

## **Minutes of Shepton Mallet Neighbourhood Watch and Police and Local Community**

**Meeting held at Shepton Fire Station Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2019 7:00 pm**

### **Present**

John Parham (Chair) Robert Goodhand (Sec) Paul Massey (Treasurer)

Redacted

### **Neighbourhood Policing Team**

Sgt431. Rachel Clark PC3356 George Simpson PC7118 Stephen Redding

### **Apologies:**

Redacted

### **Minutes Previous Meeting:**

Agreed

### **Chairman's Welcome and Report**

JP now a member of the Police and Crime Panel. At a Town Council meeting an average £24 / year Band D average precept was agreed subject to Police Commissioner coming back with concrete plans on how that additional funding is to be spent in Mendip. JP had voted against and he had not received those assurances but the additional funding was passed. There is a promise of 100 extra officers in Mendip next year. The financial increase is £12 ½million across Avon and Somerset. Bristol average is B/C so Mendip will pay a greater sum but see a lesser benefit. All police officers will get a pay rise but that will result in additional pension contribution which will swallow £11 ½ million. With other budget pressures a real increase in funding is unlikely.

Latest police concerns is “cuckooing” where criminal gangs move into a vulnerable person’s house and use it as a base. It then operates like a spider’s web. This is a real issue in places like Shepton not inner city phenomena. Further concern is average age for knife crime is 15 years. Report from local Head Teacher indicates a 1% exclusion rate.

Cyber-crime was discussed at previous meeting and has been turned into a separate information leaflet available on the website.

<http://www.smbtc.org.uk/community/smbtc---connecting-with-the-community-14932/neighbourhood-watch/>

Cyber-crime is now the biggest source of illegal funding now in excess of drugs revenue.

### **Police Report**

County lines remains a major national and local concern and educating people of the practice is the main thrust. Gangs are moving into rural areas from London, Manchester and Liverpool.

Vulnerable people are being targeted in Shepton more than Bristol. The local police have attended

focussed training days on how to protect vulnerable people. This is a social issue that may be contained but never wiped out. Single mums are particularly vulnerable as people move in.

Shopkeepers and taxi drivers can be useful sources of information. Youngsters also use buses for drug running and there is the possibility of picking them up at this point.

The use of cannabis is now prevalent in Shepton and the police do not turn a blind eye to this despite Facebook posts to the contrary.

Currently "999" calls respond from Frome and Wells but this operation is to move to Shepton. There will therefore be a significant increase in local police presence.

All police have laptops. If you see them in cafes and on benches with them they are not playing candy crush! Stop and chat and tell them any observations you may have on life in the community.

Any intelligence is useful and you can find out more about your local team and report general concerns here.

<https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/your-area/shepton-mallet-town/>

It was mentioned that in the snow, roofs without snow might indicate a cannabis factory (or very poor insulation!) Any intelligence from the community is always welcomed.

To report a crime after the fact go here

<https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/report#/>

These links are now posted on the Neighbourhood Watch website.

Police now routinely wear body cameras. There is a procedure on their use and this can replace a police interview at a police station – instant action and not taking up an entire shift.

The neighbourhood team now amounted to 23 officers on 5 varied shift patterns so there is much greater consolidation of resources.

### ***Anti-Social Behaviour***

A small group of young people under 16 were currently occupying a disproportionate amount of police time. The police working with shopkeepers and significant prosecutions are pending. There have been multi-agency meetings and additional support from Frome officers to address. The main problem area is around the Retail Park. Documentation of all offences is critical so a coherent serious case can be presented when matters come to court.

### **Items of Discussion**

#### ***Facebook***

There was a discussion about how organisations can post direct onto Facebook pages

**Action** RG to discuss with MP

JP reminded the meeting it could identify three items for priority focus over the next three months.

### **1) Speeding**

Community speed watch was progressing. Ashley Reay from the Mendip Community Speed watch team was working closely with the Speed Enforcement Unit. In a recent exercise the speed enforcement van caught over 100 “speeders”. About 6 people have now been trained.

It was mentioned from the “Sheep” roundabout onto the Fosse Way was 40 mph but then heavy Lorries on a downhill run come up against a 30 mph sign. Could 30 mph operate from the roundabout? Dobbie’s entrance going north to the Thatch has had some close calls. Unfortunately a survey by Somerset County Council didn’t back up the original complaint.

Action Police will give Ashley a nudge on this.

JP said councillors get a full written report on any road fatality which when occurred made for heart-breaking reading.

A petition was then formally presented to JP (as agreed) urging an introduction of 30 mph speed limit from Back Lane. Resurfacing was also requested. JP indicated a reply within 3 weeks and 12 months to implement any agreed action.

The Community Speed watch AGM was scheduled for 7<sup>th</sup> March 7:00 pm at the Salvation Army.

### **2) Parking**

Double yellow lines were requested from Junction Bath Road and Windsor Hill. Police said they would investigate the situation there. The Windsor Hill “triangle” had not been used as a road for many years. It now presented itself as forgotten rough ground and difficult for the police to intervene. People should take photographs of concerns and forward to police. It was ultimately a County Highways responsibility and the contact was Andy Turner. Applications for parking restrictions rarely are agreed when there is significant objection from local residents.

### **3) Business Against Crime Group**

MP briefed on a new “closed” WhatsApp Group. The police were investigating if the app could link direct to their mobiles. There had been a Shop Watch meeting at the George Hotel in Frome.

**Action** RG to email Rachel Clark on next Frome Shop Watch meeting

SMNW agreed to provide £150 start-up funding to this project.

### **Treasurer’s Report**

Financially there was little else to report other than £12 room hire. However the Treasurer raised discussions about the future of Neighbourhood watch and whether the group combining with PACT had been beneficial or whether it had diverted focus. It was agreed we lived in a changing

world of much greater “instant” communication and as previously reported the police focus had dramatically shifted. It was a question of balancing the roll of the traditional neighbourhood watch coordinator keeping an eye on vulnerable neighbours and blending that into a more active PACT group which had greater influence.

**Action** RG to discuss and progress PM’s concerns.

There were now 1350m people engaging non Neighbourhood Watch social media so we should not judge success solely on who turned up to meetings. Nevertheless there were a few stalwarts whose involvement and prodding was greatly appreciated keeping us all motivated to improve the society we lived in.

### **Ride Along Scheme**

Attendees were reminded of this scheme. This is where members of the public can join a police shift. Details and application to become involved on the web

<https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/services/ride-along-scheme/>

### **Date of Next Meeting**

Agreed Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> May SM Fire Station 7:00 pm

*Secretary’s note. The discussions were wide ranging and I have tried to reproduce the key elements as best I can. Please feel free to recommend to me any specific addition you would like to see included*