

SOUTH AREA NEIGHBOURHOOD PANEL
Wednesday 20th March 2013, Kirtling Village Hall, Kirtling

Panel Members Present

Cllr Tom Kerby (Chair)	East Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Chris Morris	East Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Robert Stevens	East Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr David Brown	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr Olive Oakervee	Ashley Parish Council
Cllr Christine Bryant	Bottisham Parish Council
Cllr Mathew Shuter	Brinkley Parish Council
Cllr Ken Simpson	Burrough Green Parish Council
Cllr Pat Kilbey	Burwell Parish Council
Cllr Michel Scarff	Burwell Parish Council
Cllr Maggie Carvalho	Dullingham Parish Council
Cllr Jean Gilmour	Kirtling and Upend Parish Council
Cllr Martin Golding	Kirtling and Upend Parish Council
Cllr Helen Slater	Kirtling and Upend Parish Council
Cllr Peter Taylor	Kirtling and Upend Parish Council
Cllr Anna Taylor	Stetchworth Parish Council
Cllr Lily Whymer	Stetchworth Parish Council
Cllr Margaret Chadwick	Swaffham Bulbeck Parish Council
Cllr Clifford Pettitt	Woodditton Parish Council

Others Present

Darren Dixon	Head of Community Services East Cambridgeshire District Council
Natalie Osborne	Sanctuary Housing
Terry Jordan	Neighbourhood Panel Liaison Officer Cambridgeshire County Council
Inspector Paul Ormerod	Cambridgeshire Constabulary
Adrian Scaites-Stokes	Democratic Services Officer East Cambridgeshire District Council
Julie Cornwell	Partnerships Officer East Cambridgeshire District Council
Lorraine Brown	Conservation Officer East Cambridgeshire District Council
Sarah-Jayne Smith	Sanctuary Housing
Kevin Napier	Station Commander Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue

IN ATTENDANCE: 1 member of the public

SNP12/28 Welcome

The Chairman, Councillor Tom Kerby, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

SNP12/29 Introductions and Apologies

The Panel Members and supporting officers introduced themselves.
Apologies were received from Councillors Allen Alderson and Lavinia Edwards.

SNP12/30 Chairman's Announcements and Consultation Items

The Chairman read out the fire instructions.
The Chairman asked those present to fill in the attendance sheet and complete the questionnaire.
The District Council was undertaking a sports facilities audit, which had been sent to all the parishes. Only Ashley, Reach and Westley Waterless had not responded.
Responses to the Council's Local Plan were needed by 25th April.

SNP12/31 Update on East Cambs District Council Actions Since Last Meeting

The Panel received a table giving an update on the actions undertaken by East Cambs District Council.

Issue No and Description	Further Comments
Code of Conduct	An explanation of why the Code of Conduct had changed was covered in the two letters included with the meeting pack. The Council had approached the Department for Communities and Local Government for clarity and their response was included. The Government sees the disclosure of partners' interests as being reasonable.
Parish Precepts	Information on how this was calculated had been circulated to all parish councils. A response had been sent to Stetchworth.
Budget Summary	The Council had agreed its budget and would be increasing it by 2%. The Council had adequate reserves so there was no plans to increase this. A balanced budget was predicted, despite the increase in homelessness costs. Investment would be made in an apprenticeship scheme and to provide affordable houses via Community Land Trusts.

SNP12/32 Update on County Council Actions Since Last Meeting

The Panel received a table giving an update on the actions undertaken by the County Council.

Issue No and Description	Further Comments
Pedestrian Crossing in Ashley	It was difficult to provide an accurate estimate unless a specific scheme was agreed.
Anti-Social Behaviour in Bottisham	This had been referred to the Locality Team, which was not aware of any anti-social behaviour. If any incidents come to light it would respond. It was working with 8 to 12 year-olds in a drop-in centre and were looking to work with the Parish Council.
Speed limit in Dullingham	The speed limit in Dullingham had no effect. Nothing more could be done without resorting to physical measures, which would require external funding.
Salting Heath Road, Swaffham Bulbeck	The Highways department were undertaking a review of road treatments where there was a spell of sub-zero temperatures. As this was not a major road it did not receive priority treatment and the County Council could not treat any more roads.
Reporting of road problems	The fault reporting system had been upgraded so it could track the progress of repairs..

SNP12/33 Update on Sanctuary Housing Actions Since Last Meeting

There were no actions required since the last meeting.

SNP12/34 Update on Police Actions Since Last Meeting

The Panel received a table giving an update on the actions undertaken by the Police. Priorities from the last Panel meeting were: 1) reduce speeding and illegal parking throughout the Panel area and 2) anti-social behaviour in Swaffham Bulbeck.

Issue No and Description	Further Comments
Reduce speeding and illegal parking	25 speed checks carried out in various locations. The safety camera van had been deployed a few times. Not many speeding incidents had been found. 8 notices issued. Parking enforcement work carried out across the area. 44 parking tickets issued.
Anti-Social Behaviour in Swaffham Bulbeck	Regular patrols had been carried out. No recent calls about ASB had been received. No ongoing issues.
Parking issues in Bottisham – various times	Some tickets had been issued at school ending time. Monday evening checked – no problems found.

Crime Figures	<p>The figures had fluctuated during the year but from November the figures were down on last year. All crime figures were down except for burglary of dwellings and thefts from shops.</p> <p>The new Police Commissioner had recognised the burglary issue as a problem and would focus on resolving it. It was believed that this was part of a series of activities and was an ongoing priority. Theft from shops had been displaced from Ely due to the effective ShopWatch, so now other locations had seen an increase.</p> <p>Over the district the figures were reduced with East Cambridgeshire showing the highest reduction rate. This was a result of new structures being put into place last year.</p>
Other issues	<p>(i) Alcohol related anti-social behaviour incidents were up and had increased since December;</p> <p>(ii) There was a huge number of abandoned vehicles in the district. .</p>

Responses to Panel and public questions:

Householders would legally be allowed to put up security cameras and any evidence gathered would be useful for the Police.

A check would be made whether an attempted burglary in Dullingham had been reported.

Any incidents of young men selling door-to-door should be reported, as they should have a pedlar's certificate. Although there was no direct link between their visits and crime this should still be reported.

A response had been sent to a letter received from the Editor of the Clunch magazine relating to shoplifting concerns.

SNP12/35 Update on Fire & Rescue Actions Since Last Meeting

Kevin Napier stated that a recent fire in Burwell had resulted in services attending 3 times for the 1 incident.

SNP12/36 Welfare Reform – What it means for you

At the invitation of the Chairman, Sarah-Jayne Smith, Sanctuary Housing, gave a presentation on the changes coming into affect following the Welfare Reform Act 2012. The Act aimed to give the right incentive for people to work. It was expected that the changes would result in a £2.1 billion saving. They would mostly affect people of working age but pensioners would not be affected.

The changes covered the 'bedroom' tax, housing benefit reductions and a cap on benefits. Under-occupation of a dwelling, if there were 1 or more spare bedrooms, would result in a decrease in housing benefit. Sanctuary were trying to contact all their residents and encouraging people to downsize. The benefits cap would apply to non-working households, and would come into effect in July, so that those households would not receive more than a working household.

Universal Credit would replace a number of means-tested benefits and would be phased in gradually. This should simplify the benefits system and improve working incentives. Housing Benefit would be paid directly to the tenants, rather than landlords, and the majority of applications would be done online.

To respond to these changes Sanctuary would be:

- Working with local authorities and housing benefit departments;
- Contacting tenants to help get plans in place;
- Communicating through leaflets and websites;
- Keeping tenant profiles up-to-date so advice can be targeted;
- Advising tenants how to manage their money;
- Signposting tenants to debt advice organisations;
- Being involved with a pilot Direct Payment scheme;
- Introducing incentives for moving/swapping/exchanging dwellings;
- Looking at schemes to help people move.

In the future preparation may have to be made for future cuts and keeping on top of Government changes.

In response to Panel and public queries, the following replies were given:

Private tenants would also be affected by the benefit changes.

Bedrooms were classified by landlords and there was no minimum size for them.

The pilot Direct Payment scheme was still ongoing. This had shown some increase in rent arrears but 98% rent was being collected.

Advice would be offered for tenants struggling to downsize and consideration given for discretionary housing from local authorities.

Priority on HomeLink would be given to tenants needing to downsize.

There were not enough smaller properties available so tenants would have to swap where possible.

Empty properties were not usually unoccupied for more than 2 weeks.

SNP12/37 Buildings of Local Interest

At the invitation of the Chairman, Lorraine Brown, Conservation Officer for East Cambridgeshire District Council, explained to the meeting about the decision to introduce a List of Buildings of Local Interest.

Listed buildings were designated under current legislation but the quality of the built environment included other buildings throughout the district. These buildings were worthy of including on the List of Buildings of Local Interest if they added to the character of the area. The List would mean that these buildings, or other objects, would be given extra significance in planning considerations. This would help prevent unnecessary demolishing of the buildings but would still allow for permitted development rights.

Article 4 Directions, to provide additional safeguards, were an additional option for things on the List. The proposed criteria for inclusion was based around the age of the structure, whether there was any architectural interest or historical significance associated with it, whether it had local characteristics or townscape significance. The criteria for including such buildings and objects would go out to public consultation, where comments were requested. Once this had been completed, the Council would consider the criteria and, if agreed, would ask parish councils for things to include. Nominations for inclusion could be done via a form that would be available via the Council's website.

Some members of the Panel were concerned that this was another way of 'listing' buildings, complicated matters and was a worrying development. This could mean that the local authority would impose its standards on buildings, irrespective of the owners' objections.

Others were supportive of the idea but it was explained that a minimum of 6 weeks consultation had to be undertaken before things could move forward. It was hoped that things would be ready by the summer. The owners of any buildings proposed for inclusion would be consulted but would not have the right of veto. Some parish councils had already been met to explain the scheme but anyone could make a proposal.

SNP12/38 Neighbourhood Issues

The following issues were raised by Parish representatives/public:

Ashley	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dog Fouling.• Speeding continues to be a problem through the village. (trying to get grant funding for Zebra crossing).
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Bottisham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redundant yellow signs on various approach roads for the two developments – ancient keys’ and ‘St Peters Fields’. Developments are now completed so can Highways remove the signs? • ASB at Bottisham Village College – likely to increase as weather improves, so please keep an eye on this.
Brinkley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size of agricultural vehicles is causing a problem as if two are trying to pass they have to go on pavements: The Hall and Beechcroft are now damaged.
Burwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shop-lifting • Parking over the curb at the Causeway in Burwell. Now that numbers of households have increased the vehicles are encroaching into the grassed areas and people are driving over paths. So there is damage to grassed areas and illegally driving on paths.
Burrough Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police presence to enforce the recently reduced 40 – 30 mph zone. • Brinkley Road – junction of Main Street and Bradley Road national speed limit applies, but it is felt that this is dangerous.
Cheveley	None
Dullingham	None
Kirtling & Upend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speed checks as agreed with the PCSO.
Lode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 houses driving their cars across grass and paths to get to their properties along the High Street. There are now deep ruts in the grass. Can the ‘offenders’ be spoken to? Is it appropriate for drop curbs be put in (this is a conservation area)?
Reach	None
Stetchworth	None
Swaffham Bulbeck	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quy traffic calming measures seem to have an impact on surrounding villages including SB. Will the impact of the installation of new traffic calming measures be considered in relation to other areas?
Swaffham Prior	None
Westley Waterless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would WW like to attend Burrough Green Parish Council meetings? Can ECDC investigate?
Woodditton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More Salt Bins needed around the Malvern Road area following the installation of a bin in Malvern Road. • Request for a handrail at the Steps of the junction of New Cheveley Road leading up to Crockfords Park. • Unsafe and inconsiderate parking at Ditton Lodge School.

SNP12/39 Panel Prioritisation

Police Priorities

Shoplifting.

Speeding.

Dwelling burglaries.

Other Priorities

Dog fouling.

SNP12/40 Forward Agenda

Forward Agenda Plan was noted.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.