

Whitestone & Bulkington Community Forum
Whitestone Community Centre,
Magyar Crescent
Nuneaton
CV11 4SJ

Tuesday 12 September 2017

Present:

Cllr Jeff Morgan

Cllr Jeff Clarke

Cllr Richard Smith

Cllr Kris Wilson

Cllr Julian Gutteridge

Cllr Sam Margrave

Cllr John Beaumont

Cllr Julian Gutteridge

Cllr June Tandy

Mike Slemensek (WCC)

Sergeant Nev Hewitt (Warks Police SNT)

There were 45 members of the public present.

1. Welcome and Introductions

- 1.1 Cllr Morgan welcomed everyone to the forum and introduced the panel of speakers.

2. Matters arising from the last meeting

- 2.1 Cllr Morgan reviewed the previous meeting notes (Feb 2017) and covered matters arising. Sgt Hewitt to report back concerning the bridge at Withybrook – traffic enforcement has continued and signs have needed to remain in place to prevent heavy vehicles. The area has been checked by community speedwatch and he will inquire to see if more speed checks can be set up in Withybrook Road itself to deal with concerns of speeding lorries. More volunteers for Community Speedwatch would help.
- 2.2 Mr Ljubisa Cvetkovic requested an amendment to the notes of the previous meeting. The amendment was read out and the consensus of the meeting was that the notes should be amended accordingly.
- 2.3 Cllr Margrave stated that his apologies had not been recorded in the previous meeting notes.

ACTION: Mike Slemensek to make appropriate updates to the minutes.

3. Police presentation

- 3.1 Sgt Nev Hewitt provided the SNT update. In Bulkington there had been a reduction in overall crime but with an increase by 8 in residential burglaries. Vehicle crime has

increased across the force area. Sgt Hewitt appealed for people to ensure their cars are always left locked to help deter criminals.

- 3.2 Operation Consort is in place to tackle the current auto-crime problem and there has been success recently in arresting three 'car key' burglars who have been returned to prison and other arrests made.
- 3.3 Sgt Hewitt said that a new Chief Inspector for Safer Neighbourhoods has been appointed – this is Chief Inspector Dafyd Goddard.
- 3.4 The police are trialling a system of identifying public priorities for policing using social media.
- 3.5 Sgt Hewitt responded to questions from the audience. One person asked about vehicles parked on the pavement causing obstruction to mobility scooter users. Sgt Hewitt advised that if a double baby buggy can get past the parked vehicle - the police would not classify this as 'obstruction'. If there is a complete obstruction of the pavement – this should be reported to the police who will act. Key information to provide to the police would be:
 - The specific location
 - Registration number of the vehicle
 - The make of the vehicle
 - How it is parked
 - Take a photo of the parked vehicle if possible
- 3.6 Responding to other examples given of local parking on the pavement Sgt Hewitt asked people to send in photographs and he will have each case looked into by SNT.
- 3.7 Sgt Hewitt undertook to send additional crime data after the meeting (See Appendix A).
- 3.8 Cllr Beaumont commented that he had received phone calls from residents who were concerned by the streetlights being out. Questions were also asked about the police being overstretched and it was felt that issues and concerns like this should be fed back for the information of the Police and Crime Commissioner. Residents and councillors felt that it would be a good idea to invite the PCC to a Whitestone & Bulkington forum meeting.

ACTION: Mike Slemensek to explore whether the Police and Crime Commissioner could attend a future meeting.

4. The Borough Plan

- 4.1 Cllr Wilson updated on the present position and that currently the process is in the hands of the Inspector. In response to concerns about a lack of infrastructure to go with new housing, Cllr Wilson agreed and added that an effective infrastructure delivery plan was needed. Cllr Margrave said that he had concerns about safety and the impact upon residents of the Gypsy Lane Development. He urged that each planning application should be taken on its merits, each committee meeting should be attended and the residents should get involved as much as possible.
- 4.2 With regard to roads infrastructure Cllr Clarke explained that the County has responsibility for adopted highways and it takes part in consultations with the Borough and developers.

The County isn't responsible for developer's highways designs, but it assists in this process, particularly where there are link roads. Also it makes comment on any plans submitted to Districts and Boroughs in order to ensure they comply with current highways legislation. Councillors do have a relatively small budget to alleviate/mitigate traffic problems – which is usually targeted at junction improvement. A main consultee in the process is the Highways Authority and their decision whether to object or not carries a lot of weight.

5. Update from Whitestone Resident Action Group

- 5.1 The group was created at the last meeting of the forum following the strong feelings about Borough Plan housing developments – forming a residents group and getting out a letter to other residents. Over 1,000 responses were received to form a reply to the Plan. The Group has received an invite to the hearing and WRAG will continue with its work.

6. Update from the Bulkington Residents' Voice

- 6.1 This group had a similar start to the WRAG and has carried out liaison with local councillors. They held a meeting of 300 people at Bulkington Working Men's Club and carried out leafleting. A representation was put in on behalf of the village to which 50% of householders in Bulkington responded. There was a meeting of 500 people at Weston Hall with MP Mark Pawsey. He took the representation to the House of Commons. The group have been following developments and the work of the Government Inspector closely. The group membership strongly feels that communications by the Borough about the consultation process has been lacking – citing the example of information about the Plan and consultation methods appearing the Borough's 'In Touch' quarterly magazine only after the expiry of the deadline for consultation. Cabinet meetings were not disclosed publicly and consultation was done through working groups – with ineffective engagement with the wider public on this issue.
- 6.2 Cllr Morgan commented upon the huge response from the local public on this matter and the congratulated both groups on the work they had done.

7. Children's' centres

- 7.1 Cllr Morgan wished to update the forum on the process relating to the remodelling of the family hubs. The new model involves reshaping service delivery to be provided from 12 centres instead of 39. The former Children's' centres will become Family Hubs. Consultation had finished yesterday receiving over 2,000 electronic submissions plus over 200 written submissions. Officers must now come up with a way forward – which will go to the Scrutiny Panel and then to the Cabinet later in the year.
- 7.2 In answer to a question about the need for this Cllr Morgan explained that the Council had voted to save £1.2 million out of the budget by reducing the number of centres therefore saving money on buildings but putting money into frontline services.
- 7.3 In answer to another question about the timing of the consultation over the school summer holiday period – Cllr Morgan said that the consultation period was 11 weeks so extended well beyond the six weeks of school holidays. Also the Council could not start it earlier because of the councillor elections taking place in May, followed by the snap general election.

7.4 Cllr Margrave expressed his professional concerns as an academic about the suitability of Survey Monkey to undertake the consultation. He also asked, with reference to the planned savings – if distribution of savings will be fair between the North and South of the County – taking into account the relative needs of the population throughout the County.

7.5 Cllr Morgan assured him that everything possible will be done to ensure that the new family hubs will be in the areas of greatest need.

8. Councillor Grant Scheme and Transport Delegated Budgets

8.1 Cllr Morgan explained that County Councillors each have a budget of £34K for transport issues and £5K for small community schemes. This money comes out of County Council revenue budgets. Discussion then took place about local opportunities for improving traffic flow/safety.

8.2 Cllr Beaumont referred to a scheme he had started to relocate a bus stop outside St James Church, closer to the recreation ground that could be continued. He also referred to speed awareness schemes.

8.3 Cllr Margrave said that some residents have raised the issue of increased amounts of traffic on the Lutterworth Road and asked that the Highways Team look again at the Leyland Road/Lutterworth Road junction. Cllr Clarke responded that this was an historic issue that despite effort was never satisfactorily resolved. He undertook however to speak with County Council Highways again on this matter. Cllr Wilson said that he had looked at the plans and that the sloping nature and width of the road could not accommodate a traffic island. The current layout was the best solution at the time.

ACTION: Cllr Clarke

8.4 Discussion turned to the double mini-island at Whitestone and the difficulties for traffic negotiating the junction and tailbacks at busier periods. Cllr Clarke reported that he had asked the question about installing one larger roundabout but there is insufficient room. Installing traffic lights could be a potential option.

8.5 A resident spoke of the disabled people's scheme and dropped kerbs that had been installed – but there was danger caused by speeding cars coming from the direction of Bedworth. A speed aware sign or a sign saying disabled people crossing was requested. Cllr Morgan will look at this and liaise with Cllr Beaumont.

ACTION: Cllr Morgan

8.6 Residents raised the issue of continuing problems of mud on the road in Gipsy Lane caused by HGVs. Cllr Tandy has tried the best she can to ensure the company plays its part in keeping the road clean by using the wheel wash – but problems have nonetheless persisted. Council road sweepers do patrol Gipsy Lane.

9. Wider discussion – community issues

9.1 Cllr Morgan spoke about the issue of second hand cars for sale on the highway verges. He has tried through the Borough Council to get this stopped. Cllr Clarke reiterated that County and Borough have worked together and have taken out a small number of prosecutions

which have resulted in cautions. Because the car salesmen are operating as individuals- this limits what we can do. Cllr Gutteridge said that he has spoken to Philip Richardson and the issue has been considered by Alan Mycock. Local by-laws are being considered but the situation is problematic because legal criteria must be met. The cars are reported to have no tax, and not insured or MOT'd. There is little that the police can practically do in these circumstances either. Lynne Price suggested consideration of Trading Standards.

- 9.2 A resident spoke about a dilapidated building on the road. Cllr Wilson responded that a planning application has been submitted to turn it into a fast food outlet.

10. Any other business

- 10.1 A resident asked about crime and street lights being turned off and whether the police can approach the County and ask for the lights to be put on in a given location when there is a crime problem? Also how much public money is being saved? Cllr Clarke responded by saying that the County will respond to such requests and that approximately £1million is being saved which is diverted into adult social care and education. Cllr Margrave suggested that the lighting issues should be kept on the agenda.
- 10.2 Mr Cvetkovic inquired about the frequency of future meetings suggesting that 3 per year are needed. Cllr Tandy said that discussions were taking place at County level about the future of the community forums and that there needs to be involvement of all sides on deciding the way forward. It was agreed that pending further developments about the future of forums – there should be a forum held four times per year with the next one in January 2018. Thereafter – every quarter. The next forum will be in Bulkington.
- 10.3 Residents suggested that more should be done to promote the forum as many people did not know they exist.
- 10.4 Sgt Hewitt spoke about a trial being conducted by the police to help identify policing priorities in Bedworth East using twitter allowing people to vote for 4 different options. 836 people viewed it and 100 people voted. Vehicle crime came out as a top issue. This type of result could be brought to the forum and if they agree the police could take these away as priorities. Sgt Hewitt will update the forum on how this progresses.
- 10.5 The meeting was declared closed at 9pm.