

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE held on 7 May 2003 in the Parish Room, Fiddlers Lane, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor A Bailey (in the Chair)
Councillor Mrs P Humphrey
Councillor Mrs D Whitton
Councillor Mrs M Wynne-Eyton

Invited Guests: Mr P Hughes – Chester Security Systems Ltd
Mr G Southey

Cheshire Constabulary: PC Phil Topliss

7 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Mrs J Johnson
Councillor Mrs JE Storrar
Councillor A Warrington

8 CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were received.

9 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 January 2003 be confirmed as a correct record.

10 PARISH PLANS

The Council had been successful in securing from the Countryside Agency the funding necessary to draw up a Parish Plan. This action provided an opportunity for local people to have their say.

The Council would consult widely and if the community supplied clear evidence of a need and suggested projects to alleviate certain problems, a Parish Plan would help to make the case to a range of funding bodies for grant aid.

As part of the Parish Plan process a number of Focus Groups made up of interested members of the community (including Parish Councillors) were being established to look at key issues. As community safety was a major issue in Saughall at the current time it was proposed that a Focus Group would succeed this Committee in the new Municipal Year. The Group would inform the Plan and identify problems, undertake initiatives and lobby as appropriate to improve community safety in Saughall as a whole. It was also proposed that it would retain the remit of this Committee.

Mr Hughes and PC Topliss indicated that they would be willing to be involved with the Parish Plan process.

Work on the Plan had already begun and the Chairman was seeking views by attending meetings of the various groups in the village.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) Mr Peter Hughes be invited to join the proposed Focus Groups for Community Safety and Commerce and Business; and
- (3) PC Phil Topliss be invited to join the Community Safety Focus Group.

11 CRIME PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

PC Topliss made a presentation to the Committee on Crime Prevention. Included within it was the following information and advice:

(a) Domestic Burglary

Each year thousands of items of stolen property was found by the police, but often there was no way of knowing who the owners were. A few simple measures could help the chances of recovering lost or stolen art and antiques.

- ?? 1 in 5 is a sneak theft – keep your doors locked even when you are inside.
- ?? Homewatch can reduce burglaries – from 1 in 45 to 1 in 450.
- ?? Receive weekly newsletters by e-mail – find out what is happening in your area.
- ?? Property mark your goods – Selectamark is better than ultra violet (forms were provided).
- ?? Keep a list of your valuables – keep photographs and descriptions (forms were provided).
- ?? Domestic Survey – check how secure your house is (forms were provided).
- ?? Community Safety Partnership with Travis Perkins provide cheap locks – take advantage of the scheme.
- ?? Shed/Garage break-ins – Alarms, chain items together, take out 7 iron, paint windows, weld mesh on inside, decent screws.

Members were particularly interested in the property marking initiative and considered that it may be possible to train the Homewatch Co-ordinators to mark property. It was agreed that this was a scheme worth pursuing.

(b) Car Crime

- ?? Lock up your car.
- ?? Put it up the drive and lock the gates.
- ?? Don't leave valuables inside.
- ?? Cars are more secure now so the trend has changed.
- ?? Hook and Cane – keep your keys away from the door.

- ?? Keys left in car – Insurance will not payout.
- ?? Ramming – slight bump, stop and steal your car.

(c) Violence

- ?? Who is most likely to be assaulted? – The young, domestics, public service.
- ?? When and where? – Friday, Saturday nights in the City.

(d) Fear of Crime

- ?? The hardest of the four to deal with – crime figures, personal experience.
- ?? Why do we believe it is bad? – TV programmes, newspapers, radio, adverts.
- ?? What can we do? – Use our common sense. Get a door viewer and use it.
Go out but stay in safe areas, well lit, let people know where you are, keep a mobile phone.
- ?? Get out and enjoy your life – It is safe out there.

The Government had realised that the police couldn't deal with crime alone so they brought in the Crime and Disorder Act. As a result the City and County Councils along with other agencies became involved in crime prevention. Examples included:

- Truancy sweeps – stops shoplifting, car crime
- Arson – Fire Brigade is helping to reduce car fires
- Pubwatch – reduces violence
- Drug Needles – surveys, needle boxes, drug rehabilitation

There were three groups who dealt with the City, Urban and Rural areas. Their aim was to reduce crime using an assortment of measures e.g.:

(a) Youths causing a nuisance at shops

- ?? A letter could be delivered banning them from the shops. If they continued to go there the parents were banned as well (all shops must agree to be in the scheme).
- ?? Offering training and support to businesses.

(b) Architectural Liaison Officer to design out crime

- ?? Ensures that buildings are not vulnerable, sufficiently lit, advice on cost effective improvements (fencing, etc.).

RESOLVED: That

- (1) PC Topliss be thanked for his attendance and his very informative presentation; and
- (2) the Council be **RECOMMENDED** to consider the property marking system in detail with a view to part funding those residents of the village who want to take advantage of it.

12 CCTV VERSUS IMPROVED LIGHTING

Mr Hughes had accepted the Council's invitation to attend the meeting to discuss and explore the possibility of having CCTV cameras in the village at strategic locations in an attempt to deter crime and catch those involved in crime.

Mr Hughes informed that at first CCTV could be a novelty and that its maintenance costs were as expensive as its installation costs. If a feasibility study was carried out he expected that the costs of covering the village would be quite astronomical.

PC Topliss reported that in comparison to other parts of Chester, Saughall was quite quiet. However, Members informed that they did have concerns because the police did not seem to be doing anything to catch the thugs that were frequently breaking the glass in the new bus shelters. People's perceptions of the police were that they didn't help and confidence in the police was at an all time low.

The Committee also discussed crime figures questioning how correct they actually were in the light of under-reporting. PC Topliss informed that the Government accepted that people did not always report crimes and a factor was built in to compensate for this.

PC Topliss told the Committee that the Constabulary did have 2 vans equipped with CCTV cameras and 40 police officers had been trained to use them. They were used to catch culprits in action.

Mr Hughes offered to lend the Council a CCTV camera and monitor and conduct a feasibility study.

It was agreed that enhanced lighting in priority areas would be better and more cost effective than CCTV cameras but it was important to get to the root of the problem. Youngsters needed more facilities and provision in Saughall and the current Council was hoping to address this to some extent with appropriate provision in the Golden Jubilee Park development.

RESOLVED:

That Mr Hughes be thanked for his attendance and contribution to the meeting.