

Gosport Neighbourhood Watch Association

Minutes of Neighbourhood Watch Mtg & AGM
Saturday 3rd Sept 2016 at Bay House School at 2 pm

Introductions:

Carole Rudin (CR) our Chairman welcomed all coordinators, neighbours and our special guests: Michael Lane (Police and Crime Commissioner), Chief Insp. Claire Jenkins, Chief Insp. Sharon Woolrich, Sgnt. Lesley Meenaghan, Councillor John Beavis and Kirsty Cremer from Motiv8.

Attendance:

Total attendance was 104 which included members, guests and visitors. 43 schemes were represented by a coordinator or deputy. A list of the attendees will be retained by the Association Secretary.

Many thanks to those who sent an apology.

The following notes are a summary of the presentations given at the meeting:

Michael Lane - PCC for Hampshire and IOW

ML has been in post for 100 days and relishes the demanding challenges such as the need to modernise the Police and cope with a shortage of funds.

He emphasised the importance and value of neighbourhood watch (NHW) and all volunteers who want to build safer communities.

The latest draft of his Police and Crime Plan is available for comment and he welcomes our input.

He spoke about a perception that officers were not visible on the street and how the Police response to 'Threat and Harm' and where to put resources to best protect the public. The changing nature of crime needs a different response from in the past.

There was a discussion about respect for the Police, the lack of consequences for anti-social behaviour – and how community pressure was needed to combat bad behaviour.

The emergency services can't be expected to deal with all the issues – the community needs to teach, coach and put pressure on residents to conform.

Chief Inspector Claire Jenkins – Gosport's Police Commander

From two years' experience in Gosport she knows we have a strong and resilient community and after 20 years in the police she is well aware of the changing crime types.

She spoke of some examples where the public might not be unaware – such as child sexual exploitation and domestic abuse. If you have gut feelings that something is 'not right' then you should speak out – NHW are key partners for the Police.

A question was raised about the relocation of the Police station and CI Jenkins confirmed that they will move to the council office at the end of November – and there will be a front office provision.

Sgnt. Lesley Meenaghan – Neighbourhood policing team

LM spoke about an initiative started in Brighton and now being tried in Gosport to identify ten young people who are in 'unhealthy relationships' and where there is child to parent/sibling abuse. **Break4Change** aims to create changes in young people who are out of control – and break the isolation of affected parents.

Q&A

LM answered questions about cycling on the pavement – saying the police do target hot spots and they work with schools on cycle safety and security – but they need information from the public.

LM spoke about the current issues with drug dealing. The problems with 'legal highs' has been reduced by working with partner agencies. If Class A drug users are supported then the activity of suppliers is less of a problem.

The Integrated Offender Management team are able to address many of the personal issues that lead to drug misuse.

Chief Inspector Sharon Woolrich

The police districts of Gosport and Fareham are now integrated and CI Woolrich has taken over as district commander and CI Jenkins moves to the expanded Havant/Waterlooville/Petersfield district.

Kirsty Cremer – Motiv8

A locally based charity, Motiv8 exists to improve the life chances of young people. We do this to reduce the risk of offending, anti-social behaviour and disengagement from learning or employment

We work with young people between 9 and 19 and soon to expand and start at 7 years

Our vision is a society where all young people are healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being.

We believe in developing the whole person and increasing soft skills including self-confidence and self-esteem alongside delivering hard outcomes.

Three main areas of concern:

1. Community - Reducing offending and re-offending

A reduction in the number of first time entrants and total number of offenders in the youth criminal justice system

2. Education - School Attendance

Improved attendance at secondary school, contributing to improved and accredited attainment both in school and beyond

3. Employment Progression

Young people over the age of 16 progressing in Education or moving into Training and Employment

Operation Divert

With our Police officers and funding from the PCC, Motiv8 delivered a 10 week programme aimed at reducing anti-social behaviour (ASB) in a designated neighbourhood. Police identified the young people to invite and through Motiv8's engagement 100% retention was maintained throughout. The programme explored consequences, choices and expectations. Police reported zero ASB during, and in the aftermath, of Operation DIVERT.

Due to its success DIVERT has been repeated in other places around the borough of Havant and in Gosport and Portsmouth.

Our chairman – Carole Rudin thanked our guests and speakers for their time and interesting message.

Neighbourhood Watch – the way forward – Carole Rudin

Communications:

Neighbourhood watch is all about good communication – and one of the main roles of a coordinator is to keep their members regularly briefed about any issues that might affect their safety or security.

Hampshire Alert:

We are fortunate that our Police are using Alert – the latest instant community messaging system - which is now being used by many of the Police forces all over the country. This means that the police can get information or warnings to us without delay. At the moment there are 580 residents in Gosport who receiving messages from this system - but only 37 coordinators are using it - this means that I have to copy the Alerts to the other coordinators – this can cause delays and it's a bit unnecessary I think you agree.

The way forward we believe is to get all coordinators onto the system so they get messages directly from the police – and this will be our task in the next few months.

E mail links:

It's not my place to tell coordinator how to get these vital messages to their scheme members – it's what they volunteered to do!

With so many people using e-mail these days, this must be the fastest and easiest way – so if you don't do this already – spend a useful hour collecting their e-mails.

Doing this, you will identify who doesn't use e-mail – and who needs some other route for messages – how about asking a neighbour to be their e-mail buddy – and print it out for them?

If you need some help collecting e mail addresses – I'm sure we can find someone to help you – just ask!

Facebook:

We mustn't forget Facebook – we started using this a couple of years ago to try and reach folk in Gosport who don't have a NW scheme – but who might be grateful for our messages – and the number of people looking at our page has grown to 1130 'Likes'.

You don't need to get a Facebook account and learn how to use it – you just need to go to our 'page' and read all the latest messages – this is another way of getting information to your neighbours – they may already use Facebook.

Once again - if you need any help to see how to use it –Just ask - and we can find someone to support you

Future plans

NHW is a very strong brand – a recent independent survey showed only 1% of the public had not heard of us – and 75% would join if they knew how or were asked

90% of members believe NW reduces crime – and 95% members say it increases good community interaction – so with all these positive figures – so there is a lot more we could do in Gosport!

Over the next few months we will be developing a 5 year plan – and want to involve our coordinators in this – obviously we will be aligned the PCCs latest Crime Plan and will consult with the Police and Councils Safety Partnership.

Involving younger members of the community:

How can we get some young people involved with our crime prevention message? There are some examples in Sussex where NW people are involved in after school clubs delivering a 'good citizenship' message. We are already talking to the Police Cadets about how we can support them and at the same time learn from them.

Vulnerable neighbours:

We want to help you, our coordinators, develop your understanding of how our vulnerable neighbours can be the subject of certain crimes and scams - and how you can support them further.

There are lots of opportunities to help build stronger and safer communities – but we will need some support from you.

If you would like to help us – learn more about what we are trying to do - just give me a call and we can have a chat - without obligation

For instance we need someone who can write short pieces about NW that go into our free press – or even the Portsmouth News - would you like to have a go?

As always - we can help you with faded street signs – for a few pounds we will clean and refresh them and make them as good as new.

PawsWatch:

Another way we have tried to encourage other Gosport residents to keep their eyes open and report anything suspicious is Paws Watch – and our mascot Eddy and John will now tell you about what we hope to achieve.

John Gledhill & Eddy

We started Pawswatch to try and involve the dog walking community – who are out and about at all hours in all weathers – and hopefully keeping their eyes open so they can help the community – report suspicious cars or people, report fly tipping or dog fouling – or any of these things that blight our neighbourhood.

We used to live and work in the same community – but these days we have different community groups – work groups or social activity clubs – and NW need to engage with all of them to spread our simple message about keeping safe building caring communities.

A fly tipping alert on our facebook page was seen by 5000 residents – and Streetscene did a great job sorting it out.

Can you help us to identify community groups where we can spread the crime prevention message?

AGM Business

Bob Combes the Association Secretary asked for a show of hands from the coordinators or their deputy (if they were representing their scheme).

This verified we had a quorum for any vote.

Report on the work of the committee – Bob Combes

First of all I would like to thank the most important people in our organisation – that's all you NHW coordinators and helpers who give your time freely to support your neighbours – helping to build caring communities.

On your behalf I thank our Police team who do a pretty good job at keeping us safe in Gosport and encourage us in our NW work

We must also thank our local councillors who take an interest in our Association and what we are trying to achieve and of course the Council and their Safety Partnership team.

We are all interested in the same thing – building resilient and safe neighbourhoods.

I've got records of our NW activities going back to 1996 – that's 20 years – and I'm sure some of you will tell me they have been in a NHW scheme much longer than that.

As you would expect from an organisation that's been going for a few years – we need to regenerate our self – longstanding coordinators step down and we need to find eager caring volunteers to replace them.

This takes quite a lot of effort – and is not always successful. I would like to thank Carole on your behalf for taking a leading role in this and doing quite a bit of door knocking, bringing new blood into our organisation.

Over the year with some schemes disbanding and others starting up, we now have 125 schemes ,40 less than last year, which is disappointing – but we must look to the future.

Again, led by Carole we have been trying to increase our profile in the community – Barbara Hewson has done a great job putting flyers and posters in shops, surgeries, libraries and any community meeting place she can find.

I hope you see our regular articles in the free press – just reminding people we are here to help if they want.

Our Facebook page is quite a success – another way to get raise our profile - and hopefully get the NW message to folk who not yet linked in

We supported the Councils Community Safety day in March in the Town Hall square – it wasn't quite the coldest day of the year – but close.

We used this event to launch our Paws watch initiative – and I want to thank John Gledhill and Eddy for driving this forward.

As you've heard Carole say – we want to do more to raise our profile – and show residents that our organisation is still relevant. Getting neighbours to talk to each other, keep an eye out for each other, if they see something suspicious or something they are concerned about - don't ignore it.

Any ideas you've got on how we could improve or do things differently we would love to hear from you.

If you would like to help – in any small way then please give us a call and we can have a chat.

Finance report – Mike Moncur (Treasurer)

The finance report was distributed and a summary will be attached to the minutes.

The year end a/c stands at £2082.65

MM asked if there were any questions - if not can the accounts be accepted?

Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Mr J Rogers, seconded by Marie Fearne – and unanimously accepted by the voting members.

Election of committee:

BC explained that the committee stand down each year and can stand again if they wish. This year Mike Moncur has decided not to stand again – and so BC thanked him on behalf of the Association for his work over the last few years.

The following people have agreed to stand

Carole Rudin, Alan Scard, Barbara Hewson, John Gledhill and Bob Combes.

It was agreed they should be considered en bloc.

Mrs J Barton proposed they should be elected and seconded by M. Fearne

There was unanimous acceptance from the voting members.

Next committee meeting will be on Monday 18th October 2016

Closing remarks:

Carole Rudin thanked our guests and speakers.

She thanked our Police team for the work they do to keep us safe - and thanked the Safer Gosport Team in the Borough Council for their continuing support.