



# ST ALBANS COMMUNITY SAFETY CONSULTATION FORUM

7.00pm, Wednesday 21 June 2006

Council Chamber, St Albans Civic Centre

## MINUTES

### Present:

Linda Bateman  
Sheila Bond  
Cllr David Clarke  
Janice Crombie  
Judith Everett  
Robert C Fox  
Mike Hanson  
Mark Hunter  
Janet Tansley  
Henry (Taffy) Jones  
Graham Lane  
Joy Leighton  
Sally Patient  
Cllr Bert Pawle  
Ken Peak  
Nick Rayment  
Alison Roome-Gifford  
Cllr Philip Rosen  
Cllr David Yates  
Barry Pryke  
Andy Warrack  
Marilyn Tricker

Sopwell Residents Association  
HACRO  
Colney Heath Parish  
Neighbourhood Watch  
University of the Third Age  
Crime Prevention Panel  
Herts Constabulary  
Herts Constabulary  
St Albans Soroptomists  
London Colney Parish  
Chamber of Commerce  
Victim Support  
Herts Police Authority  
SADC  
London Colney Village Concern  
Oaklands College  
Herts Constabulary  
Redbourn Parish Council  
SADC  
Herts Fire & Rescue  
Neighbourhood Watch  
CAB

### Apologies

Saiyed Asif  
Lisa Bates  
Cllr Robert Clarkson  
Martin Cooke  
Dennis Cooper  
Charles Ferrier  
Cllr John Flood  
Sikander Khan  
Neil Kieran  
Peter Parsons  
Steve Welch  
Derek & Rosemary Wenzelul  
Cllr Chris White

SADC  
SA Chamber of Commerce  
Herts County Council  
HCC Youth Service  
NHW Co-ordinator  
St Albans Childrens Centre  
Sandridge Parish Council  
National Pharmaceutical Association  
ASB Co-ordinator, SADC  
Herts Crimestoppers  
SADC  
SA Synagogue  
Herts County Council

## ACTION

### 1. **Welcome and introduction**

Chris Roach welcomed members. She informed the meeting that Brian Peyton had stepped down as Vice-Chair and was no longer the SADC portfolio holder for Community Safety.

### 2. **Election of Chair and Vice-Chair**

Councillor David Yates (SADC Community Safety portfolio holder) was elected chair (Proposed: Chris Roach, Seconded Linda Bateman).

Councillor Allan Siao Ming Witherick (Police Authority Community Engagement Lead member for St Albans) was elected Vice-Chair (Proposed: Chris Roach, Seconded Linda Bateman).

### 3. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Allan Witherick, Philip Winter, Yasmin Batliwala, John Flood, Lisa Bates, Robert Clarkson, Martin Cooke, Dennis Cooper, Charles Ferrier, Sikander Khan, Peter Parsons, Steve Welch, Derek and Rosemary Wenzel and Chris White.

### 4. **Minutes – 15 March 2006**

These were agreed.

### 5. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

### 6. **Single Non—emergency Phone Number**

Chris Roach informed members that there are currently two numbers on which to contact the police in Hertfordshire – 999 for emergencies and 0845 33 00 222 for all other calls. However, Government intends introducing a new national three-digit number (101) for the public to contact all services relating to community safety, including fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour. This would be jointly run between the police and local authorities and alleviate the current pressure on the 999 system.

**Attachment**

The attached hand-out was provided.

An update was requested for the next meeting.

**Agenda Item**

### 7. **Police Force Restructuring Update**

Sally Patient informed members that the Home Secretary had made an announcement on Monday (19<sup>th</sup> June), delaying the force merger plans. For Hertfordshire, this means that the original closing date for objections to the proposed merger with Beds and Essex to be lodged with the Home Secretary (11 August) had been extended. A new closing date has not yet been given.

In addition, no orders for compulsory orders will be placed before Parliament this side of the summer recess.

In the meantime, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Essex police forces and authorities have set up a joint working group to map current service provision. This work will be used to identify areas where joint working could benefit service delivery, even if the merger proposals do not go ahead.

The Police Authority has extended its closing date for consultation to 8 September 2006 and encouraged those members who had not already done so to respond during that period.

## **8. Community Safety Report**

Chris Roach handed to members a newsheet detailing the community safety report for 2005/06.

- *Anti-Social Behaviour*

Chris Roach informed members that the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit has now dealt with over 100 cases since it started work in June 2005, and currently has approximately 50 open cases. These cases include complaints over ball games, organised fly-tipping, motorbike nuisance, drug dealing and harassment.

Surveillance is currently taking place at a site in the City Centre, which has experienced very high levels of theft and vandalism. Further surveillance is planned for Wheathampstead to tackle persistent fly-tipping.

Staff from the Unit accompanied the police on late night patrol in Harpenden as part of the Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaign, in order to tackle known hotspots and deal with underage drinking and alcohol-related disorder in the alcohol free zone.

Staff are now involved in training police Community Team constables on local authority powers for dealing with anti-social behaviour and on joint working.

A recent arson attempt on woodland adjacent to the Alban Way was foiled and steps taken with a local school to identify the perpetrators.

An ASBO has been obtained against a persistent aggressive beggar, banning her from the City Centre alcohol free zone for two years. This ASBO has only been breached once, very soon after being granted.

An Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC) is being drafted for a 'rogue trader' and bogus builder who uses intimidation against elderly people. If this does not succeed, an ASBO will be considered.

***Issues raised by members included:***

*Q. Is it possible to have CCTV installed near Barley Mow Lane as there is persistent fly tipping occurring?*

*A. A static CCTV camera is not suitable for this purpose as, once*

people become aware of its existence, the problems move elsewhere. It may be possible to use a mobile CCTV camera for surveillance.

### **Drugs and Alcohol**

Following the introduction of the Council's Drug & Alcohol policy, training is being rolled out on drug and alcohol awareness for all staff. Invitations to the training have been extended to Town and Parish Councillors, Housing Associations and the CVS. CSCF members were invited to attend the training if this would be useful to them.

The CDRP Liaison Officer has produced a Young People's information pack, copies of which are left at the Police station to help address concerns within families where substance misuse issues arise. These packs can help Police to signpost parents and young people to sources of help and early intervention.

### ***Issues raised by members included:***

*Q. There appears to be drugs misuse happening in London Colney, where large groups of youths congregate. Can the drug sniffer dogs be used?*

A. It would be much better for the intelligence to be passed on to the community team so that they can investigate the concerns. Officers are trained to spot the signs of drug taking and dealing. If people are not happy to talk to the police, they can either contact Crimestoppers (0800 555 111) or the ASB Unit at St Albans.

*Q. What supervision is proposed for the rehabilitation of drug users?*

A. Unable to answer at the meeting; the following has been provided by Sophie Westbrook:

An important part of successful drug treatment is aftercare re-integration into the Community, appropriate accommodation plays a major role in this. By providing permanent accommodation in bedsits (or 1 bed flats) with proper support we will be giving people the opportunity to re-integrate into the communities of St Albans. More often than not they have been housed in temporary accommodation in St Albans and this is often not the best solution. Surrounded by former drug using acquaintances who are still using drugs it puts these vulnerable individuals in a high risk situation where they are more likely to relapse (start using drugs again). It is similar to housing an ex alcohol user next to a pub or above an off-license where the shopper owner keeps banging on the door to offer you drink. These are people who have gone through a substantial amount of therapy and made a huge personal investment to change, housing them back where they started creates a massive drop in the self-esteem and negates all the effort they have been making to leave that lifestyle behind. It is a bit like being sent back to your first job on a paper round after being the head of logistics. Demoralising, demeaning and leaving a huge sense of rejection and lack of value. It is also important to remember that a huge financial investment has been made by the health service to this persons recovery and it makes sense to ensure this isn't thrown away by unsuitable

accommodation.

As an homeless individual, they are entitled to accommodation. With this procedure we avoid placing them in potentially high risk temporary accommodation and we offer them a support package dependent upon their needs. People are selected and referred by the treatment agencies after a professional case conference to discuss their suitability. We trust the professional opinion of the services involved to make an accurate assessment of the client their suitability for the project and the needs they have. The support provided is ongoing; dependent on needs by the local treatment agency and whatever other services the client is identified as needing.

Each case is reviewed every six months, or sooner if required. All the clients have links to St Albans District. Drug treatment is expensive and we need to maximise its effectiveness. If a client needs to go through a drug treatment programme two or three times because suitable after care is not in place, then that is both time consuming and expensive. The housing nomination agreement commenced on 1 April, there aren't any current applicants in the system.

#### **9. Police Performance to 31 May 2006**

A copy of the presentation given by Chief Inspector Mark Hunter is attached. Highlights shown below.

**Attachment**

All crime is down by 20.5% in St Albans, with particular success in reducing home burglary and vehicle crime. Robbery has increased but the numbers of offences remain small (22). There have been some problems with purse dipping and three people have been arrested to date. The offences have been especially related to three licensed premises and police have made the management aware of the problems. The police are also working with the newly formed Business Crime Reduction Group and British Transport Police to tackle the purse dipping problems.

A strategy for policing during the World Cup games, especially England matches, is in place, with special patrols. To date there has been very little public disorder.

Cllr Yates informed members that the District and City Council had just completed a successful prosecution of a licensed premises for not complying with the conditions of its licence.

Cycle theft continues to be a problem, especially at the St Albans City rail station. Discussions have already taken place with Capital Connect about the problems.

The Domestic Violence help-line is now countywide and receives about 300 calls a month.

The Community Teams have about 25 Problem Oriented

Partnerships (POPs) in process at present, including one at Napsbury.

**Issues raised by members included:**

Q. *As the Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator for Napsbury, why have I not been involved in the POP?*

A. This will be remedied.

Q. *Are supermarkets checked for selling alcohol to people under age?*

A. The police work with Trading Standards on all licensed premises, which include supermarkets. Intelligence is always welcome.

Q. *Are fast food outlets licensed to sell alcohol?*

A. Not necessarily but they have to be licensed under the same legislation if they are selling hot food after 11.00pm.

Q. *Will CCTV be installed in the station car parks (this follows a serious assault in the area)?*

A. The Partnership is discussing the possibility with Capital Connect, who have their own CCTV system. However, we would be keen to also establish a link into the local system as this would enable joint monitoring and possibly a quicker response to any problems from local officers, rather than BTP officers.

**10. Police and Justice Bill 2006**

Robert Thackeray provided the attached update on the Bill, which is currently in its second committee stage at Parliament.

**Attachment**

An update will be provided at the next meeting.

**Agenda Item**

**11. Any Other Business**

Q. What is happening to Neighbourhood Watch schemes in the district?

A. The Community Co-ordinator, Dennis Cooper, gave a presentation to a previous meeting of the Forum. He is attending a re-launch meeting of NHW in Wheathampstead so could not be present tonight. However, he is a member of the Forum. Progress is being made to revitalise schemes across the county and a new communications system is currently being piloted, prior to it being rolled-out across the county, hopefully before the year end.

An update on Neighbourhood Watch will be provided at the next meeting.

**Agenda Item**

Q. There is a lot of anti-social driving taking place in London Colney, involving high speeds and children playing 'chicken' with the traffic.

A. The Fire and Rescue Service has signed up a number of schools to its Mega Drive initiative, which targets 17 year olds. It aims to make them aware of driving issues, including how to look after a car and, using role play, what happens to someone in a road traffic

collision.

**12. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held at 7.00pm on Wednesday 25 October 2006 in the Council Chamber, St Albans Civic Centre.

**Issued by Sally Patient  
Communications Manager  
Hertfordshire Police Authority  
Tel: 01992 555624  
Email: [sally.patient.hpa@herts.pnn.police.uk](mailto:sally.patient.hpa@herts.pnn.police.uk)**

**27 June 2006**