

Minutes of Shepton Mallet Neighbourhood Watch and Police and Local Community

Meeting held at Shepton Fire Station Thursday 15th November 2018 7:00 pm

Present and Apologies

Redacted

Minutes Previous Meeting:

Agreed

Chairman's Welcome and Report

PACT priorities were speeding and parking. Community speed watch programme set up with thanks to volunteers some now trained up (three named). Others in progress. The training is done on line. The next step is for volunteers to meet up and be trained on equipment, speed detector, provided by police. The Parish Council approached and offered £2500 this next year and £1000 the year after. There was no charge to set up. The detector mobile phone size costing £600 / unit. The first in Shepton. Stephen Reading currently trained. Risk assessments completed and clear criteria established, primarily to be visibly safe. Key areas are West Shepton, Old Wells Road, Fosse Way, Cannards Grave Road and Waterloo Road. Operation by volunteers can only be in a 30 mph zone. New volunteers to email John Parham. A coordinator needed.

Cyber Crime

JP is the nominated link member with police on cyber-crime. His own learning curve had been considerable. 8 times more likely to be a victim of cyber-crime as a physical crime. Young people (surprisingly) are the most likely victims including grooming and "county lines". People need to be aware of key vulnerabilities, fraud (the older group) and sexual exploitation (the younger group).

Fraud scams are now very sophisticated. Main thrust is supposed calls from "banks" advising of suspicious activity and the need to transfer funds out. These calls are very believable. RG reported students are encouraged to open bank accounts and then sell them on. Technology now exists to display a fraudulent call appearing to come from a trusted number. Standard advice is

- 1) Never give details to anyone on an unsolicited call – always 'phone back on another 'phone.
- 2) Phone back using the number on the credit card

There are currently approximately 400 reported attempted frauds / month in Avon and Somerset. The bottom line is if you use your PIN to transfer funds the bank will not compensate you. Only about 2% of reported frauds are investigated.

Credit Card Shopping

It was briefed that when paying by credit card for a fraudulent transaction if payment was by "contactless" the trader takes the hit, if payment by chip and pin the bank takes the hit which is why some traders routinely refuse "contactless" payment unless customer personally known to

them. There is a 24 hour “pause” before the money is actually transferred. “Card skimming” is when the card is copied so NEVER let a credit leave your possession – not even for seconds. Sadly the technology now exists to read card details even when in your pocket and people are now investing in “scan-blocked” wallets.

Parking

Areas of concern were now Ridgway Estate, Compton Road, Charlton Road, Whitstone Road and Windsor Hill. The police had attempted to progress this in discussion with Somerset County Council but powerless to act when there are no visible road markings. This remains SCC responsibility hence the impasse when not actioned. Details at the top of B3136 were discussed. Poor weather and high surface water had ripped up road markings. It was queried whether the police could not intervene when there was a clear obstruction irrespective of markings. It was clarified the police had to see the obstruction in progress. An attendee reported the farrago of a report to SCC, the delay and the action in the wrong place. Further stories related of inconsiderate motorists to local residents when there was an accident by Price Right partially blocking the road. In some areas residents were buying “20 mph” speed limit signs and sticking them on their wheelie bins. JP said petitions did give him “elbow power”. Shaftgate Avenue and St Peters Road mentioned. The PCSO’s committed to increasing checks at random times. Otherwise email JP direct on any issues cllr.j.parham@sheptonmallet-tc.gov.uk.

Police Report

The Market Place was now considerably calmer, crime wise, partly because generally more active and lively so self-policing in place. Van break-ins of concern and now classed as a major crime because of frequency. A warning of leaving Christmas presents in vulnerable sheds and visible on the back seats of cars. Neighbour disputes are now at a minimum.

Improved road markings outside Bowlish House had improved matters. Again emphasised police have to witness to act. Work has been done in school and it’s children who can influence parents’ lazy habits. An “Active Traffic Order” took a long time to implement but now in place. So every line painted and displayed sign is now enforceable. Mendip enforcement officers now active and reported the situation around Bowlish School now much improved. Clarified disabled badge holders can park on double yellow lines but not footpaths. However the onus is on the landowner to enforce which in many cases would be Mendip.

Waterloo Road Parking changes now improved. Plans were amended following objections from some residents. SCC prepared to start spring half term but school did not agree as works might overrun. So work now deferred until Easter holidays. Plans include railings, bollards, road narrowing and double yellow lines and lines in force only at school times.

Reported all neighbourhood teams now coordinated. Police visibility in Tesco trialled. Action taken on abandoned vehicles. Fixed penalty notices (FPN’s) now in force. Littering is £150,

reduced to £100 if paid in 14 days. Large fly tipping attracts a fine of up to £10 000. Dog fouling dealt with by FPN's and could be £1000 if taken to court. This is a Mendip district initiative on trial for 12 months to hopefully prove effective. The budget is four "full time equivalent" officers. The task is to balance hard results with soft improvements. Areas discussed such as Collett Park and West Shepton Playing Fields.

Finances

Reported we have £1318 on account largely because of one generous donation. PM promoted spending on leaflets and signs. PH reported letter drops in hand and would encourage volunteers to step forward.

Other Matters

Planning application for new police HQ by Haskins garage not yet approved. The old police station is to be sold. Shepton Mallet is the ideal central location.

Subway has applied to open outlet underneath facing Audi which would serve food until 11:00 pm. Concerns were expressed if this might now attract anti-social behaviour. The police will be monitoring closely.

Attendees reminded of up and coming Sunday Markets in run up to Christmas and Christmas Lights switch on.

Consultation on a new push on Neighbourhood Plan to commence soon.

Date of Next Meeting

Agreed Thursday 7th February

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