

EASTGATE WARD COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

OPEN MEETING – THURSDAY 6TH NOVEMBER 2014, BAPTIST CHURCH, GARLAND STREET

7:00 P.M.

Welcome

Richard Whalebelly opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees. Introductions were made of the Committee and Local Councillors. He encouraged all attendees to give consideration to joining the Committee and getting involved in their local community. EWCA meets 6 times a year and anyone is welcome to come along to a Committee meeting and then decide if they wish to sit on Committee.

3 guest speakers had been secured for the evening, DCI Kim Warner, John Smithson and Revd Robert Green.

Detective Chief Inspector Kim Warner

DCI Kim Warner spoke to the meeting on themes within the crime statistics

- Burglaries in dwellings in the last 6 months – the offending criminals have come from out of county, committed crimes and disappeared so the work has been challenging.
- Wallet and purse thefts – people were encouraged to be vigilant/mindful when out in town with their purse and wallets in their bags
- Immigration – there is not a huge population but there have been problems with crime and the purse and wallet thefts have been linked to Eastern Europeans
- Public Disorder – good working relationships with licensees and premises. Proactive policing and the current economic climate has meant that the town is quieter in the evening.
- Reducing the Strength – there is a current initiative whereby licensees are not selling high % alcohol. Most licensees have signed up to the campaign.
- Safer Neighbourhood Team – attendees were encouraged to contact SNT either via the website, by telephone or through the Police Station. The SNT will focus on local priorities which are established at the Local Priority Setting Meetings on a 3 monthly basis

Questions:

- (1) Homelessness within town. DCI Warner said that this was not a huge problem, partner agencies work with individuals collectively in terms of sourcing

accommodation

- (2) Drugs - it is reported that there is not a huge problem, the current trend indicates that small groups have arrived from London / Liverpool / Peterborough and are befriending vulnerable people, putting pressure on them to take over their house and to then deal drugs from the house. A recent Crack House Closure took place at Vinefields. Covert methods led to the warrant being executed.

The Police rely on intelligence from the general public and victim impact statements also have an impact on cases.

- (3) Swan Surgery – 100 hour surgery – it came to light during the process that the police are approached for a view and gave “no comment”, it was questioned why? DCI Warner advised that throughout consultations a raft of views are sought, crime / disorder consultations are made with the local SNT.
- (4) Lynda Seldis advised that she had recently been the victim of a crime and that her response office had been kind and caring and she had been pleased with the quality of the service. DCI Warner said that this had been pleasing, they had pushed this service as they had been aware that they could have done better.
- (5) Anti-Social Behaviour – the problem had moved from St Johns Church to Looms Lane. DCI Warner suggested that this could be taken forward to the Local Priority Setting Meeting
- (6) Lighting – since the switching off of the lights there has not been an increase in crime.
- (7) Will there be cuts to Policing = DCI Warner advised that 87% of funding is on staff and £16 million has to be saved over the next 4 years. Inevitably this will impact but through collaborative work with Norfolk the front line is currently preserved within the West.
- (8) Walk in burglaries – DCI Warner advised that these had now abated, they had been quick opportunist thefts.

John Smithson, St Edmundsbury Borough Council – Parks Operational Manager

John Smithson informed the meeting of a new initiative on the Ram Meadow Water Meadow which is our local nature reserve. An Ecological survey will be undertaken it is known that there are water voles and bats on the reserve. Patsy Warby has kindly put forward the money to fund this. It is hoped that a circular walk can be created and wild flowers planted.

Volunteers are a valuable support to the Park Ranger Service, giving many hours of labour that contributes to the future of our parks. If anyone was interested in helping to maintain

and enhance parks and open spaces for the benefit of wildlife and the enjoyment of all in getting some exercise whilst meeting new people then you could join the conservation volunteer group. More information about these groups is below:

- previous experience is not essential, although an average level of fitness is needed to fully take part in all tasks;
- please wear comfortable weatherproof clothing and stout footwear;
- tools, gloves and light refreshments are provided; and
- training is provided.
- Tasks vary according to the season.
- **For more information on volunteering visit:** parks@westsuffolk.gov.uk or telephone 01284 757088

John Smithson further advised that sheep will graze on No Mans Meadow – the fencing is in place.

Ram Meadow Football Ground site – John Smithson advised that he was aware that there had been a proposal but that the planning process overfilled. Trevor Beckwith advised that it was necessary to still be vigilant as there had not been a no to the road. The site is of ecological value but it is not a **designated site** as there are not enough species. It is a local wildlife site.

The issue of the lack of bins for picking up rubbish was raised. John Smithson would take the matter forward.

Reverend Robert Green – Garland Street Baptist Church

Saturday 15th November 2014 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon Open Day at Baptist Church to view the proposed plans for the development of the facilities opposite at the the old church hall. The site will be completely redeveloped into a new hall and meeting rooms. The hall is currently used for Boys' and Girls' Brigade, carpet bowls, table tennis and youth groups.

Any Other Business

Rachel Shaw thanked all attendees and asked if there was Any Other Business

1) Sue Tamlyn queried what the reason for the roadwork's in Northgate Street had been. At one point up to 15 parking spaces were taken up because of the works.

Action: Trevor Beckwith will look into the matter

2) An issue of illegal parking at Cannonfields was raised. It is a private property and the issue is causing access problems. The property deeds are not clear. Residents wish to put up signs but sought guidance on the best place for the signs. A suggestion was made to seek the plans from Highways. Residents were also advised to contact the SNT to make them aware of the issue.

3) Sue Tamlyn raised the issue of bollards being placed on parking spaces outside the Athenaeum and who has the authority to do this

Action: Trevor Beckwith to advise

4) Pickwick Crescent – the council will repair the road 21 metres in length and 1 metre wide and then the double yellow lines will be marked. A request was made for the double yellow lines to be extended to the top of the road so that access to the resident's car park and access to the dentist is not restricted.

Action: Trevor Beckwith to pursue

5) School Hall Lane drain is blocked and has been for some time. There is a similar issue in Eastgate Street.

Action: Trevor Beckwith to pursue

6) Standing up for "God Save the Queen" at the Apex. John Smithson will establish the reasons behind the new signs at the Apex.

Meeting Close

Keith Fennelow, Treasurer advised the meeting that the EWCA funds were depleting, a donation bucket was made available.

Richard Whalebelly closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance.