

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL BOARDS

NOTES OF MEETING

ASHFORD LOCAL BOARD

Date Thursday, 29 May 2008

Venue: Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone

Present:

Local Board Members: Mike Angell (Chairman), Mike Hill, OBE, George Koowaree, Derek Smyth, Elizabeth Tweed and Sue Sawyer

Apologies for absence: Charles Findlay, Richard King and Tylden Reed

KCC Officers: David Geoghegan (Community Liaison Manager)

		Action
A1.	Welcome to the meeting - Mr M Angell Chairman	
	Mike Angell welcomed everyone to the meeting. He was disappointed at the low turn out and agreed this would be an informal event.	
A2.	Declarations of Interests by Members in Items on the Agenda for this Meeting	
	There were no declarations of interest.	
A3.	Notes of Local Board Meeting held on 28 February 2008 and progress on any action	
A4.	Question Time - Your Opportunity to ask questions about local public services	
	Victim Support Wendy Bartlett spoke about domestic violence. From 1 st May Kent Victim Support was merged into a National organisation to benefit from economies of scale. Funding will run out for an Ashford Co-ordinator in 2009. She gave us the following facts:- <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two women are killed every week as a result of domestic violence;• One in four women will be victims;• One in six men will also be victims;• In the UK there are only 212 refuges for women (there are 1,500 for animals);• There is only one refuge for men;• 90% of incidents investigated show children witnessed the domestic abuse (DA) or were in an adjoining room;• 30% of all violent crimes in Ashford are DA;• The DA forum in Ashford meets four times in a year.	

Q. Have you seen a change in society's views on DA over the years?

A. No, there has been no real change. We need to educate children more about what a healthy relationship is all about.

Ashford Samaritans

Judith Feline spoke about the work of SAMs in Ashford:-

- Nearly 7,000 people die each year from suicide;
- Suicide is the biggest cause of death for young men;
- 83 prisoners have killed themselves in the last 11 months;
- 70% of gay people have thought of suicide;
- The first SAMs phone lines were set up in 1953;
- There are now 16,000 volunteers who each work at least 23 days a year for SAMs;
- There are now over five million phone contacts a year but there can be email, text, face to face or letter contact as well;
- The Ashford branch has 40 volunteers and 20,000 contacts;
- It costs £10,000 a year to run the branch;
- SAMs now trains prisoners to be "listeners" and have a programme to talk to schools.

Q. Is suicide of the elderly an issue?

A. Yes it is.

Q. You mentioned confidentiality is always maintained; what about where a crime is being committed?

A. It is always maintained.

Ashford Refuge Centre

Lucy Bramley spoke about the centre and made the following points:-

- Using five houses in Ashford while the main centre is being refurbished;
- Space for 18 women and their children;
- The new centre will include facilities for disabled clients;
- As well as providing support the centre will signpost women to other partners and agencies who may be able to help them.

Q. Who pays for the centre?

	<p>A. Women pay £8.45 a week, housing benefits are used and central government pays for CASA.</p> <p>Q. Do you take local women?</p> <p>A. No, but we will take women from Canterbury and Folkestone etc.</p> <p>Q. How do you deal with inappropriate contact and harassment from former partners etc?</p> <p>A. We move the women. However, they normally can stay for up to two years.</p> <p>Q. This is a general question for all the speakers; are the services offered adequate and what can KCC do to help?</p> <p>A. We could always do more. The libraries are good at promoting our services but leaflets in payslips for staff would be useful as well as work place training about DA. The issues discussed tonight should be part of the school curriculum. We could always do with more volunteers and funding.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked the speakers and Members for their questions and ended the meeting.</p>	
A5.	Future Local Board Meetings in 2008/09 - Dates, venues and possible agenda topics	
	The next Local Board meeting will be on 17 July 2008.	
A6.	Any Other Business notified to the Chairman prior to the meeting	