

**Hazlemere & Chepping Wycombe
Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG)**

**Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 21 October 2010 at
Sir William Ramsay School**

Attendees:

Peter Cartwright	-	Vice-Chair / Bucks County Council (BCC) (items 5-10 only)
Sgt Andrew Deane	-	Thames Valley Police (TVP)
PC Sue Jacobs	-	Thames Valley Police (TVP)
Jean Johnson	-	Chepping Wycombe Parish Council (CWPC)
Robert Kin	-	Loudwater / Flackwell Heath Resident
David Onslow	-	Flackwell Heath Resident
Sandy Macdiarmid	-	Chair / Penn & Tylers Green Residents Society
John Marais	-	Flackwell Heath Residents' Association
Alex Slater	-	Hazlemere Parish Council
PCSO Robert Sowicki	-	Thames Valley Police (TVP) (items 1-6 only)

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from David Gresswell, Madeleine Howe, David Johncock, Richard Mapp, Graham Phillips and Les Willis.

Peter Cartwright had advised that he would be unable to join the meeting for the first hour, owing to his attendance at another meeting.

The meeting welcomed a new member, PCSO Robert Sowicki, who recently joined the Hazlemere & Chepping Wycombe Neighbourhood Police Team (HNPT). He is assigned to Hazlemere and is working in liaison with PCSO Roger Brooks

2 Minutes of Last Meeting (9 September 2010)

David Onslow identified one correction, affecting the first point under item 5, Anti Social Behaviour / Criminal Damage. It was David Gresswell who had reported graffiti on the walls opposite the side of the dry cleaners in Flackwell Heath.

In all other respects the Minutes were agreed as accurate.

3 Matters Arising (not on the Agenda)

The following documents had been distributed since the last meeting:

- the NAG letter to TVP Authority, copied to our two local MPs was distributed on 13 September;
- the texts of the email replies from MPs followed on 16 September;
- the October newsletter from the HNPT was distributed on 30 September;
- also distributed on 30 September was the text of the letter from Steve Baker, MP;
- a report of Sandy Macdiarmid's telephone conversation with the TVP Authority on 13 October was circulated the same day;
- TVP guidance concerning the Halloween / Bonfire Night period was distributed on 19 October.

4 NAG Constitution and Terms of Reference (C&ToR)

David Johncock was able to confirm that the CWPC insurance policy met the requirements of paragraph 3.4.3 of the C&ToR, and that CWPC members were able to sign the document with no caveat on this point.

David Onslow reported that an inactive member of the NAG, resident in Flackwell Heath, had decided to resign.

Sandy Macdiarmid would contact those other members of the NAG who:

- had yet to sign the C&ToR, and/or
- had not attended a NAG meeting for six months or more,

in order to establish their future intentions regarding NAG membership.

It was agreed that, in future, the NAG should review applications from new members, either at a meeting if timely or by an exchange of emails between meetings, prior to their membership being confirmed.

5 NAG Priority - Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) / Criminal Damage

There was no news on the lighting situation in the alleyway between Hedley Road and Straight Bit, Flackwell Heath. Poor lighting was thought to be a factor in graffiti vandalism here and, allegedly, drug pushing. At the previous meeting David Johncock had reported that the alleyway has become overgrown and that this was obscuring light from nearby lamp standards. He advised that he had asked for this foliage to be cut back to improve matters. PCSO Daton Beckford was continuing to monitor this area regularly.

Action – David Johncock

There was no news about the provision of a litter bin in the vicinity of the footpath from Chapel Road to Old Kiln Road in Flackwell Heath. David Johncock was progressing this matter with the CWPC Clerk.

Action – David Johncock

PCSO Daton Beckford was continuing to monitor Flackwell Heath Recreation Ground where youths had been congregating and allegedly indulging in underage drinking resulting in excessive noise well into the night, causing a nuisance to residents living in the houses bordering that area..

Action – Daton Beckford

Robert Kin advised that the graffiti had been painted out on the walls of the passageway servicing the flats adjacent to the shops in Flackwell Heath.

Andrew Deane reported that the incidence of graffiti in the NAG area had significantly reduced. Accordingly consideration of Street Art Wall projects was currently suspended.

As agreed at the previous meeting, on 13 September 2010 the NAG had written by letter and email to the Thames Valley Police Authority (TVPA) pointing out that current neighbourhood policing arrangements had resulted in huge improvements in policing effectiveness in recent years. The letter strongly expressed the view that all this would be undermined if cost saving measures were to result in a reduction of the number of front line Police Officers and PCSOs, or their ability to patrol the neighbourhood. Copy letters and emails were sent to the local MPs, Dominic Grieve and Steve Baker.

Our two MPs gave immediate (same day) responses. When, after three weeks, there had been no response whatsoever from the TVPA, on 4 October 2010 the Chair sent a reminder email to

the TVPA including a copy of the original letter. This too was completely ignored. The Chair then telephoned the TVPA on 13 October 2010. This finally resulted in a response, which was that it would be several more weeks before decisions would be taken. The TVPA accordingly undertook to respond to the NAG at that stage. No explanation was given for the failure to respond to our correspondence during the previous month. The Chair will continue to monitor the situation.

Action – Sandy Macdiarmid

Andrew Deane observed that the TVP had been cutting back on costs over the previous two years, so it was hoped that this would limit the impact of future cuts in expenditure. At Hazlemere there had been a reduction in civilian staff numbers, but not in the number of Police Officers or PCSOs. Inevitably this had resulted in an increased administrative workload on police personnel.

Jean Johnson had recently attended an informal presentation to councillors addressed by the Chief Constable of TVP, Sara Thornton, who said that her priorities were to keep PCSOs and increase the number of Special Constables. She also plans to cut back on middle management and to find more cost saving options by linking up with regional forces.

Andrew Deane reported on his response to the CWPC consultation document concerning planned playground improvements: this was that CWPC should liaise closely with residents who might be affected by such changes.

Andrew Deane reported on a number of areas of police activity. Responding to public concern about inappropriate behaviour in and around the public toilets in the car park off Beaumont Way, Hazlemere this location had been monitored during September and October. No problems had been detected.

ASB on Tylers Green Common had continued, but at a low level.

There had been a number of isolated street robberies, but not confined to any specific location.

Peter Cartwright joined the meeting at this point.

Andrew Deane reported that there had been some recent instances of neighbour disputes, exacerbated by a refusal of those concerned to communicate with each other. The involvement of Wycombe Mediation had met with some success.

David Onslow asked about the new ASB process that TVP had recently implemented. Andrew Deane reported that, since 1 October 2010, this involved an ASB "risk assessment matrix". Sue Jacobs showed NAG members the associated matrix card that was carried by police officers and was used to assign scores to different ASB actions. If the resulting matrix score deemed an incident to be a sufficient risk, this led to the creation of a crime report. At this point the Public Safety Team, the local neighbourhood police team and partnership agencies would then collaborate to develop a suitable plan of action designed to resolve the issues raised.

Jean Johnson asked about recent ASB involving cars in the Tesco, Loudwater car park. Andrew Deane confirmed that this location had recently become a gathering place for young people and their vehicles which led to some drivers carrying out hand brake turns, wheel spins and playing loud music. The police are liaising with Tesco and patrols at the location have been increased.

Action – Andrew Deane

Alex Slater requested information on Community Payback, whereby young offenders carry out unpaid work for the benefit of the community. Andrew Deane advised that the scheme was operated by the Probation Service.

6 NAG Priority – Speeding / Road Safety

Andrew Deane reported that Treadaway Hill, Flackwell Heath had recently been adopted by Traffic Safety for a speed enforcement operation. This had been a conspicuous success, with many speeding tickets issued. The NAG agreed that the Chair should write a letter of thanks to the Traffic Officer for this initiative.

The regular deployment of Speed Indication Devices (SIDs) by PCSOs continued. These provided a visible presence and speed deterrent. Alex Slater expressed a wish to accompany a PCSO on such an operation. Andrew Deane undertook to arrange this.

David Onslow asked when SID operations were generally conducted since, in his view, peak hours are the only times that matter. Andrew Deane confirmed that the police did indeed concentrate on peak hours.

Disruption caused by motorists parking in and near the bus lay-by on the A404 near Hazlemere Library when dropping-off and picking up school students was a continuing problem. Andrew Deane reminded the meeting that, while the police continue to be responsible for dealing with obstruction, Wycombe District Council (WDC) was responsible for the enforcement of parking regulations. The meeting agreed that the Chair should write to Gerry Doyle of WDC requesting the presence of a Civil Enforcement Officer at this site, especially immediately after school.

Action – Sandy Macdiarmid

Peter Cartwright had written a letter to Val Letheren, Cabinet Member for Transport at Bucks County Council asking about the strength of the barriers on the M40 Loudwater viaduct. Ms Letheren had responded in Council, saying that in normal circumstances these barriers are of sufficient strength, but confirmed that no tests involving double deck coaches (such as those used on the 'Oxford Tube' coach service) had been carried out. Peter Cartwright understood that this matter is being progressed by Val Letheren.

Action – Peter Cartwright

Robert Sowicki left the meeting at this point.

At the previous NAG meeting, concern in Flackwell Heath about the planned removal of the speed humps on Straight Bit and Heath End Road had been expressed. While it was recognised that speed humps create many problems (such as delays to ambulances, discomfort to patients on board and noise nuisance to adjacent residents) it was felt that other solutions, such as speed tables ought to be considered. David Onslow attended the Chepping Wye Valley Local Community Partnership meeting on 19 October 2010 with the intention of asking a question on this issue. However the opportunity did not arise. David Onslow considered that this matter should be progressed by a CWPC councillor resident in Flackwell Heath (FH).

Action – FH-based CWPC councillor

Peter Cartwright had heard that some funds had been withdrawn from the Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership, which would result in the operation of fewer speed cameras; these would be used in rotation. Andrew Deane had no information on any such development.

7 Youth Involvement

There had been a suggestion that the Hazlemere Youth Centre might be closed as a result of the spending cuts. Peter Cartwright advised the no risk to any local youth club had been reported to the Chepping Wye Valley Local Community Partnership (LCP). The meeting agreed that any such closure should be resisted and that the Chair should make contact to establish if the support of the NAG was needed at this stage.

Action – Sandy Macdiarmid

Alex Slater proposed that the NAG should give some thought to projects that could engage the youth of the area, especially during half-term and the main school holidays. Alex Slater agreed to lead a discussion on this topic at the next NAG meeting.

Action – Alex Slater

Peter Cartwright reported on a number of recent initiatives undertaken by the Chepping Wye Valley Youth Subgroup:

- Hazlemere Youth Centre: funding approved for graffiti art project;
- Wooburn Youth Club: funding approved for hire of climbing wall;
- Loudwater Boys' Club: funding approved for club enhancement.

The Subgroup next meets on 19 January 2011, venue to be determined.

Action – Peter Cartwright

8 Communications

The TVP website still does not have separate sections for the Hazlemere & Chepping Wycombe and Hughenden Neighbourhoods. Andrew Deane confirmed that he persists in trying to get the necessary programming work carried out.

Action – Andrew Deane

9 Any Other Business

Jean Johnson reported on a further recent encounter with a Heavy Goods Vehicle using Cock Lane, despite the installation of deterrent warning signs at each end of the road. It had not been possible to record details of the offending vehicle, so no specific information could be given to TVP for action.

10 Next Meetings

The dates / times of the next two meetings, to be held at Sir William Ramsay School, are:

Thursday 2 December 2010, at 7.30pm
Thursday 13 January 2011, at 7.30pm (provisional).