

Notes taken at a meeting of the Services Focal Group

Date 4th May 2005

Present:

Gerry Burton

Judy Wilkinson

Ken Butler

Subject –Community Policing, Crime and vandalism

KGB explained that the purpose of the meeting followed on from the last Steering Group meeting at which some of the initial findings from the questionnaires were discussed.

It had been decided that the appropriate Focal Group should meet to make a start at looking into specific issues that seemed to be a common worry amongst those responding. In our case this was Community Policing, Crime and Vandalism.

Following some discussion it was agreed that we should look at the issues under the following headings:

- a) Schoolchildren, vandalism, nuisance, antisocial behaviour problems.
- b) Burglary including theft from and damage to cars.
- c) Non- licensed 'door knocking' hawkers.
- d) Neighbourhood watch.
- e) Community Action Team(CAT)

a)Schoolchildren, vandalism, nuisance, antisocial behaviour problems.

JW has spoken to the Headmaster of Rainow School and there is a problem both within the school grounds and nearby with vandalism . This mainly consists of graffiti, broken glass and other damage to school property. About 4or 5 times a year there are instances of serious vandalism with criminal damage being carried out to the buildings e.g roof tiles have been removed and thrown down with consequential damage from water penetrating the building. This all has to be paid for from the school budget.

There is a camera but the children are aware of them and ensure that their faces are covered when in the vicinity of the camera. The camera is not of very high quality in any case and it would be very difficult to identify individuals.

Response from the police is fairly minimal, there is little to go on and the incidents don't rate as high priority.

The Headmaster has kept a photographic record of all serious cases and JW agreed to look at these.

Children are allowed to play in the school playground out of hours but only until it gets dark although there is outside lighting these are turned off.

Some form of policing after dark would be a serious deterrent to the type of problem being experienced. Also a better camera with infra red capability .

b) Burglary, theft and damage from cars.

As far as we can establish this has generally been committed by people from outside the village on an opportunistic basis and isn't easy to deal with. A permanent(regular) police presence might go some way to solve this. It would be useful if we could get some figures of the incidence of this type of crime. KGB said he would look into this.

The one area in which it was felt a significant step could be taken would be to rejuvenate the Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

c) Non-licensed 'door knocking' vendors.

Although this was not thought to be a serious problem nevertheless it did cause distress to some of the elderly residents. MBC does operate a system of licensing which all callers should have if they are selling door to door.

We need to find out how this is operated, what are the conditions for a license to be issued and how a bona fide operator can be identified.

d) Neighbourhood Watch

It was agreed that this needed a thorough overhaul, there is a list of coordinators who are registered with the police but many of these have left the village and others have not taken any active interest for some while.

We should obtain this list and with discussion and agreement with the community reallocate areas of responsibility and rename coordinators.

KGB said that a lady called Jane Thirsk had been responsible from the police side and had given a presentation to the Parish Council the last time we tried to get the scheme going 4 or 5 years ago. He will attempt to contact her with a view to getting the list of coordinators and areas they looked after. Who was responding and who wasn't.

e) Community Action Team

This is a Unit formed by the local police to deal with non serious crime issues . We need to understand just what their remit is and see how we use this to the benefit of the community. KGB agreed to look into this and report back.

Other villages are using Community Policing/Wardens to assist with the sort of issues we are trying to deal with. GB agreed to research what is being done elsewhere and report back.

Post meeting note:

KGB spoke to a Sgt. Chamberlain (Macclesfield Police) regarding CAT on the 5th May.

CAT was formed to deal with long term community problems , including neighbourhood disputes, antisocial behaviour, racial issues and other similar problems which could affect the quality of life of the community.

There will be 3 Sgts. , one dedicated to our area, David Cummings (tel 01625 610000 ext. 3488).

We will also have our own area police officer PC Dave Dimmock who will cover Rainow and Sutton. This will mean 2-3 days a week high visibility (full uniform) patrols in Rainow. With possibly a police 'surgery' every 7 to 10 days.

She says this is due to start in June!

MBC have 4 Neighbourhood Wardens and two of these will be allocated to the CAT Team.

This all sounds too good to be true but it wont be long before we find out.