

Whitestone & Bulkington Community Forum

**Whitestone Community Centre,
Magyar Crescent, Nuneaton**

Tuesday 19 June 2018

Present:

Cllr Jeff Morgan (Chair)
Cllr Richard Smith
Cllr Kris Wilson
Cllr Julian Gutteridge
Cllr Andy Sargeant
Cllr John Beaumont
Cllr June Tandy
Mike Slemensek (WCC)
PS Andy Scruton (Warwickshire Police SNT)
PC Esther Kinch (Warwickshire Police SNT)
PC Claire Jones (Warwickshire Police SNT)
PCSO Susan Laing (Warwickshire Police)
51 members of the public signed in to the meeting
Total recorded attendance 63

Apologies:

Cllr Clarke

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 forum

2.1 Cllr Morgan referred to the minutes of the previous meeting on 16 January 2018 and updated the meeting on the actions. Please see the action update sheet attached at Appendix A.

2. Safer Neighbourhood Team Report

3.1 Police Sergeant Andy Scruton introduced himself and has recently taken over as SNT sergeant responsible for South Nuneaton and Bedworth. The SNT team under his command consists of a total of 14 Constables and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). PC Kinch and PC Brown are beat managers and the SNT at Whitestone has been joined by PCSO Khane Barlow, a very experienced PCSO. Sgt Scruton provided an overview of the SNT role, which was about problem-solving rather than a reactive response to crime and ASB, using intelligence and information to direct policing actions. He also stressed the importance for the police to work in partnership with other authorities and the community. The recent reorganisation within Warwickshire Police has relocated officers to help bolster the numbers available for patrolling and this has been helped by having

additional support in police communication centres to identify and re-direct calls that do not actually require a police response – thereby reducing the operational demand upon patrolling officers.

- 3.2 Sergeant Scruton informed the meeting that Sergeant Nev Hewitt, the previous SNT sergeant was now in charge of a proactive team of 10 officers who are deployed around the county to support SNT to deal with specific crime and ASB problems and that this was a resource that the local SNT could ask for. Sergeant Scruton outlined his intentions to bring speakers to future forums to talk about specific and important areas of policing that affect the community. At the next meeting he hopes to bring Police Constable Martin Rone-Clarke, the Warwickshire Police Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer. Following that people will be able to request speakers from the police.
- 3.3 Sergeant Scruton said that standardised data had been prepared for the meeting and will continue to be supplied in the same format going forward. He handed over to PC Claire Brown to provide information about the latest crime figures. The full figures, as reported by PC Brown and relating to Bulkington and to Whitestone separately, are reproduced at Appendix B attached.
- 3.4 A substantial discussion about local crime followed these figures which focused on the increase in vehicle crime in both Bulkington and Whitestone. The following key points emerged:
- Criminals are especially targeting ‘keyless’ cars, using a device that replicates the owner’s key fob to enter and start the vehicle in order to steal it. Fords are the most frequently targeted although other makes are also stolen in this way.
 - Organised criminal gangs are believed to be mainly responsible for this type of crime.
 - The police advised the use of old-fashioned ‘Krook- Lock’ devices to immobilise the car and the use of specially made car key pouches which block the signals being sent from the key fob to the car whilst it is parked – thus preventing the criminal from being able to use these signals to unlock the car. The pouches can be obtained by purchasing them online and local Neighbourhood Watch also sells these.
 - The police advised against storing car keys upstairs overnight. Your personal safety is paramount in all of this and some criminals may enter the house by force to search for and obtain the car keys.
 - Two other preventative measures were suggested by members of the public at the meeting – using PIR floodlighting on your driveway and also clicking the key fob twice when locking the vehicle which ‘deadlocks’ the vehicle so it cannot be driven away.
 - The police strongly encouraged everyone to phone in to report suspicious incidents day or night. Sergeant Scruton urged that people should not be afraid of using the 999 number for an incident that is actually taking place and said that members of the public could tell the call handler that they have been asked to report incidents by SNT and mention specific officer names. This will be helpful to the call handler and can help to improve the police response.
 - The police advised that incidents should be called in to the police there and then and not be reported via Facebook.

- 3.5 A wider, general discussion about policing took place. In response to a question about how many police patrols take place in the area Sgt Scruton said that SNT does as much as it possibly can but the main responsibility for routine patrolling is with the 24/7 emergency response/patrol teams. SNT work closely with these teams and can submit 'taskings' to be carried out by the emergency response teams e.g. requests for special attention paid to a given area.
- 3.6 A resident asked if offenders are known to the Police. The Police responded that many criminals are known and the Police act upon intelligence sources and utilise analysts to map trends and crime patterns and look for links to known offenders.
- 3.7 Lynne Price (Bedworth & Bulkington neighbourhood Watch) called for public support for SNT and said that the numbers of SNT officers had been 'decimated' over the years. She said that in 2009 in her area there were 24 SNT officers (constables and PCSOs) and now there were only 5. She said that SNT had no real capacity for patrolling and that community policing was vital and there should be more support and resources for local policing teams.
- 3.8 Cllr Morgan agreed with Lynne about the key role of SNT but pointed out that there had been a small rise in the policing precept that had enabled 50 more police constables to be recruited in the County.
- 3.9 Cllr Tandy said that whilst this was true the Police had already planned to reduce the number of constables by 60. Therefore the net result was an overall reduction in the establishment of the Police by 10 constables, not an increase.
- 3.10 One resident spoke of the work of local civilian patrols contributing to public safety.
- 3.11 Cllr Wilson asked the Police if they respond to emails sent in to SNT. He said that he had emailed the SNT about an anti-social behaviour issue at Crowhill recreation ground – but had not received a reply from the Police. Sgt Scruton offered his apologies for the lack of reply on this occasion – saying the SNT do normally respond to email inquiries. He said that he was aware of the issues at the recreation ground and these are being addressed.
- 3.12 A resident asked if leaving the streetlights on at night would be helpful in terms of reducing crime. The Police responded that there was no statistical evidence that supported this. The Police are able to request for streetlights to be turned on to meet an operational requirement at a given time and the Council responds to this quickly.
- 3.13 Cllr Morgan added that he had looked into the data about this and he himself had been unable to identify any causal link. He said that it would seem logical to assume that switching off the lights could lead to a rise in criminality – but this was simply not borne out by the data. In fact, there was some evidence to show that crime is higher in some areas where the lights are on. However, he did understand the public perceptions and concerns around this issue and said that at the end of the year Warwickshire County Council will be reviewing the policy again, look at the savings being achieved through LED lighting and consider options including a partial switch off.
- 3.14 Lynne Price asked for evidence of what has been saved. She said that these have never been provided. Cllr Morgan undertook to provide these figures for Lynne.

ACTION: Cllr Morgan

- 3.15 A resident asked what the response time was for a 999 call. Sgt Scruton said that the Police would aim to arrive within 10 minutes for an 'urban' incident. But if all available patrol officers are committed at incidents – the Police would prioritise the calls and response times can take longer.
- 3.16 Another resident asked if the Police benchmark crime figures in this area against other areas. Is crime in Whitestone and Bulkington up – compared to other areas? Sgt Scruton said that he did not have figures available to compare against other areas.
- 3.17 PC Brown announced that the Police are looking for 6 volunteers to run a community speedwatch scheme locally. Anyone who is interested in supporting this should contact the local SNT.

4. The Borough Plan

- 5.1 Cllr Wilson gave a general update on the Borough Plan. The recent 2nd round inspection has now taken place and a number of people did make strong representations. The Inspector is now deliberating on his findings and we can expect a report from him in September. On the 29 May however the Inspector issued a letter to Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council stating he was content for the Plan to go to the next stage (major modifications) and it therefore is apparent that the major builds that have been proposed will remain within the Borough Plan as it proceeds forward. The Inspector has not ruled out any of the sites. The Borough Plan could feasibly be adopted towards the end of 2018 or early 2019.
- 5.2 Cllr Wilson said that there may be another round of consultation. The timings put forward in the last consultation round were not appropriate, for example a consultation exercise was scheduled on budget night. Cllr Wilson expressed his concerns should this approach to timings be repeated at any further consultation round.
- 5.3 Cllr Smith had nothing further to add from the Bulkington perspective saying that Cllr had covered all the essential points. He added that the Bulkington Residents Voice would be looking to see what actions it can be taking in terms of infrastructure demands.
- 5.4 A resident asked if the Borough Plan takes into account the issues of traffic gridlock. Cllr Wilson responded that conditions need to go into the planning consent to deal with the major impacts of the developments. The developer must contribute to the expansion of the roads to deal with the extra demand.
- 5.5 Lynne Price commented that the WCC Highways Team seem to rarely raise objections and asked what are the criteria that they base their decisions on? Cllr Morgan responded to this that the County Council is the Highways Authority and the Borough Council is the planning. The criteria will ultimately be based upon safety and the bias will be in favour of approval unless there is a good reason why not.
- 5.6 One resident observed that when developers apply for permission to build – not enough consideration is given to parking – currently there are roads that are not wide enough for emergency vehicles to get through because of parked cars. New plans should ensure that

builders allow for this. Highways should make decisions about this with the developer. Cllr Morgan acknowledged the issues caused by insufficient parking and as a case in point said he is currently working on having a road widened in Bulkington.

- 5.7 A resident asked if there were plans to develop the land behind Chetwynd Drive. Cllr Wilson said that there are some suggestions that this could happen and that people have been measuring up the land in question. He said that councillors had been in a meeting with Taylor Wimpey and made it clear they would oppose development. Taylor Wimpey said they would not submit any planning applications until the Borough Plan had been approved – but now seem to have gone back on that by indicating they may submit an application just prior.

6. Warwickshire County Council and Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council updates

- 6.1 Mike Slemensek (WCC Community Safety & Locality Working Service) notified the meeting that the Warwickshire County Councillor grant fund is now open for applications from voluntary and community groups to apply for funding for small scale community projects. The deadline for applications is Friday 31 August 2018 and each County Councillor has a fund of £6,000 for this purpose. Information leaflets have been made available for attendees. This is an online application process – although there is provision for a hard copy application to be used if necessary.
- 6.2 There were no updates from Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council.
- 6.3 Cllr Morgan said that County Councillors also have a delegated budget for small improvements to roads.

7. Wider discussion on issues in the local area

- 7.1 A resident asked for an update on the New Inn. Cllr Wilson responded that plans have been submitted to re-develop the New Inn site. Forty-four flats within a three-story building are proposed to provide accommodation for people aged 55+ years and a community centre. It will be staffed with an on-site manager. The consultation is finished and the proposals are now likely to come forward to the planning committee. Proposals can be viewed online.
- 7.2 A resident complained about parking on double yellow lines and a lack of Civil Enforcement Officers to deal with this. Cllr Morgan said he would look into this issue.

ACTION: Cllr Morgan

- 7.3 Further discussion took place around inadequate provision for parking and that there are no enforceable criteria around minimum/maximum car parking spaces when new developments are being proposed.

8. Any other business

- 8.1 A resident complained about heavy lorries carrying concrete using Gypsy Lane which has a 7.5 tonnes restriction together with wider issues of problems caused by heavy lorries in the area. Cllr Morgan will look into this and speak with the resident after the meeting.

- 8.2 Cllr Morgan thanked all members of the public for their attendance and contribution to the discussions. He thanked all councillors and the Police for their input. He closed the meeting at 8.30pm.
- 9. Date of next meeting**
- 9.1 A meeting will be held in three months' time and the date will be notified.

APPENDIX A – Update on actions from the previous meeting

WHITESTONE & BULKINGTON COMMUNITY FORUM 16 JANUARY 2018

ACTION UPDATE SHEET

	Action	Action owner	Update 19/6/18
1.	This referred to the last bus stop as you go out of Bulkington towards Bedworth. Drivers do not see the two dropped kerbs at this location (for disabled people to cross) and come speeding by – causing a danger to people crossing. Cllr Beaumont knows the name of the person who raised this issue previously and will put the person in touch with Cllr Morgan – who will look further into the matter.	Cllr Beaumont and Cllr Morgan	Cllr Morgan is following this up and is fixing a date to meet and consider solutions to the reported issue of motorists speeding at this location.
2.	PC Esther Kinch and PC Claire Jones were welcomed to the meeting and gave an update on local crime issues. In their presentation they referred to changes in recording practices which have made it difficult to collate data for the meeting – but full figures will be provided as soon as possible after the meeting. Police were therefore asked to provide consistent standardised data reports for future meetings.	Police to provide standardised data reports for Whitestone and Bulkington	Standardised data was presented at the forum and will continue to be presented in this format.
3.	From the floor there were complaints about the mud on the road in Gypsy Lane a three piece suite that has been dumped. It was agreed for the present that Cllr Clarke will write to the owners of the quarry and Cllr Wilson will arrange with the Borough for the settee to be removed.	Cllr Clarke & Cllr Wilson	Cllr Wilson has arranged for the settee to be removed and there has been a clean-up of Gypsy Lane. This work required some coning off to protect operators.
4.	A resident said that grit bins were needed for the side roads in Whitestone. Cllr Clarke said there were laid-down criteria about where grit bins were sited but there might be an opportunity to site one in Caroline Close. He also said he would check if County Councillors delegated budgets can be used for this purpose.	Cllr Clarke	Cllr Clarke is away on holiday and an update will be sought by Cllr Morgan on his return.

Appendix B – Police crime data report

Crime Figures BULKINGTON

	16/01/18-27/03/18	28/03/18-12/06/18	+/-
Burglary	3	9	+ 6
• Nothing Stolen	0	3	+ 3
• Property Stolen	0	1	+ 1
• Vehicle Stolen (merc)	1	3	+ 2
• Attempt	1	2	+ 1
• Distraction	1	0	- 1
Vehicle Crime	14	13	-1
• Theft of MV	2	4	+2
• Theft From MV	9	6	-3
• Vehicle Interference	3	3	0
Street Robbery	0	0	0
Damage	2	3	+1
ASB	5	14	+9

Crime Figures WHITESTONE

	16/01/18-27/03/18	28/03/18-12/06/18	+/-
Burglary	8	15	+ 7
• Nothing Stolen	1	4	+ 3
• Property Stolen	1	3	+ 2
• Vehicle Stolen	2	5	+ 3
• Attempt	4	3	- 1
• Distraction	0	0	0
 Vehicle Crime	 3	 11	 +8
• Theft of MV	2	2	0
• Theft From MV	1	8	+7
• Vehicle Interference	0	1	+1
 Street Robbery	 0	 1	 +1
 Damage	 0	 7	 +7
 ASB	 2	 8	 +6