

SEFTON AREA PARTNERSHIP OF LOCAL COUNCILS
Aintree Village-Formby-Hightown-Ince Blundell-Little Altcar
Lydiate-Maghull-Melling-Sefton-Thornton

Minutes of the Meeting of the Area Partnership held on Thursday 20th March, 2014 at Maghull Town Hall

PRESENT:

Cllrs M.Coles (Chair, Formby), J.Colbert (Aintree Village), G.Downey (Aintree Village), P.Gill (Guest, Aintree Village), W.Honeyman (Aintree Village), G.Gaskin (Formby), T.Asbury (Hightown), D.Warren (Hightown), I.Cowell (Clerk, Ince Blundell), A.Ibbs (Little Altcar), M.Byrne (Maghull), R.Baker (Melling), T.Carr (Melling), G.Lee (Melling), B.Draper (Sefton), C.White (Sefton), J.Hounsell (Thornton), A.Keith (Thornton), D.Miles (Thornton), Inspector Phil Hatton (Sefton Neighbourhood Inspector, Merseyside Police)

APOLOGIES:

T.Robertson (Lydiate)

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting. He was particularly pleased to welcome Inspector Phil Hatton to the meeting, and commented upon the difficulties in contacting Neighbourhood Officers in the East side of Sefton compared to the West side. Cllr Coles explained the role of the group, and explained that the group consists of the 10 Parish and Town Councils that cover the Sefton area. He then requested a summary of the problems for the areas covered by the East side of Sefton, and introductions were given.

1. GUEST SPEAKER

Inspector Phillip Hatton

1.1 Introduction

Inspector Hatton explained that until 10th November, 2013 he was the Inspector for the Maghull Neighbourhood. On 11th November, 2013 he became the Inspector for the East Sefton Neighbourhood due to structural changes within the Force. He shares responsibility for the north end with Inspector Burnham.

Previously there was 1 Dedicated Officer per Ward but due to changes in the configuration of Dedicated Patrols most Wards have lost their Dedicated Officer to a 'Neighbourhood Support Unit'. There is 1 Neighbourhood Support Unit for the north end, and another for the south end. These units are delegated to areas in priority of need. Although in some areas the Dedicated Officer has been lost, this is not the case in the Ford, Netherton and Orrell areas where the Dedicated Officer has been retained. Those areas which, have lost their Dedicated Officer, have gained in terms of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs); as is the case with Aintree.

1.2 Aintree & Melling

In response to concerns about drug dealing in Aintree, the Neighbourhood Support Unit (NSU) which incorporated 3 teams of Officers were tasked to deal with this issue. This resulted in a successful search warrant being executed, which led to 3 persons being arrested for Possession with Intent to Supply. There has also been a further arrest for Possession of Class A drugs with Intent to Supply in the Melling area.

The N.S.U. also worked with the Sefton Tactical Team who are based at Maghull Police Station, and with Officers from Knowsley and Lancashire to target a recent spike in burglaries in the area,

in creating a 'ring of steel' which covered the main arterial routes into the area. There was a notable reduction in the number of burglaries as a result.

The N.S.U. are not currently targeting Aintree and Melling.

Two males have also been arrested in relation to recent robberies in the HEYSHAM ROAD area.

There has been a spike in the number of calls reporting Anti-Social Behaviour in the Melling area of late. It has been reported that groups of up to 10 youths have been roaming around the area. PCSOs will be tasked in the first instance to tackle this issue, then the deployment of NSUs and other tactical options, such as horses, Armed Response Vehicles and the Matrix will be considered.

1.3 Questions/Comments

- (a) The difficulty between perception and what's actually being done was raised, as was the lack of visible policing.
Inspector Hatton appreciates that nowadays the public don't see as much of the 'bobby on the beat' as we would like to.
- (b) The problems with youths in Station Road and Mark Avenue in Melling were raised, as they were at the "Have Your Say" meeting last Friday.
Reported crime figures for Melling are generally low. It's all a matter of prioritisation. It's difficult to balance deployment of resources and public reassurance; given current limits on resources and budgets.
- (c) Is the reduction of resources in Melling and Aintree likely to continue?
The reduction of resources in these areas came about as a direct result of the force wide restructure. Those resources which, have already been lost, are unlikely to be reinstated in future.
- (d) Are there any available resources to target the problem with Scrambler bikes?
Pictures for the Lunt area have been received of offenders using these bikes. It is believed that many of these bikes are coming from outside the area. Although Merseyside Police do have an off road capability in terms of specially trained Officers on quad bikes, they cannot get involved with pursuits due to the danger this presents. Inspector Hatton states they will conduct an Operation to target this problem, if the request can be justified. Action could involve increased visibility and targeting the vans bringing these bikes into the area.
- (e) The proposed deregulation bill regarding the use of mechanically propelled vehicles on unsealed roads was raised.
Inspector Hatton agreed that this could have an impact on policing, and stated he would be interested to know if the Council would provide a legal facility.
- (f) Problems with off road bikes using the location of Sefton Lane by the Alt was also raised. The successful use of barriers at the Cheshire lines access point was mentioned.
Intelligence has been received in relation to this, and Merseyside Police are planning to set up an Operation there soon. Barriers are only successful if closed.
- (g) It was queried if any member Parishes were contributing towards 'Smart Water'?
Little Altcar Parish Council confirmed they were contributing towards this. Every burglary victim does receive a free Smart Water installation, and Neighbourhood Watch teams can get this at a reduced cost. Further funding is required for this, and Inspector Hatton reported that they have just 20 Smart Water kits left. Patrols are equipped with UV torches, which will highlight any Smart Water activations. Smart Water is a very effective investigative measure.
- (f) Is a Community Messaging scheme, like that currently in place in Knowsley, going to be implemented in Sefton?
An email and Twitter scheme is imminent.

- (g) Comment was made about the successful 'Beach Safe' scheme.
Inspector Hatton reported that the Beach Safe scheme is to be extended to include Crosby Beach. The 'Rimrose Valley Plan' will mirror the Beach Safe scheme.
- (h) How does Sefton fit in with the Knowsley area?
They work in Partnership on joint operations with them.
- (i) The scale of the drugs problem was queried, and the Parishes asked what they can do to assist?
Vigilance and reporting any concerns to the Police is key. The Fire Service heat sensor was recently deployed, and several cannabis farms were detected. In Aintree Village local residents have been asked to keep logs of any suspicious cars that are seen coming and going. A Partnership approach is vital.
- (j) The need to advertise the use of the '101' number in local press was raised.
This number is being promoted at every opportunity.
- (j) The cost of PCSOs and their limitations was raised.
Inspector Hatton spoke favourably about the use of PCSOs.

The Chair thanked Inspector Hatton for his attendance and contribution.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (16/01/14)

Clr Lee proposed that the Minutes were a true and accurate record of the previous Meeting and Clr Byrne seconded this. The group was in agreement.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

- * New Clerk details for Melling Parish Council - 11/2/14
→ Miss Pamela Crilly
98 Northway, Maghull, Liverpool, L31 5NF.
(0151) 531 9679 / mellingparish@aol.com
- (*) The Secretary agreed to circulate this information to the Parish Clerks as per the request of the Chair**
- * Various positive email responses to email sent re: GILLMOSS Visit - 4/2/14-16/2/14
- Peter Gill, Fred Forrest, Tony Robertson, Sean Brady, David Warren, Gerry Lee, Gordon Harrison, Alan Brown, Ron Baker, Barbara Karran & Ann Ibbs
- (*) It was agreed that Monday would be the preferred day for this visit. The Secretary will enquire about available dates.**
- * Paul Nolan, Mersey Forest - 24/2/14
(The Mersey Forest Plan 2014)
- * Clr Mike Coles, Formby Parish Council - 24/2/14
(Sefton's Monthly Tracker – January 2014)
- * Gary Berwick, Cleansing Department Sefton MBC - 4/3/14
(Information about GILLMOSS Recycling Depot Visit)

(*) Concern was raised about the lack of information about the new recycling bins. It is understood the new brown bin will only be for a bi-weekly collection of cardboard and plastics. Cllr Carr to forward an email about this to the Secretary for circulation.

- * Cllr Mike Coles, Formby Parish Council - 4/3/14
(Date for CSAC Meeting: 12/3/14 / Are any members raising questions?)
 - * Margie Kirk, SMBC - 5/3/14
(Declining invite on behalf of Andrea Watts to attend meeting 20/3/14)
 - * Cllr David Warren, Hightown Parish Council - 7/3/14
(Request to discuss Council Year Book)
 - * Ian Cowell, Clerk Ince Blundell Parish Council - 9/3/14
(Information about the David Pluck Betting Office Proposal)
 - * Paul Fraser, SMBC - 10/3/14
(Request for individual Councillor Contact Details for Year Book)
→ The Secretary has responded and explained that due to Data Protection she is unable to provide this information, and has suggested that he make contact with individual Parish Clerks instead
 - * Cllr Mike Coles, Formby Parish Council - 10/3/14
(Information about a possible change to a .7 mile stretch of footpath in Lydiate known as 'Lydiate 24')
 - * Stephen Birch, SMBC - 18/3/14
(Progress Update : Thornton to Switch Island Link Road)
- (*) There has been a slight delay to the Switch Island Link Road due wet weather conditions making it impossible to remove surface soil**
- * Cllr Tony Carr, Melling Parish Council - 19/3/14
(Invite to "Your Transport, Your Say" – Merseytravel Transport Forum : Tuesday 15/4/14, 1.30-3pm at Guild Hall, Church Road, Formby, L37 3NG)

6. PARISH CHARTER

6.1 General Overview

The Chair made reference to an amended version of the Parish Charter dated 21/3/14, and was seeking agreement and comments on the Charter in its' current format.

It was deemed necessary to review the Charter for various reasons; not least because of the Area Committee restructure. As such the Working Group recently met at Maghull Town Hall to review the Charter. The Working Group will reconvene with SMBC next week to discuss this matter. There is a clear willingness to work with SMBC to try and make the Charter work. It was agreed that should there be a need to compromise on any of the clauses of the Charter, then the Working Group will report back and consult with the group.

Since Parish and Town Councils are now undertaking tasks previously done by SMBC, it is vital to achieve better communication with SMBC and to ensure a 'level playing field' for all member Councils. The notable lack of communication between Parish Councillors, Officers and Ward Councillors in Formby was raised. Comment was made that Parish Councils should not be footing the bill for things SMBC should be paying for.

The Chair will endeavour to ensure that Neighbourhood and Local Plans, and the Localism Act feature in the Charter given Planning is a key issue concerning us all. He will go with the best tactical Option.

6.2 Questions / Comments

- (a) If SMBC break the terms of the Charter, would they in turn break the Code of Conduct?
The Code of Conduct doesn't compel SMBC staff to adhere to it, but merely sets out a practical way of working to them. It would have to be agreed with SMBC to be enforceable. It's more likely to be a voluntary Code of Conduct, which wouldn't be enforceable.
- (b) According to guidelines Cllr Warren cannot be on the Review Committee, although he can stand on the Initial & Hearing Committee. The need for SMBC to provide obligatory briefings for all new Parish Councillors was raised.
It was decided to leave things as they are for now. The names of the 3 representatives will be Cllr Jack Colbert, Cllr David Warren and Cllr Gerry Lee.
- (c) The issue about SMBC notifying Parish/Town Councils about Planning Applications affecting them was raised.
The following points were made:-
** All Planning Applications are listed by area online.*
** The difficulty in locating particular applications was raised.*
** In making reference to point (32) which reads, "Notify Parish Councils about Planning Applications", this was considered to be ambiguous and may give SMBC scope to just say they are notifying Parish and Town Councils since the information is posted online.*
- (d) In view of the recent DAVID PLUCK Betting Office application in Formby, the Chair has made representations to CSAC that Parish and Town Councils should be consulted about Licensing Applications affecting them, given the impact such applications could have for them.
- (e) The group was asked for their opinions on the new Area Committee.
*Comments were made which ranged from the meetings being poorly attended, and so big and diverse that issues affecting us are not covered. It was also deemed that this group is more appropriate to our needs. **The Chair agreed to send a letter to Margaret Carney, Chief Executive of SMBC giving our views on the Area Committee.***

7. FUTURE SPEAKERS

- * Andrea Watts, SMBC (Parish Charter) - 29/5/14
- * Mark Long, SMBC Economics Officer (Handling Liverpool City Region Work)
- * Ken Clarey, Chair of SALC (General local issues)

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No items of Other Business were raised.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on **Thursday 29th May, 2014** in the Council Chamber at Maghull Town Hall commencing at 7.30pm.