

High Street Safer Neighbourhood Team - Ward Panel Meeting
Notes of meeting held virtually - Tuesday 5 January 2021 at 6.30pm

Attendees: Phil Herlihy (Co-Chair), Malcolm Patten (Co-Chair)
Islam Kamrul (NE - CU), James King (ASB - WF)
Helen Jackson, Colm Gallagher, Alice Taylor-Rugman, Mo Yusuf, Maya Walker, Jacqueline Sheehy,
Sandra DaCosta

Helen Jackson volunteered to take the minutes.

Guidelines for the meeting were reiterated: listen respectfully without interruption, give way to the chair, continually improve to aim what we do and be open to new ideas.

1. Apologies: There were no apologies.

2. Minutes: Philip has still to draft minutes from the meeting on 10 November 2020.

ACTION: Philip to circulate the minutes, and associated Police PowerPoint, from the 10 November meeting.

3. Police Report and subsequent discussion:

- There are currently around 5 crimes per day - lower than the same period last year due to Covid-19 and lockdown.
- A brothel in Courtenay Mews has been closed down, hopefully permanently, in association with the council.
- Attention is being paid to Essex Close where youths have been loitering and smoking weed.
- As a series of break-ins were taking place in Thomas Jacomb Place between 11pm and 5am, shifts were changed to deal with them and this had worked well.
- Officers had assisted at The Mall with mask enforcement.
- A number of robberies at High Street ATMs had taken place in the last week and plain clothes officers were being deployed. As the banks have not been particularly helpful, Philip suggested talking to the ward councillors. However, it was thought a direct approach to the banks' management team may be more effective.
ACTION: Philip and Malcom to liaise with the police about the approach to be taken to ATM robberies.
- Antisocial behaviour issues, including drug dealing from a different vehicle, have moved from Carisbrooke Road to Buxton Road.
- Twitter is being used more actively to notify cybercrime - there are current scams regarding the Covid-19 immunity programme and vaccinations which request bank details.
- The team has been hit by Covid-19 but will hopefully be back to full strength soon. There are currently only 4 out of 7 PCs and PC Terry Smart is due to retire mid-January. In his absence, Philip thanked him for the sterling work he had done for High Street Ward and in particular on the forum, and wished him all the best in retirement.

4. E-scooters

Helen said that the number of e-scooters had increased in recent months and were often seen to be speeding dangerously down Cleveland Park Avenue and the High Street and that it would only be a matter of time before an accident occurred. As riding them on public roads is illegal, she asked what the police approach was.

The police acknowledged their use was illegal but said that in view of the growing numbers, dealing with them would be resource intensive as when scooters are impounded, they have to be taken personally to a pound in Charlton. However, if they do see the scooters being recklessly driven, they will stop owners. Jacqueline suggested a 'day of action'.

ACTION: The police to raise the issue of e-scooters, and the proposal to run a targeted campaign with senior management.

Colm understood that a trial of e-scooters was taking place at the Olympic Park in Stratford.

ACTION: The police to find out the outcome of the e-scooter trial.

It was also noted that cyclists riding both on the pavement and at speed on cycle lanes which were in close proximity to pavements was also dangerous. The case of a persistent pavement cycle rider on Coppermill Lane was mentioned.

ACTION: The police to get details of the persistent pavement rider from Sandra and to deal with.

5. Essex Close

Mo reported that activities had been quiet but last month had seen youths aged around 18 congregating near door entrance 12. As scaffolding is in place, they are now often out of sight of CCTV cameras and drug dealing has been seen near the car park, away from CCTV.

It was thought that the initial group had splintered after police activity and the fatal shooting. However, numbers are returning and there is a small nucleus of around 6 with a figurehead. A drill video was filmed around 2 months ago by youths in masks and a drug user has been seen repeatedly visiting the same building.

ACTION: Details of the address to be passed on to the police to deal with.

The police are aware of the issues and are patrolling as much as resources allow, but it is simply a matter of being in the right place at the right time due to the layout of Essex Close. They have also sought the input of other units for support.

Whilst a small number of residents are happy to raise issues and tackle individuals, many residents feel intimidated and prefer not to get involved.

It was suggested that encouraging residents to keep dairies could help build intelligence and James suggested reporting incidents anonymously through Crimestoppers or the Residents' Association.

Residents should also be encouraged to report maintenance issues directly to the housing association.

It was noted that a sexual assault had taken place at the beginning of January and that although the investigation is ongoing, there is nothing for residents to be concerned about.

Mo was thanked for all his work in trying to improve Essex Close.

Fortunately, there are no other areas of such a similar scale within High Street ward.

6. AOB

As there was no AOB, the meeting closed at 7.50pm. It was suggested that shorter meetings at more frequent intervals could be more effective and it was agreed to hold the next meeting in six weeks' time.