

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

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**Minutes of the Meeting of the Area Partnership held on Thursday 19th November, 2015 at Maghull Town Hall**

**PRESENT:**

Cllrs G.Lee (Chair, Melling), J.Colbert (Aintree Village), R.Preston (Aintree Village), M.Coles (Formby), P.Wiencke (Formby), T.Asbury (Hightown), D.Warren (Hightown), I.Cowell (Clerk, Ince Blundell), K.Sharpe (Ince Blundell), A.Ibbs (Little Altcar), J.Desmond (Maghull), R.Baker (Melling), J.Duffy (Clerk, Sefton), M.Duffy (Sefton), C.Jones (Sefton), D.Miles (Thornton), Jane Kennedy (Police Commissioner, Merseyside Police), Jen Currie (Community Engagement Officer, Merseyside Police), MP Bill Esterson

**APOLOGIES:**

Cllrs M.Byrne (Maghull), A.Carr (Melling), K.Hounsell (Thornton)

The Chair welcomed and thanked the Guest Speakers for their attendance, and gave mention to the petition currently being circulated by Police Commissioner Jane Kennedy against the proposed cuts to Policing. A minute's silence was then held in memory of the recent atrocity in Paris.

**1. GUEST SPEAKERS**

**1.1 Police Commissioner – Jane Kennedy**

**“Future Possible Cuts to Merseyside Police”**

**1.1.1 UPDATE**

When Jane previously addressed the group on 28/11/13 she spoke about the Change to local Police Stations, and the proposal for 5 areas each with its' own Headquarters.

The Force is now working through the details of what the next stage of Government Cuts could mean for them, and Jane made reference to a shocking meeting between herself and the Chief Constable to discuss how the Force intends to face these Cuts whilst staying functional.

From 2010 to-date Merseyside Police has lost 1600 Police Officers plus other support staff. In the next 3-4 years an additional loss of 1400 staff is anticipated. It is expected that Specialist Units such as the Sigma and Matrix teams will have to be integrated, and the PCSO role will be disbanded since the Force will simply not be able to afford to keep them in post, even though the Public do depend on them. Notably before this cull started, Merseyside Police had a workforce of approximately 7500. It now also looks like the 5 Boundary areas will be erased.

**1.1.2 ACTIONS TAKEN**

Jane has already written to Members of Parliament and the House of Lords about these proposed Cuts.

A non-party political petition supported by the Police Federation, Unison, and the Force itself has been circulated. Within a week of being publicised, this petition had received 10,000 signatures online, and to-date this petition has 15,000 signatures. This only goes to prove that there is great anxiety from the Public about further cutbacks to their local Police Force and resources.

### 1.1.3 PARIS INCIDENT

In reflecting upon the terrible recent terrorism attack in Paris, Jane said that she hoped a positive outcome would be a rethink on Police Budgets. An indication on this may be given next Thursday when the Chancellor announces the Spending Review. In stressing the value of PCSOs, Jane mentioned that 7 terrorist attacks had been foiled, potentially as a result of PCSOs, due to the important link they provide to the Community, in terms of their approachability and ability to gather intelligence.

### 1.1.4 QUESTIONS / COMMENTS

(a) The proposal to cut the number of Police Officers on our streets is madness. Is there any indication that these proposed cuts might be softened as a result of the recent incident in Paris? Also is it true that 2000 staff will be recruited to the Government Central Headquarters (GCHQ)? *Prior to the Paris attack Local Government had agreed with the Treasury to cut the Policing Budget by 30% over the next 3 years. Jane is still praying for a rethink on this, and a strongly worded letter has already been sent by the Chief Officer of ACPO about this. Jane added that there is clearly a need for 2000 staff to be recruited to GCHQ.*

(b) If the PCSO role is disbanded, what's Merseyside Police's strategy for Community Policing? *Jane stressed that Cutting Crime and making our Communities safer for all is a key priority. In addition to this, in her Police and Crime Plan Jane identifies the additional 4 priorities listed below.*

- \* *Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour*
- \* *Providing a visible and accessible neighbourhood policing style*
- \* *Tackling serious and organised crime*
- \* *Supporting victims, protecting vulnerable people and maintaining public safety*

*Jane's challenge to Merseyside Police is to ensure they maintain a Community Police Service. She anticipates that Neighbourhood teams will be more thinly spread, and are likely to consist of Police Constables and a Police Sergeant. It's possible that the 999 response team will utilise Community facilities for rest periods, to make them accessible to the Public.*

(c) In view of the threat of terrorist activity, the ability of specialist Armed Response Units to respond was raised.

*It was explained that Merseyside Police have a different tactic to those Officers deployed in Paris. There are fewer specialist Counter Terrorism Units, but much more effort is put into the detection of terrorist activity, and stopping terrorist attacks before they occur. Armed Officers are trained to 'shoot to kill' and to aim for the centre of the body when threatened with lethal force. Merseyside Police current has 4 ARV Units with 2 Officers in each Unit.*

*Jane believes that the ARV tactics might have to be reconsidered; since it is possible to meet lethal force with a less lethal response dependant on how the situation presents itself. She also believes that introducing more weapons to more Officers would be a mistake, since the Public response to them would then be different.*

(d) Comment was made that is wrong that Ministers get extra protection at the expense of the Public.

*Jane explained that the Police have a legal obligation to protection persons under direct threat.*

(e) The Rifle Range at Hightown and it's subsequent risk as a terrorist target was discussed, since this site can have up to 600 soldiers present at any one time. Interestingly the Army cannot 'shoot to kill', but merely have the right to shoot to protect their own property and stop any potential threat posed. The Police do visit this site 4 times daily.

- \* Johnny Duffy, Clerk to Sefton Parish Council commented on the sterling work Merseyside Police does and also requested more copies of the Petition leaflet.
  - Jane agreed to try and get more copies sent to him.

## 1.2 MP Bill Esterson

MP Bill Esterson firstly reflected upon the recent Paris attack. He spoke about the significant differences between the UK and Europe, and stressed that we should not forget the 7/7 terrorist attack, nor become complacent as the likelihood of repeat attacks on the UK remains high.

Although it is not possible to predict the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review, he expects there will be change around Counter Terrorism spending. Bill fears the effect that 30% cuts to Local Government Spending could have on Policing, and he clearly sees the need for Neighbourhood Policing to help protect us from Counter Terrorism. Bill then spoke of the economic effect that anti-social behaviour can have on small businesses if an area is considered not to feel safe.

### “Small and medium sized Enterprises”

#### 1.2.1 INTRODUCTION

Bill explained that he ran a small business for 15 years prior to being elected in 2010. Bill clearly sees the value of small businesses, which offer services people rely on, and are a key part of our Communities. He believes we should ‘champion’ these small firms, which are key to the success of the local Community. As such Bill has been working with the “Small Business Saturday” team, who will be hosting the Small Business Saturday event on 5/12/15 – a day aimed at encouraging people to spend money locally, and to support local businesses.

This team aims to,

- \* Promote what small businesses do and to offer them support
- \* Promote a level playing field between large and small businesses in Sefton

#### 1.2.2 QUESTIONS / COMMENTS

- (a) It was queried if there had been any discussions with the Banks, which are key to the success of local businesses.  
*Bill explained that he had met with the Royal Bank of Scotland last night. It is apparent to him that there has not been a recovery in lending to small firms by the Banks as yet. Bill also met with a representative of ‘Rate Setter’ yesterday, who offer match funding/lending rather than standard loans. This is potentially a means for smaller firms to access funding, given that the Banks don’t appear to be lending.*
- (b) Comment was made that land in Formby had been purchased by the firm who run Cheshire Oaks for a possible Outlet Village.  
*Bill said he had no knowledge of this.*
- (c) In view of recent improvements to Manchester Victoria Station, and mention of improvements to tram stops in Manchester, it was queried when we can expect to see better transport links in Merseyside?  
*Bill stated that Manchester has had a very successful arrangement between Local Authorities for many years, and still does. The Devolution deal is currently under discussion, and the re-regulation of buses has been raised, which Liam Robinson, the Chair of Merseytravel is very supportive of.*
- (d) The need to adjust local infrastructure to accommodate the Peel Holding Port developments was raised, and also the need to support inventors and major companies who provide many opportunities for the smaller investor.  
*If we are to thrive locally on the back of the Port investment it’s essential we have both intermediate and advanced level technical skills. Small businesses are part of creative and manufacturing industries that are essential for success.*
- (e) The need to protect local Pubs was raised, since they are vital small businesses in our Communities. It was suggested that Supermarkets should be targeted about their low alcohol prices, which in turn are forcing many local Pubs out of business.  
*Interestingly there has been a bit of a renaissance in Pubs and the real ale industry. Bill reported*

*that the Scotch Piper is now back in the Real Ale guide, and that micro breweries in Formby and Maghull have opened too.*

- (f) Concerns were raised about accidents, pollution and congestion resulting from increased traffic using the Port of Liverpool following the improvements.  
*Bill agreed that there is a definite need to improve rail freight, and added that Peel Holdings have negotiated an additional 6 slots/day for rail freight. Bill has previously raised such concerns in the House of Commons and will continue to do so. There is a clear need for links to Hull, and the closure of rail freight terminals across the country is ridiculous.*
- (g) Why can't HS2 use the normal railway lines, as is the case in France, rather than destroying more countryside?  
*Unfortunately the capacity of the existing rail network is full. There is simply no space within the existing timetables.*

## **2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (17/9/15)**

Cllr Wiencke proposed that the Minutes were a true and accurate record of the Meeting and Cllr Warren seconded this. Those present were in agreement.

## **3. MATTERS ARISING**

### **3.1 Misspelling**

Apologies to Cllr Pengelly whose name was misspelt on the previous Minutes.

### **3.2 Hightown Village Surgery/SSP**

Raised under point 3: 'Correspondence' in the previous Minutes, it was reported that the couple who owned SSP have been discharged from running most of the 8 Practices in the Borough of Sefton. Cllr Asbury stated that although he had presented to the group at the last meeting on the current situation with SSP, he was unaware of the email from John Joseph Kelly about this. The Secretary asked Cllr Asbury to provide clarification to her so that this point can be amended.

### **3.3 Parish Charter**

Raised under point 6: 'Parish Charter' in the previous Minutes, it was stressed that the reluctance of some SMBC Personnel to accept the Parish Charter should be raised with Andrea Watts as a matter of urgency. The Chair suggested raising this issue at the next Area Committee meeting, and also inviting Andrea Watts to a future meeting. Sefton Parish Council reported that they have since presented Gary Berwick of SMBC's Cleansing team with a bound copy of the Parish Charter after it became apparent that he was not aware of its' existence. This point was reiterated by other members present who spoke about other Officers who had not heard of the Parish Charter.

## **4. CORRESPONDENCE**

- \* Cllr Jack Colbert/Cllr Stephen Gent, Aintree Village PC - 3/10/15
    - Advising of creation of Personal Committee in view of the proposed Police Cutbacks. Notification that this will be placed as an Agenda item at their next meeting.
  - \* Kevin Sharpe, Chair – Ince Blundell PC - 22/10/15
    - Advising that Coriolis are in the process of submitting a Planning Application to West Lancs Council Planning department for a 12 turbine Wind Farm in the Lower Alt area. He adds that 98% of Ince Blundell are against this proposal.
- *The need to clarify what has already been said about this to West Lancs Council was raised. It was suggested that a small Focus group be set up to prepare a letter on this matter. It's expected that Coriolis will represent their Application in the next 2 months, therefore time is limited. Councillors Lee, Warren and Clerks Ian Cowell and Johnny Duffy were appointed to the Focus group. The Application was previously rejected on a technical matter. Coriolis must demonstrate that they've dealt with all concerns raised by the local Community, and that the Community are supportive of the Application. Cllr Sharpe stated that the representatives present at the recent Consultation event held in Ince Blundell Hall were very poorly informed, and the images depicted in their literature were not reflective of the Lunt and Sefton Village areas.*

- \* Carole White, PA to Margaret Carney SMBC Chief Executive - 28/10/15  
- A contact list was forward outlining Officers per department
- \* Patricia Annal, Maghull Town Hall - 28/10/15  
- Request to start 17/11/15 meeting later due to Civic Service
- \* Cllr Gerry Lee, Melling PC - 3/11/15  
- Melling PC are looking into the possibility of a **Dog DNA database**, like in Malaga in Spain. This enables owners who allow their dogs to foul to be tracked. In July 2012 Melling PC contact SMBC to try and get a specific Byelaw introduced requiring dog owners to display poo bags on their dog's lead. This however was unsuccessful as it was stated there were other Acts and Powers already in place to cover this.
- *Cllr Lee requested the group's authority to submit this idea to SMBC. The group was in agreement since this is still an important Service issue, but stressed this should be at cost to the dog owner. The Secretary will send a letter on the behalf of the group.*
- \* Cllr Anthony Pengelly, Thornton PC - 5/11/15  
- Cllr Pengelly contacted the Secretary to report that his surname had been misspelt on the previous Minutes. The Secretary stressed the need to **print** and not **sign in** on the attendance sheet
- \* Cllr Gerry Lee, Melling PC - 8/11/15  
- Agreeing to provisional meeting dates for 2016
- \* MP Bill Esterson - 9/11/15  
- Confirmation of attendance for 17/11/15
- \* Noel James, Historic Towns Forum - 12/11/15  
- Historic Towns Forum Newsletter : Internal & external landscapes
- \* Cllr Mike Coles, Formby PC - 14/11/15  
- Request for previous Minutes of Meeting with Jane Kennedy from November 2013
- \* SMBC Planning Department - 17/11/15, 10/11/15  
- Weekly Planning Lists + 5/11/15
- \* Johnny Duffy, Clerk – Sefton PC - 19/11/15  
- Suggestion for 1 minute silence at the beginning of the meeting in memory of the victims of the Paris Terrorist Attacks
- \* Elizabeth Payne, Grant Manager – Burbo Bank Extension Community Fund - 19/11/15  
- The 1<sup>st</sup> round of successful projects will be announced soon and the deadline for the next funding round is 7/3/16.

## 5. FUTURE SPEAKERS

- \* Ian Maher, Leader of Sefton Council  
- SMBC Budgets / possible withdrawal of Precept & scrapping of S.106 monies
- \* Andrea Watts, SMBC  
- Parish Charter
- \* Area Commander, Merseyside Police
- \* Cllr Carl Brennar  
- Fracking

## 6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### 6.1 Liverpool Echo article

In view of recent Cllr Hounsell made reference to a recent article in the Liverpool Echo, which referred to Isis fighters as cowards.

## **6.2 Meeting Dates - 2016**

The Secretary explained that she has provisionally booked the Council Chamber for the following dates having compiled a list of member Councils' Meeting dates and looked at her own availability. Whilst the dates for January and March are definite, the other dates are subject to confirmation when the Secretary hears if her work roster will change from April 2016.

### **Thursday 28/1/16 + 13/3/16**

Thursday 19/5/16, 21/7/16, 28/9/16 + 1/12/16

## **6.3 Transparency Fund**

From July 2015 smaller Councils with a budget of less than £25k should have been publicising any expenditure of £100+. All Councillor names and Council Minutes also have to appear on a website. The National Association of Local Councils have launched their *Transparency Fund*, which can provide funding of up to £350 for a computer and £100 for a printer to successful Councils.

## **7. AREA ROUND UP**

### **7.1 Aintree Village PC**

\* Reported on a successful Civic Service, which MP Bill Esterson attended, although Cllr Tony Carr was not present.

### **7.2 Formby PC**

\* Discussions are ongoing about the Local Plan  
\* Planting has been undertaken in the Village.

### **7.3 Hightown PC**

\* The Local Surgery has been secured; as have the Formby, Freshfield and Thornton Surgeries  
\* A 20 mph speed limit is being imposed on the roads in the Village  
\* War Memorial restoration – 3 possible funds for this have been identified  
\* Solar Farm between Hightown and Ince Blundell – a revised Planning Application is expected soon

### **7.4 Ince Blundell PC**

\* Discussions are ongoing about the Local Plan  
\* Wind Turbines (discussed under item 4 : Correspondence)

### **7.5 Maghull TC**

\* There has been mention of a Steering group being set up for the Centenary Celebrations and a Budget in Principle has been agreed for this.

### **7.6 Melling PC**

\* The progress on their Local Plan has been stalled due to the absence of the Lead Councillor on this

### **7.7 Sefton PC**

\* The issue of a problematic resident complaining about the ringing of the Church bells and flood lighting, who has requested the installation of double yellow lines outside the Church and also been problematic to Church Users was raised. In 2013 the same resident of Mill Cottages requested that trees in the Church Yard were cut down due to light issues. SPC gave funds towards this; which amounted to 1/3 of their precept, and the male is now requesting this be done again. A letter to this resident has been drafted, declining to undertake the works again on the basis of finance and precedent; given that the trees form part of the background to the Church, which is in a Conservation area.

\* Reference was made to a fence, which had been erected without Planning permission being granted

\* Traffic through the Village has increased following the opening of the A5758 Link Road

\* Sefton Church is to amalgamate with St Oswald's Church, Netherton

\* It is feared that an unlit turning point proposed by SMBC for the top of Back Lane would turn this

area into a Fly tipper's Paradise.

## **8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of this group will be held on Thursday 28th January, 2016 at 7.30pm in the Council Chamber at Maghull Town Hall.