

PUBLIC MEETING ON 10TH APRIL 2010

HELD AT ST PAULS CHURCH HALL SMANNELL ROAD ANDOVER

Present Chairman – Councillor Len Gates

Sgt Andy Noble – Hampshire Police

PCSO Becka Williams – Hampshire Police

Sir George Young Bt. MP – MP for North Hampshire

Residents from Trajan Walk, Vespasian Road, Hadrian Road and Tiberius Close

This meeting was organised in order that the residents of Hadrian Road, Vespasian Road, Tiberius Close and Trajan Walk, could have the opportunity to voice their experiences and concerns relating to vandalism and anti social behaviour in the above area.

Councillor Gates opened the meeting at 1500 and introduced the Police and Sir George Young.

A resident of Trajan Walk stated that in his opinion, an increased and obvious police presence has been experienced over the past few weeks and there have been no further acts of vandalism and that ASB had decreased.

A general opinion held that when the police were contacted, they rarely responded. Sgt Noble explained that there has now been a change in policy and police were now to respond as soon as possible where a crime has been committed. He also detailed the composition of the resource at his disposal covering the North Andover Area.

Various residents spoke out about the problems they had experienced and it was apparent that many incidents were not being reported to the Police because of the attitude 'nothing seems to happen'. We all seem to be experiencing similar problems; damage to cars, damage to property, late night hooliganism and noise, motorbikes and the like riding where they shouldn't and abusive behaviour.

Sgt Noble stressed that residents must **ring the police on every occasion that a problem is experienced**. In his words, "If we are not aware of a problem then we are not able to respond". Cllr Gates re-emphasised this advice. Sgt Noble also explained that whenever he or any of his officers came on duty, one of the first jobs was to look what has happened during the preceding shift(s). If an area then appeared to be experiencing a particular problem perhaps within a recurring time slot, then this can be targeted by the local beat officers.

PCSO Williams stated that she targets her patrols to the areas where she expects her presence to be most effective and this is partly based upon those reports made by the public. She asked if there was a particular time and day when problems seem to occur. Everyone agreed that overnight Friday, Saturday and Sunday morning between 0100 and 0400 was the worst time. The state of some of the street lights was also causing concern and Cllr Gates agreed to look further in to this.

A question was asked about mobile patrols. Sgt Noble detailed the make up of the mobile patrols based within Andover and Romsey able to cover five shifts. In response to a further question he stated that Traffic Police, CID and others were not a part of this resource.

Concerns were expressed that no patrols were seen especially along the footpath which forms a part of Trajan Walk, between Vespasian Road and the Newbury Road. It was stated that this was a

particular problem area and could anything be done to stop this pathway from being used by certain people. Both Police Officers stated that they are not able to prevent free use of this footpath. Cllr Gates said that he would talk with the resident concerned and would investigate if a fence could be erected along side the Newbury Road to prevent pedestrians from using the path to cross at this point. (Since this meeting, Sgt Noble has suggested that a thorny hedge could be planted as a barrier. Cllr Gates has agreed to look into funding for this.)

In response to a question, Sgt Noble said that there was no plan to enable the local public to be able to telephone Andover Police Station directly. When pressed he said that at night, all those on duty were out and about and that the Police Station was closed to the public. He also said that all calls, 999, 101 or 0845 were prioritised at the call centre and contact was then made with the relevant Officers on duty.

In answer to a further question, Sgt Noble explained how the action 'Citizens Arrest' should be used. Any member of the public may make a citizens arrest but in order to make a citizens arrest the arresting person must be certain that a crime has been committed and that the person arrested must have been the person who committed that crime. Physical restraint may be used and the police must be immediately informed. However, Sgt Noble advised that it is safer if the public called the police and let them handle the matter rather than get directly involved.

Several residents supported the idea of setting up a regular meeting, supported by the local councillors and the police to monitor the impact of the police and the incidence of reports made. It was felt by all that this would be very beneficial. Cllr Gates agreed to take this further and will try and book the same hall for a meeting to be held every eight weeks. The police supported this idea and will be happy to attend. Sgt Noble also said that more information relating to policing within the Andover area can be found on the internet – www.hampshire.police.uk – and then enter the relevant post code in the box next to the map to go to the Andover North Safer Neighbourhood website.

Cllr Gates agreed to look into the possibility of setting up a community notice board next to the bus stop near Florence Court.

A lot of discussion followed on the use of CCTV. The Police and Council are not able to provide the equipment and explained that care had to be exercised in the siting of cameras so as not to infringe on the privacy of the public. Camcorders and cameras are a good way to record incidents but again care must be used where minors are involved. Sgt Noble said that companies specialising on the provision of this sort of equipment will be able to provide the best advice and care should be taken in choosing equipment that allowed police to take copies of recorded incidents. It was also expressed that the erection of notices in itself may lead to a decrease of bad behaviour.

To end the meeting PCSO introduced the idea of setting up a 'Neighbourhood Watch' for the area. More information will be forthcoming but will need considerable support by the residents. The scheme inception will also incur a small one off cost for signage which will have to be paid for by the residents.

The meeting closed at 1635.