

**Notes of the meeting of the DOVER WEST Neighbourhood Forum held on Monday 20 July 2009 at the Ramada Hotel, Singledge Lane, Whitfield at 6.30pm**

Present:

Parish Councillor Jenny Miles retiring Vice-Chairman

DDC Councillor Clive Meredith

Other councillors, officers and 7 members of the public.

Apologies: KCC Councillor Bryan Cope, DDC Councillor Jennifer Record and Parish Councillor Jeff Goodsell.

1. Chairman's welcome

Jenny Miles took the chair and welcomed those attending the meeting.

2. Notes of the previous meeting

Notes of the Forum meeting held on 2 April 2009 had been circulated and there were no matters arising.

3. Clean Kent

Melanie Price, Clean Kent Co-ordinator, gave an illustrated presentation on the work of Clean Kent, a multi-agency partnership she had helped to start in 2004 comprising KCC, 12 districts, Kent Fire & Rescue Service (KFRS), Police, Environment Agency, Highways Agency, Crown Prosecution Service and others. The focus was on fly-tipping, graffiti, littering and vandalism, arising from issues raised by the public affecting their quality of life, and looking at environmental and community improvements. This was the only example of such a partnership in the UK and all parties gave financial support. KFRS was targeting changing attitudes and behaviour of young people regarding rubbish and bin fires, encouraging young people to make informed choices and reducing the number of fires. Rogue traders and fly-tipping were worse in West Kent, being nearer to London, but still a problem in East Kent. The presentation included a still from a cinema advert aimed at 12-16 year olds in Kent to prevent and deter wheelie-bin fires, and showed the personal injuries they could suffer. 'Streetwise' is a schools-based initiative aimed at preventing the start of litter/graffiti problems and the escalation of crime. Resources for teachers were available on-line at [www.cleankent.com](http://www.cleankent.com)

Recent legislation on waste carriers and fly-tipping meant that householders could be liable to prosecution if their domestic waste was found to have been fly-tipped. Householders have a duty of care and should be sure that they used a registered waste carrier; details were available on-line at [www.cleankent.com](http://www.cleankent.com) or from the Environment Agency on telephone number 08708 506506. For fly tipping offenders, the maximum penalty is now up to 5 years imprisonment and/or a £50,000 fine. Kent is one of the most successful counties in the UK in addressing

fly-tipping with highly experienced enforcement teams, shared legal powers, a 24 hour contact centre on 0845 3450210, legal support and a robust prosecution policy. With regard to litter clearance, KCC and the districts support community activities by providing equipment, health and safety advice, insurance and collection of waste materials collected by volunteers. Information is available at [www.cleankent.com](http://www.cleankent.com).

Many people volunteered to help but more were always welcome; Neighbourhood Watch members were invited to join the Clean Kent Watch to focus on reporting risks and incidences of rubbish accumulations, abandoned vehicles, rubbish fires and fly tipping. They would provide intelligence to support a criminal investigation and alert teams to areas where cleaning was required.

#### Question and answer session

- Should kebab shops be responsible for cleaning the area around their shops? This was a matter for the Licensing Committee under the terms of Late Night Refreshment licensing procedure; DDC was responsible for collection of waste and street cleansing, KCC disposed of waste.
- Road sweepers with broom and trolley had been replaced by cleansing lorries which should clean the gutters but could not do the job properly because of parked cars so was a waste of time. Community Payback workers were functioning well in the village.
- Is any help available to remove graffiti; large amounts of cleaning materials could be bought to save costs for parishes? The Neighbourhood Response Team and DDC Waste Unit should be contacted.
- Elderly and vulnerable people need to be made aware of information about rogue traders and licensed waste collectors. Where they could not access the information on-line it should be included in existing publications and the community directories held in libraries and other hubs.
- Rubbish bags left out early can be blown all over the road with contents spilled; contents such as soiled nappies and incontinence pads should be put in different bags. DDC Waste Unit should be contacted regarding the provision of clinical waste bags. The questioner had tried this but received no reply.
- Waste wheelie bins had been bought privately for some elderly relatives to help protect rubbish from vermin, but DDC would not accept them. Wheelie bins could only be used by the appropriate vehicles and DDC did not have these

#### 4. Kent Community Wardens

KCW's Paul James (Capel-le-Ferne) and Julliette West (Shepherdswell) spoke of their role under the Community Safety banner as the ears and eyes of the community. KCW's work over 9 areas helping local groups to organise such things as litter picks and Clean Kent will help to dispose of the waste. Keep Britain Tidy supplies equipment and small amounts of graffiti are cleaned immediately to avoid a poor image of the area and fear of crime. Incidents are reported to DDC on the main number 01304 821199 where the correct officer will

provide all necessary information. Wardens can help with long-standing problems such as dog fouling and report exact location of fly-tipped rubbish. Young people are generally know to them so can be spoken to informally. Parish Councils are happy to employ local pickers to be paid by the precept and McDonalds in Whitfield use their own personnel. Planting vegetation improved areas and acted as a deterrent to littering. DDC Dog Wardens can put up dog fouling signs if necessary and can be contact at DDC.

#### Question and answer session

- Do Wardens report to DDC or the police? Community Wardens are employed by and report to KCC.
- What's the difference between Wardens and Police Community Support Officers? The roles are similar but PCSOs are employed by Kent Police; both help to tackle low level crimes, improve quality of life, and help sort problems. Wardens have no powers and do not want any because of the paperwork involved. PCSOs help investigate criminal damage, make crime reports, have no powers but under S59 of the Police Reform Act 2002 can confiscate goods. People would not talk to PCSOs so freely if they had powers like the police. Together with Environmental Protection officers they help to keep DDC informed.
- Can't people be fined for throwing rubbish from cars? Not in this district because DDC doesn't use fixed penalties yet.

#### 5. Temple Ewell Village Clean-up

Jenny Miles spoke about the organised village clean-up which Temple Ewell holds once a year, liaising with DDC for orange sacks, litter-pickers and gloves together with collection of the filled sacks afterwards. Having high-visibility vests was most important, especially for youngsters. Asking village organisations to send representatives had been most effective; some areas were more littered than others and the local pub had helped with recycling. Harbour School had sent two young people twice a week to help pick up litter and graffiti at the Kearsney campsite toilets had been removed immediately. Did anyone know of a source of waders for use when cleaning in the river Dour?

A member of the public stated that more education was needed to raise awareness of litter problems and more punishment for offenders. He lived 20 houses way from the hotel and had counted 29 pieces of litter on the way there. Fergus McKay, Whitfield PCSO, advised that prosecutions could only be made if the person was actually seen dropping the litter and people tended not to do so if a uniformed policeman was around. What could be done about people who sat beside litter bins but left their litter on the ground? Cllr Clive Meredith spoke of the litter problem on the A2 where DDC had reached an agreement with Tesco to help clear part of it and Kent Highways' sub-contractors cleared every 6 weeks. McDonalds at Whitfield employed litter collectors.

Parish Councils asked that DDC should be more pro-active in making examples of litter offenders.

6. DDC/KCC Small Community Capital Project Grants 2009/10

Emma Carey, KCC, reported the three funding streams available to local communities:

Neighbourhood Forum Small Community Grants with a maximum of £5,000 and deadline of 30 September;

County Councillor grants - £10,000 in one fund over the year for organisations rather than individuals, who benefit the community;

Local Schemes grants with a deadline of 30 October.

Forms and criteria were available at the meeting.

Louise Rogers from Case Kent offered to help with advice on accessing funding for specific projects and Parish Councils needed to be aware of all funding sources so that they could advise their communities.

7. Topics for future meetings

- traffic in villages and speed cameras, roads and parking obstructions. (Heidi Golden Community Safety Officer DDC, said that they had speed indication devices available for villages to use and Kent Police would advise on how to access them).
- how to build up community spirit, sense of inclusion for all ages and origins, getting involved in village events from fetes to Parish Councils

The meeting ended at 8.00pm