without causing problems. He also reminded the meeting that youths provided 3% of offenders, but 24% of the victims of crime.

Ron Perks referred to the anti-social use of fireworks after 11 p.m. and asked what the police were doing to combat it. Sergeant Hill referred to the difficulty in pinpointing where a particular firework had been launched from. He added that 999 was not the correct number to use when reporting a firework complaint.

Councillor Douglas-Maul referred to the fact that the use of fireworks was no longer limited to the weeks around 5 November. They were used to celebrate Divali and more and more to celebrate birthdays and anniversaries. He felt that the fireworks code should be enforced and that common sense should prevail.

Resolved

That the verbal update be noted.

163/06 LNP Funding

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Parveen Sangha reminded the meeting that there was £8,500 remaining to spend from the 2005/06 allocation to Local Neighbourhood Partnerships and £10,000 from the 2006/07 allocation. She added that the £10,000 for 2006/07 had to be used for environmental improvement projects.

Councillor Rochelle referred to the gate at Lindrosa Road. He was concerned almost two years had elapsed and still the new gate had not been provided. He had now been advised that it was suggested that bollards be provided rather than a gate. He asked who had made this decision.

Councillor Ansell indicated that he had raised this matter with Jamie Morris as the provision of a gate should take 2 to 3 months to complete at the outside. He added that it was important that speed of spending money was increased otherwise the funding could be lost.

Councillor Clarke referred to the “Gateway to Streetly” sign which had been erected outside the church. He felt that this was entirely the wrong location for such a sign and that it should be relocated immediately.

Resolved

That the Local Neighbourhood Partnership:-

- (1) notes the progress on projects;
- (2) explores potential project proposals that meet the 2006/07 funding criteria as a matter of urgency;
- (3) requests that the “Gateway to Streetly” sign erected outside the church be relocated immediately.

164/06 **Community Action Group Update**

A report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Ron Perks reported that the video on forged £20 notes had not been collected. He added that under age drinking, hotspots and the shortfall in police numbers in Streetly had all been discussed.

Johanne Newens reported that the Health and People Community Action Group would be held on 24 October at Streetly School, Queslett Road East, Streetly. It was proposed to review the health pledges agreed by the Partnership and explore ways of moving forward.

Resolved

- (1) That Local Neighbourhood Partnership Members continue to attend Community Action Group meetings;
- (2) That the Local Neighbourhood Partnership notes the progress made by Community Action Groups.

165/06 **Christmas Tree in Aldridge**

Councillor Rochelle reported that a local businessman had obtained 21 sponsors for a Christmas tree to be located on the Elms Island in Aldridge. He added that the Council had agreed to erect the tree and provide lights for it. He added that the tree was being provided at no cost to the Local Authority.

Resolved

That the verbal report be noted.

166/06` **Lowlands Avenue, Streetly Traffic Problems**

Councillor Douglas-Maul referred to the fact that Lowlands Avenue, Streetly, was being used as a rat-run to avoid the road works in Bridle Lane. He asked if Highway Officers could investigate the position and report back to the next meeting of the Partnership.

Blackwood Road, Streetly – Traffic Problems

Councillor Douglas-Maul referred to the chaotic parking which took place in Blackwood Road, Streetly, when parents dropped off and collected children from school. He stated that driveways were blocked; lawns had been damaged by vehicles driving across them and residents were abused by parents when they complained about inconsiderate parking. He asked if Highway Officers could investigate the position and report back to the next meeting of the Partnership.

Sergeant Hill reported police officers had been sent to Blackwood Road and the problem had been resolved. The head teacher of the school would be writing to parents asking them to park considerately and traffic wardens and community support officers would be visible in the area at appropriate times to diffuse the situation.

Resolved

That Officers investigate the situation and report back to the next meeting of the Partnership.

Termination of Meeting

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 9.25 p.m.

Chairman:

Date: