

Westcotes Community Meeting

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

7:00 pm, Monday, 24 November 2008

Held at: Robert Hall Memorial Baptist Church

Who was there:

Councillor Andy Connelly

Councillor Sarah Russell



RESIDENTS PARKING

Members and residents discussed the possibilities for residents parking in the Westcotes Ward.

INFORMATION FAIR

The following information stands were sited in the room. Members of the public visited the stands and were given an opportunity to meet Councillors, Council staff and the local Police and to bring enquiries and raise and issues.

TABLE 1 Ward Councillors and General Information

TABLE 2 Domestic Violence Team

Officers were present to promote awareness in domestic violence

TABLE 3 City Wardens

The Westcotes City Warden was present to answer queries.

TABLE 4 Riverside Rangers

Details were provided on the Riverside Rangers.

TABLE 5 Neighbourhood Policing

Local Police Officers were present to discuss matters of local concern.

At the conclusion of this informal session members of the public were invited to take their seats and take part in the formal session of the meeting.

22. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Connelly was elected as Chair of the Community Meeting.

23. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Councillor Connelly welcomed everyone to the Community Meeting and introductions were given.

24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received.

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors were asked to declare any interest they may have in the business on the agenda, and/or indicate that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them.

Councillor Connelly declared that he half owned a property on Harrow Road and a property on Wilberforce Road.

Councillor Russell declared that she was a member of the Joint Action Group.

26. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting on 11 September 2008 be agreed as a correct record.

27. CITY WARDENS

Barbara Whitcombe, City Warden Manager, gave a presentation on the Westcotes City Warden. The City Wardens were introduced to improve the environment in each ward and work closely with the community. Graham Smith was the City Warden in the Westcotes Ward and would attend the Community Meetings.

City Wardens had the power to give on the spot fines for crimes such as flytipping, enforce the removal of rubbish on private premises, and report stray and dangerous dogs. They would also report abandoned vehicles, although did not have the powers to enforce. The key ward priorities that would be focused on were uneven pavements, nuisance parking, litter, bins on street and graffiti.

In response to questions Barbara reported that:

1. when flyposters were identified they were photographed and removed, as the Council had been given the powers to remove them immediately. The organiser was then contacted and warned; if they persisted action would be taken. A process had begun to prosecute persistent offenders.
2. if graffiti was offensive it needed to be cleaned off property within 24 hours, even from private property. It was also possible to clear away long standing graffiti.
3. there had been leaflets distributed to inform residents that fines would be given if wheelie bins were left out on the street.

28. LOCAL POLICE

Inspector Ross Dimmock discussed local policing initiatives in the Westcotes Ward and its surrounding area. He reported that the biggest challenge for the area had been burglary on dwellings as this had increased by 40%. The area had been leafleted to inform residents on how to reduce the risk of burglary, such as by closing windows. It was noted that there were 40 people who had been linked to these crimes and 50% were now in prison. There had been a reduction in other areas of crime including violent crime.

In response to questions Inspector Dimmock explained that:

1. signal crimes such as graffiti had been focused on by the neighbourhood teams to improve the quality of the area.
2. there was an opportunity for victims of crime to speak up for the suspect, which could influence their sentence. The aim was to reduce the time police spent off the streets and limit unnecessary prison sentences, however this did not prevent criminals going to prison.
3. in relation to reporting crimes such as graffiti a resident may call the City Warden, however if they felt a crime has been committed they should call the police station.

29. DRAFT WARD ACTION PLAN AND BUDGET PROPOSALS

Ward Action Plan

Councillor Russell outlined the proposal to target a specific area in the ward for beneficial focused work. She explained that the police had identified areas that needed addressing between Upperton Road to Ivy Road. The budget could then be used to assist with projects such as gates on alleyways and removal of graffiti. This would be a pilot project and would aim to encourage multi agency working, including the probation service. It was noted that there were a number of issues which would need to be addressed such as access to keys for alleyway gates.

RESOLVED:

that it be agreed that the bid be supported in principle.

Budget

It was reported that an application had been submitted for signage to 'respect your neighbourhood'. There had been a number of noise problems on Bede Island and the signs would remind people to act in a reasonable manner.

RESOLVED:

that it be agreed that the bid for around £200 be supported.

30. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next meeting was 9 February 2009 at Robert Hall Memorial Baptists Church. It was anticipated that this would start at an earlier time to accommodate discussions on residents parking.

31. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

