

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL BOARDS

Notes of Meeting

**DOVER WEST NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM**

Date: Monday, 7 April 2008

Venue: Archers Court School, Whitfield, Dover

Present:

Local Board Members: Bryan Cope, Jeff Goodsall and Jennifer Record

KCC Officers: Louise Bolton (Community Liaison Manager)

<b>A1. Welcome - Chairman</b>	<p>Bryan Cope introduced the evening and welcomed Jeff Goodsall (Whitfield Parish Council) and Jenny Miles (Temple Ewell Parish Council) as Chair and Vice-Chair (subject to the agreement of Jennifer Record).</p> <p>Jeff thanked Bryan and noted how successful last year's Forums were and that we would all like to continue that success this year.</p>
<b>A2. Apologies</b>	<p>There were no apologies.</p>
<b>A3. Notes and matters arising from last meeting</b>	
<b>A4. Any Declarations of Interest</b>	<p>There were no declarations.</p>
<b>A5. KCC Community Wardens and Kent Police</b>	<p><i>Don Covus, Area Supervisor, KCC Community Safety Unit, Chris Allen, Community Safety Manager, DDC, Dover Community Safety Partnership and Chief Inspector Tony Kofkin, Area Commander for Dover, Kent Police: were in attendance for this item.</i></p> <p>Don noted how everyone works in partnership and this enables more to be achieved, the Wardens will tackle anything, e.g., adult abuse, dog fouling, social and welfare issues, community bonding and much more. They are not police and do not have the powers the police have. Don noted some wardens are based in parish halls and the parishes have been very helpful.</p> <p>Chris noted the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 recognised other partners and how they can help, e.g. DDC, KCC, Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, all skills can be used and these partners are all on the Partnership.</p> <p>The Partnership has had good success in this area, reducing crime by 15% across the whole of the District. In Kent, with 1 being the worst and 13 being the best, Dover District prominently features at number 9 or 10; this is sometimes surprising given the areas of deprivation within the district. Dover</p>

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district also comes out as safest in its family group of similar areas.

There are a number of Community Safety Partnership Sub-groups dealing with locally relevant issues, e.g. road safety and young people staying safe. The biggest victim group in the district is those aged under 18, with the biggest crime against them being assault. The sub-groups also look at substance misuse – legal and illegal substances – to provide education and help. Funding has been going to the sub-groups but it is now also being offered to Parish Councils (up to £5000) for projects tackling crime and disorder and public safety.

Tony noted his role covers front line police, responding to emergency calls, investigating crime, managing sex offenders in the community, the treatment of offenders, amongst other things. Tony also noted he worked with partners to ensure funding is spent in the places that need it most.

The Community Wardens and PCSOs are the eyes and ears of the Police. Tony also noted he chairs the Counter Terrorism Forums – this involves information coming forward from local people.

Every individual should know who their Community Warden/PCSO is and a leaflet has gone out to all households – expectations must now be managed. Crime is decreasing rapidly in Dover and this is through good partnership working and good funding.

The bottom line is that Dover is a safe place to live with safe communities.

*Question and Answer session:*

Q. What is the difference between Community Wardens/Rural Wardens and PCSOs?

A. PCSOs are funded by the Home Office and Wardens are funded by KCC, however they are housed in the same place and work together with the same objectives, they are simply funded differently. There are also some powers with the PCSOs. There are 101 Wardens in Kent and Dover has 10.

Q. In Temple Ewell there is an excellent PCSO, however they have been informed this person is to now cover a wider area, why is this?

A. In a way the scheme has been a victim of its own success. As more PCSOs have been recruited the number of Special Constables has declined. Once a PCSO is successful they can apply to be recruited into the Police, the master plan was that once a PCSO was successful they were unable to leave the position until a new PCSO was ready to replace them. This caused fairness issues and was overruled. Funding hasn't been lost but it is taking time to replace people and during this process it is necessary to reconfigure – hence one PCSO covering a larger area. There is no doubt that continuity is very important with community policing and ways to overcome this are being explored.

Q. Community Wardens pass information on the Police, but how often/much

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are Community Wardens updated by the Police – or individuals fed back to once they have given information?

A. All Wardens, PCSOs and the Police work very closely together on a daily basis. All information is fed into Chris Allen at the Community Safety Partnership (who has daily conversations with the Police) and everything is fed back out. The Partnership are trying to feedback as much as possible, accepting it doesn't happen 100% of the time and that some people do not want feedback.

Q. One resident reported ASB incident to the Community Safety Partnership over a week ago and thought that at an earlier presentation he was told the Office was manned into the early evening only to get an answer machine saying the office was open 9-5 pm, is it possible to extend the hours or re-direct out of hours calls to the Police?

A. Resources are obviously a big issue; however the office has never been manned into the early evening. It is not and cannot be seen as an emergency response service, people must call 999 if there is an emergency. If it can wait and be scheduled then call the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), if it is happening and is dangerous call the Police. An example was given by a gentleman who called the CSP to report a youth throwing stones at a bus, this should have been a 999 call as someone could have been seriously injured.

The message is don't be afraid to call 999 and use common sense as to what is an emergency.

If you call a Warden and get their voicemail message you get the option of calling 999 or a non-urgent police phone number – this can be helpful for those who don't feel the incident warrants a 999 call.

The Secretary of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme noted Neighbourhood Watch (NW) members can gather information and know the numbers to call, they can watch and report and are the eyes and ears of the community – their aim is to be more integrated with the Police and the Community Safety Partnership.

All agreed NW is a great way of feeding back information to the areas.

Q. A small rural parish with a very good and important relationship with their PCSO and Community Warden have unfortunately just lost their PCSO – will new details be updated and published quickly?

A. This has been raised at a strategic level – that information has been sent to all households and in some cases will need updating. The internet/website details are update immediately there is any change and the main office number always stays the same – someone here will be able to advise of any details. New posters will also be displayed as quickly as possible. Wardens/PCSOs attend all Parish Council meetings so can help with updating info.

**Action: Town/Parish Councils can help advertise the posters and place information updates in their Parish magazines. Councillors can also make sure updated information is circulated, as can NW members.**

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**Action: Michelle Traylor (DDC) to advise Chris Allen (CSP) of Town and Parish website addresses.**

Q. Information has been given on how well the wardens feed information up to the Police but how well does information feed down from Police to Wardens?

A. A briefing is held daily in the CSP office where Don Covus is based. This enables Don to disseminate the relevant information down to the Community Wardens.

Q. The mobile CCTV cameras don't stay for very long, why is this?

A. There are static cameras around and also some mobile ones. Christopher Allen is in charge of the mobile ones and decides where and for how long they are placed. There is a method to these decisions and, however re-assuring they are, if there is no need for them to be left in a particular place, or if the purpose for placing them has finished, they will be removed. There are a limited number of cameras and there has to be justification for placing them in an area.

Q. There is no evidence that the town centre is an unsafe place in the evening, however people still feel intimidated – why is this?

A. One of the biggest challenges is the fear of crime and although the police work with businesses, doormen etc in the towns, they have no control over the media and this can heighten the fear. If you haven't seen any bad reports of crime in the town in the evening you can still feel vulnerable because, unfortunately we live in a communication age where bad news sells. It was noted that some people can feel vulnerable if they see a group of young people hanging around on a street corner, but it is worth knowing that these young people are in that particular place because streets are usually well lit and they feel safer being in the well lit areas. The balance needs to be addressed and this does not take away from the fact that people still need to drink responsibly.

Q. There are communication issues and perception issues between the young and old, how can Parishes, at grass roots level, take this forward?

A. This is a major issue and is incredibly complex – there is a Youth Officer and a Youth Forum, however there are no young people at this meeting. Could parish Councils encourage young people along to their meetings and onto their Councils?

It was acknowledged that this is extremely difficult to do – not least because these young people have such a lot going on with exams, course work etc.

It was also noted that trying to encourage volunteers to work in Police Stations is extremely difficult as forms that have to be completed now ask very detailed personal questions and this can put people off.

This has been acknowledged by the Police and is being explored.

Q. Is noise pollution only considered anti-social behaviour after 11 pm at night?

A. No it is a nuisance issue at any time, however, Councils have different cut-off times.

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<b>A6.</b>	<b>Information on Grants 2008/09</b>
	<p>Louise Bolton noted funding is now available and application forms were supplied at the meeting.</p> <p>There are 3 streams available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Small Community Capital Grants – combined DDC and KCC funding, £13,116.61 available for this Forum area, application forms available.</li><li>○ KCC Member Community Grant - £10,000 for Bryan Cope, application forms available.</li><li>○ KCC Local Schemes Grant - £9,300 for Bryan Cope, if you have a project please approach Bryan Cope directly.</li></ul> <p>For further funding information please access: <a href="http://www.dover.gov.uk/communitydevelopment">www.dover.gov.uk/communitydevelopment</a>, <a href="http://www.open4community.info/kent">www.open4community.info/kent</a>, or <a href="http://www.midsekent-cvs.co.uk">www.midsekent-cvs.co.uk</a>.</p>