

SOHAM AND EAST NEIGHBOURHOOD PANEL

**Wednesday, 29th January 2014,
at The Beeches Community Centre, Isleham at 7.00pm**

PRESENT

Cllr Derrick Beckett (Chairman) – East Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Tony Cornell – East Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Joshua Schumann – East Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Tony Parramint – East Cambs District Council
Rev. Mike Banyard – Rector of 3 Rivers Parishes
Cllr Gary Watson – Wicken Parish Council
Cllr Jennifer Wilson – Chippenham Parish Council
Cllr George Ginn – Soham Town Council
Cllr Pauline Wilkes – Isleham Parish Council

OFFICERS

Alistair McKie – East Cambridgeshire District Council
Insp. Paul Ormerod – Cambridgeshire Constabulary
Jackie Trower – Sanctuary Housing
Janis Murfet – East Cambridgeshire District Council
Terry Jordan – Cambridgeshire County Council
Debbie Wildridge – East Cambridgeshire District Council
Sue Wheatley - East Cambridgeshire District Council

IN ATTENDANCE

Cllr Malcolm Roper – Fordham Parish Council
Cllr Rosemary Aitchison – Soham Town Council
Cllr Jack White – Wicken Parish Council
Cllr Hazel Thompson – Isleham Parish Council
Cllr James Broad - Chippenham Parish Council
4 members of the public

S&ENP 13/22 Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to Isleham's new community centre for this meeting of the Soham & East Neighbourhood Panel.

S&ENP 13/23 Introductions and Apologies

The Chairman introduced all the officers present from agencies.

He said that everyone was pleased with the new community centre and what had been achieved, and anyone wishing to have a tour of the building would be welcome to do so at the end of the meeting.

It was noted that there were no apologies for absence.

S&ENP 13/24 Chairman's Announcements and Consultation Items

The Chairman asked Members and Officers to sign the attendance sheet, and members of the public to include their email address and postcode

After reminding everyone of the fire instructions, the Chairman highlighted the following consultation items:

- Draft Ely Station Gateway Supplementary Planning Document – Public Consultation. It was noted that two public exhibitions were being held in the former Milletts shop on Ely Market Place on 6th and 8th March.
- Novel Psychoactive Substances & Drugs Strategy Consultation.
- Better Care Fund.

S&ENP 13/25 Neighbourhood Update

Alistair Mckie, East Cambridgeshire District Council summarised the issues relating to the District Council and made the following comments:

- ECDC (Waste Services) grass cutting was carried out in Chippenham, Kennet and Snailwell by the County Council, and Veolia was made aware of the need to litter pick in these areas.
- With regard to black sacks being left outside properties at Lower Carter Street onto the Soham Road (Fordham), if collections are missed, this should be reported to ECDC via Customer Services within 24 hours of the misses collection and Veolia will rectify.
- There is a property in Fordham where additional assistance may be required to bring rubbish from the rear of the property. If the details have previously been received at ECDC and the criteria met, then this address should now be on the “assisted” list. If not, Customer Services should be contacted, and a form will be sent out.
- The Parish Councils are consulted on all planning applications, but when outline permissions are granted, the precise number of dwellings and bedrooms may not be known. This information is provided in subsequent detailed applications.
- In respect of areas available for affordable housing in expanding areas of villages, the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan takes a positive approach to delivery. With developments of more than 5 dwellings, the Council seeks that 30% should be affordable homes. The Council also takes a positive approach to affordable housing outside of village boundaries.

- With regard to the rubbish at Isleham Primary School not having been collected on 9th January, and no new recycling bins having been provided to the school, this has now been rectified.

Terry Jordan presented the section relating to Cambridgeshire County Council and commented on the following issues:

- The pot holes in East Fen Road and Houghton Lane, Isleham, had been inspected by the Highways Officer and the appropriate action will be taken. Members of the public and local councils can report pot holes and other defects using the County Council's highways fault reporting process; this can be done on-line or by telephone:

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/transport/roads/reporting_a_fault.htm

Contact Centre : 0345 045 5212

- The overgrown hedges on the roadsides in Soham are mostly in private ownership and therefore the responsibility to maintain them rests with the owners of the properties. To enable the situation to be fully investigated, it would be helpful if specific locations could be identified.
- Balfour Beatty has investigated and the lights which are not working at Kingfisher Drive, Soham, are owned by the developer of the estate. The County Council does not have the powers to take action in relation to lighting which is in private ownership.
- The faulty street light in the High Street, Soham, has been reported to Balfour Beatty for investigation and any necessary remedial work.
- In response to the complaint that the County Council's system for reporting pot holes does not work, if details of specific cases are provided, the matter can be investigated.

With regard to Kingfisher Drive, the Chairman queried whether the lights had now been adopted, as the bollards had been removed and traffic could travel through the estate to and from Mereside. Mr Jordan said he would go back to his colleagues and check on this matter.

It was noted that there was nothing to report in respect of Sanctuary Hereward.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Inspector Paul Ormerod gave an update on the actions taken by the Neighbourhood Policing Team to address the priorities set by the Panel at its last meeting:

Serious Acquisitive Crime

Regular patrols had been conducted, with the focus being on major routes used by offenders. Road blocks had been set up overnight and during the hours of darkness, and officers had concentrated on known offenders. Ongoing information was being shared with neighbouring police areas, crime reduction surgeries were held outside Co-Ops in the area, and there had been leaflet drops of areas affected by vehicle crime.

Acquisitive crime in the area remained a concern and a priority for the local policing team.

Anti-Social Behaviour in Soham (Hallowe'en)

ASB patrols in Soham had been prioritised throughout this period, with additional officers on duty at Hallowe'en. This proved to be successful, because although there were lots of people out and about, there were no significant issues.

Other young people were taken on trips at Hallowe'en as part of the CSP-funded Soham youth work project.

There was ongoing work to deal with individuals believed to be responsible for antisocial behaviour in Soham. However, the need had been identified for all incidents to be reported to the Police, along with the names of the people involved, if known.

Parking around the school areas

Regular patrols had been undertaken by PCSOs around the schools and 2 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued to drivers who had parked illegally. Words of advice had been offered to some drivers about parking on grassed areas.

Statistics

In the last three months there had been an increase in total crime figures, particularly in respect of dwelling burglaries. However, there had been a dramatic reduction in antisocial behaviour.

Other Issues

With regard to speeding in Fordham and Wicken, it was noted that Community Speedwatch checks had been conducted in Collins Hill, Church Street, and Mildenhall Road, Fordham, with a total of 74 letters having been sent out to drivers. No Community Speedwatch activity had been recorded in Wicken.

Patrols had been carried out in response to complaints regarding motorbikes on the High Street, Soham but no offending motorcyclists had been observed. In connection with complaints about motorcycles in the area of the Fountain Lane Car Park, the CCTV footage was being checked to try and identify the persons involved.

The Community Safety Officer and local PCSOs had met with Soham Town Council and offered crime reduction advice in relation to the Adizone.

There had been regular patrols conducted in the area of the Recreation Ground and ongoing engagement with users of the Pavilion. A number of Guardian Awareness Programme letters had been sent to the parents of the young people found causing problems and drinking underage.

Speed checks had been carried out on Mereside, Soham as a result of which, letters had been sent to 5 drivers. No Community Speedwatch activity had been noted on Mereside.

Inspector Ormerod said that his officers would continue to focus on ASB in Soham, and acquisitive crime, and he would make a commitment to ongoing engagement with the Parish Councils in order to keep them informed of current issues.

The Chairman concluded by expressing his appreciation of the work carried out by the Police.

S&ENP 13/26 Community Land Trusts

At the invitation of the Chairman, Debbie Wildridge, Community Land Trust Advisor, ECDC, gave a short presentation on Community Land Trusts in East Cambridgeshire, and made the following comments:

- What is a Community Land Trust – a legal, non profit vehicle for communities, led and run by local volunteers. It can collectively own and manage property/land, undertake development projects, and lock in assets for the community for ever;
- Why do communities want to set up CLTs – to realise local goals, set priorities, address local issues and to exert local influence (land or assets);
- Why are CLTs an answer - to take control and have genuine influence over local development, to meet local needs by creating community-owned assets that produce income for local projects, to provide affordable property for local people, and to create stronger communities.
- How do communities set up CLTs – every CLT is different, but each would set rules, incorporate as a legal entity, call for land/assets, secure funding, apply for planning permission, build or renovate, and manage the assets;
- Set rules for CLT – this would set out the obligations of the members and the Board, underpinning the democratic nature of the CLT;
- Support from CLT East and ECDC – early stage advice from a CLT advisor, and a scoping day to discuss potential projects. Learning events (regional

conference), “how to” guides, and new “community-led” planning policy. Set-up grants, and pre-development loans;

- What’s happening locally – CLTs for Stretham & Wilburton, Swaffham Prior, and a Thrift CLT for Soham;
- Stretham & Wilburton Community Land Trust – 15 affordable local homes, workspaces, doctor’s surgery. The CLT has 91 members and 12 Trustees. The ECDC pre-development loan has been approved and the planning application is ready;
- Swaffham Prior Community Land Trust – this was a partnership model with a local housing association. It is a secured site within the settlement boundary. Three local landowners want to ensure that the village benefits. There will be 12 new private homes and 8 affordable local homes for local people;
- Soham Community Land Trust – this was in the early stages of discussion with the local steering group, landowners and the Council. There could be an opportunity to provide 55 – 60 affordable dwellings within a major new housing allocation.

Having concluded her presentation, Ms Wildridge then responded to comments and questions from the Panel.

A member of the public asked what would be done about providing more doctor’s surgeries if another 600 houses were built in Soham. Ms Wildridge replied that infrastructure would be looked at as part of the negotiations. The CLT, as a Corporate Body, would be consulted and given the chance to influence everything.

Another member of the public, referring to the Stretham & Wilburton CLT, wished to know who selected the members and Trustees. He was advised that they were democratically voted in and drawn from many different walks of life. People had different talents at different stages of the process, but the wider community could be involved and transparency would be important throughout.

The Chairman noted the number of private and affordable houses to be built at Swaffham Prior and asked how many there would be at Stretham. Ms Wildridge replied that there would be 35 houses, of which 15 would be affordable; numbers were all to do with the viability of schemes.

There being no further questions, the Chairman thanked Ms Wildridge for her presentation.

S&ENP 13/27 Planning Enforcement

At the invitation of the Chairman, Sue Wheatley, Principal Development Management Officer, ECDC, gave a presentation on planning enforcement.

A summary of the presentation is as follows:

- The Planning Enforcement team comprises Senior Enforcement Officer (Andy Smith), Enforcement Officer (Steve Harrison), and Part time Monitoring Officer (Peter Preston);
- Much of the work is reactive: investigating allegations of “breaches of planning control”, monitoring planning conditions, illegal advertisements, unauthorised works to Listed Buildings, high hedges, and untidy land;
- A “breach of planning control” is unauthorised development such as operational development (e.g. building or engineering works), or a “material” change of use. In the case of the former, this is not always straightforward;
- Planning enforcement is a discretionary power. It is not always expedient to take action, for example it cannot be taken if a development would otherwise get planning permission;
- The Local Planning Authority tries not to get involved in matters which are best left to other legislation;
- There are periods in which unauthorised development becomes lawful and immune from enforcement; this is 4 years for operational development (or Change of Use to a dwelling house), and 10 years for a material change of use. There has been a recent change in legislation regarding Enforcement Orders in respect of concealment;
- With regard to Permitted Development, sheds, walls, fences and satellite dishes etc all require planning permission. They receive a blanket planning permission via legislation called the General Permitted Development Order. This is often used as a “fall back position” when something is not an issue because it is just in excess of Permitted Development
- The Planning Enforcement Team deals with 300 plus new cases each year. On paper, the resource equates to approximately one hour per week, per village/town in the District;
- Strict priorities have to be adhered to ensure that the most urgent matters are dealt with first. Consideration has to be given to harm; some matters can take a long time to resolve.

Ms Wheatley then responded to comments and questions from the Panel and members of the public.

A member of the public asked if planning permission was required for commercial signage signs, and Ms Wheatley said that the advertisement regulations stipulated

different sizes for different things. In connection with this, the Chairman commented that lots of adverts were on trailers, and he wondered if they fell under different jurisdiction. Ms Wheatley replied that there was case law to say that if a trailer was being used just for the purpose of advertising, then enforcement action could be taken.

Another member of the public asked why enforcement action took so long to go through. Ms Wheatley stated that if the complaint related to a business, the needs of the business had to be considered as well as those of the complainant and the impact on amenity also had to be taken into account. As much as possible would be done through negotiation.

The comment was made that the Enforcement Team seemed to be really hard pressed, and the questioner asked if it had the resources it really needed. In the light of the budget cuts he wondered if the team would be able to cope; he was not complaining but rather expressing concern. Ms Wheatley replied that the team had to do the best it could with what was available, and the Council had to be mindful of its budget.

The Chairman interjected to say that the Senior Enforcement Officer reported to the Planning Committee every six months, but sometimes it was better to put queries through a District Councillor. He also added that despite the budget cuts, there were no plans to reduce the size of the Enforcement Team. He concluded by thanking Ms Wheatley for her presentation.

S&ENP 13/28 Neighbourhood Issues

The following issues were raised by Parish representatives/public:

PARISH	ISSUE	
Chippenham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roadside litter – B1085 entrance to Chippenham Fen Nature Reserve full of rubbish (metal foil) • Speeding traffic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECDC (Waste Services) • Police
Fordham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of public transport. The County Council cut the subsidy to the community car schemes and demand for the Three Rivers scheme has increased dramatically • Speeding – Mildenhall Road • The layby by the water tower is full of flytipped rubbish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cambs County Council • Police • ECDC (Waste Services)
Isleham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking at the school at peak times is still an issue • Parking at the T junction at Limestone Close and Mill Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police • Police

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barbed wire on the sheep fence beside footpath • Dog fouling – The Causeway • Speeding along Waterside • Transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ? • Police • ?
Kennett	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Litter on the roads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECDC (Waste Services)
Snailwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cambs County Council
Soham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Litter in the gutters and in the bus shelter at Staples Lane • Blocked drain at the junction of Sand Street and The Butts – pedestrians getting splashed by passing cars • Object in the road at the exit of the A14, going in the direction of Fordham • Double parking across the road at the football club on Qua Fen Common – difficult for other motorists to pass • Complaints from residents regarding a fence that has been erected on the highway boundary on the right side of the road beyond the Dolver Drove junction • Speeding in the 20mph zones in the vicinity of the primary schools • Dog fouling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECDC (Waste Services) • Cambs County Council • Police (?) • Police • Cambs County Council • Police • ECDC (Waste Services)
Wicken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speeding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would like feedback about how the new waste collection service is going – details to be circulated to all Parish Clerks • Green collection – queries/issues to be referred to the Waste Manager at ECDC • Praise for “ShapeYourPlace” – good responses, is working well for the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECDC (Waste Services) • ECDC (Waste Services)

Cllr Aitchison said that with the demise of the Neighbourhood Panels, she wished to thank everyone involved in the organisation of the meetings; she offered particular thanks to Cllr Beckett for fulfilling the role of Chairman of the Soham & East Panel.

S&ENP 13/29

Panel Prioritisation

The Panel agreed that the policing priorities should be:

- Acquisitive crime

- Anti social behaviour in Soham
- Speeding
- Parking in the vicinity of the schools

A member of the public asked how the Police would liaise with the Parish Councils and the public following the demise of the Panel meetings. Inspector Ormerod said he would encourage the public to report things directly to the Police, and if the parishes informed him of the dates of their meetings, he would try to have an officer attend. In the case of routine engagement he could not guarantee attendance by a PCSO, but if there were extraordinary issues raised, somebody would attend.

Inspector Ormerod concluded by saying that it was intended to put something in place of the Neighbourhood Panels, and a paper would be going to the meeting of the Community & Environment Committee on 4th March 2014.

A representative of Chippenham Parish Council said that they would like to receive crime information specific to each village on a six monthly basis. Inspector Ormerod replied that he would be reluctant to do this because it would mean having to take officers off the beat. However, messages could be sent via e-cops, issues could be reported by phoning 101 or via e-cops, and general matters on ShapeYourPlace.

S&ENP 13/30 Future Community Engagement

The Chairman read out the following prepared statement :

“At our last Neighbourhood Panel meeting, we presented a set of recommendations made by the multi-agency Review Team set up to look into the future of Neighbourhood Panels and community engagement.

I can now report that Community & Environment Committee have now endorsed the findings of the Neighbourhood Panels Service Review and as a result, Neighbourhood Panels will not continue beyond 2013-14.

All partners remain committed to community engagement and the last Neighbourhood Panel newsletter will detail the many ways in which the public can contact the agencies involved in Panels and how the agencies in turn engage with the public.

An “Improvement Plan” will be presented to Community & Environment Committee on 4th March, setting out the options around holding a Parish Conference for Parish Councils and other public sector organisations. The results of this agenda item will be shared with parish councils in due course.

I would like to thank all current and past Panel members for their contributions over the years and on behalf of all the partner agencies around the table we look forward to ongoing dialogue with you all.

All the identified Panel ‘ issues of concern’ will be responded to by agencies through the Shape Your Place website and in the last Panel newsletter. The newsletter will be sent out 3 – 4 weeks following the meeting.”

S&ENP 13/31 Close of Neighbourhood Panels

The Chairman recalled that eight years ago the then Deputy Chief Executive had asked him to work with her and the Police to set up Neighbourhood Panels. It was an experiment, and one to which he felt privileged to have been a part of.

As he looked around the room, he was pleased to see faces that had been there at the outset, eight years ago. Some of the issues did not seem to change, but over the years there had been some highlights such as the young people of the Kingfisher Estate in Soham, and a presentation from the Arts Centre in Soham.

The Panel had engaged with many people, but as this was a low crime area, the issues tended to come down to such matters as speeding etc.

The Chairman expressed his sincere thanks to everyone, from both the Parishes and Officers, who had made the Neighbourhood Panels what they were. He said he felt a certain sadness at the demise of the Panels, but he hoped to see some form of community engagement in the future.

He concluded by thanking all present for their attendance and co-operation.

The meeting closed at 8.53pm.