

## West Area Neighbourhood Panel

Monday 1 October 2012 – Witchford Village Hall – 7.05pm

### PRESENT:

|                      |   |
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| Cllr Nick Border     | Coveney Parish Council                      |
| Cllr Peter Goddard   | Haddenham Parish Council                    |
| Cllr Owen Winters    | Little Downham Parish Council               |
| Cllr Jean Ballantyne | Little Thetford Parish Council              |
| Cllr Roy Harknett    | Mepal Parish Council                        |
| Cllr Chris Day       | Wilburton Parish Council                    |
| Cllr Tony Goodge     | East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) |
| Cllr Bill Hunt       | East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) |
| Cllr Peter Moakes    | East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) |
| Cllr Gareth Wilson   | East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) |
| Cllr Philip Read     | Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC)         |

### OFFICERS

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| Inspector Paul Ormerod | Cambridgeshire Constabulary                               |
| Sergeant Will Davies   | Cambridgeshire Constabulary                               |
| Liz Knox               | Head of Environmental Services, ECDC                      |
| Lewis Bage             | Project Officer (Leisure and Community Services),<br>ECDC |
| Melanie Sage           | Democratic Services Officer, ECDC                         |
| Terry Jordan           | Neighbourhood Panel Liaison Officer, CCC                  |

### IN ATTENDANCE

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| Peter Doktor | Environment Agency     |
| Mark Hucker  | Citizens Advice Bureau |

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** 7 members of the public (including 1 District Councillor, 1 District/Parish Councillor and 2 Little Downham Parish Councillors)

### **WNP12/10** Welcome

The Vice-Chairman, Cllr Wilson welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that the Chairman, Cllr Elizabeth Stazicker had offered apologies for the meeting.

### **WNP12/11** Introductions and Apologies

In addition an apology for absence from Cllr Elizabeth Stazicker, a further apology for absence was also received from Cllr Alistair Berry of Witcham Parish Council.

### **WNP12/12** Chairman's Announcements and Consultation Items

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- A new seating layout was being trialled for the meeting that replicated the layout used at the Soham Neighbourhood Panel meeting. The Chairman requested feedback regarding this layout at the end of the meeting.

- Requested that everyone ensure they complete the attendance list and at the end of the meeting complete the 'Have Your Say' evaluation form.
- Highlighted the following items currently out for consultation, as detailed on the reverse of the agenda sheet:
  - 'Burwell Masterplan'
  - 'Have your say on what the Council (County) should spend money on and where it should make savings with new survey'.
- Referred to agenda item no.12 – Assessing the purpose and effectiveness of Neighbourhood Panels. A questionnaire was currently being circulated to all Parish Councils. At the end of the meeting there would be an opportunity to discuss the questionnaire and offer input into the process. The questionnaires should be returned to James Nairn, Community Engagement and Development Officer at East Cambridgeshire District Council by 22 October 2012.

### **WNP12/13 Neighbourhood Update**

The Panel did not set any non-policing priorities at its last meeting. However, the Panel received an update on the issues raised at the previous Panel meeting.

| <b>East Cambridgeshire District Council Update</b>  |  |
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| <b>Cars for sale at perimeter of junctions</b>  | Specific locations and times need to be provided to the Council, along with any contact telephone numbers. The number of vehicles for sale determines the legislation that can be used - 2 or more cars may be dealt with by the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act.  |
| <b>Flytipping around recycling sites - Haddenham and Sutton</b>   | ECDC had recently added new signage to the recycling banks throughout the district and officers attended the sites at regular intervals to speak with local residents regarding fly-tipping. ECDC are also looking to run articles in local newspapers to highlight issues occurring throughout the district. This could also be promoted by Parish Councils via the various village publications. If sufficient evidence is gathered enforcement action can be pursued. |
| <b>Collectively get together in Parishes to reduce speed restrictions, e.g. reduction of 40mph zone in Wardy Hill play area</b> | Parish Councils were invited to deliver a verbal update at the meeting.<br><br>Cllr Wilson noted that Haddenham Parish Council had been successful at securing a minor highways bid from CCC to reduce the speed limit along New Road and Westend in Haddenham. Haddenham Parish Council and Wilburton Parish Council needed to work together to reduce the speed limit between the two villages.  |

Regarding fly-tipping at the recycling sites, Cllr Wilson noted that it was important that the recycling bins were emptied regularly to deter fly-tipping. The Head of Environmental Services noted that some people put waste next to the recycling bins even if they were not full. Other people then added to this as they assumed that the bins were full.

| <b>Cambridgeshire County Council Update</b> |  |
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| <b>State of the A1123 across the Earith</b> | Sections of this road have been identified previously as suffering from drought damage and are on a long list of similar roads |

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| <p><b>Causeway</b></p>   | <p>within Cambridgeshire that require repair.</p> <p>For the year 2012/2013 other roads have been assessed to be in a worse state and, therefore, the A1123 has not been assigned available finance for repairs within this year's programme. It is presumed that the remainder of the list, including sections of A1123, will be allocated the necessary finance in one of the next future years.</p>   |
| <p><b>Concern regarding state of highways and when accident occurs at Witcham Toll traffic diverts via Wardy Hill. More by-pass areas required on road as not suitable road for this use, particularly for large vehicles, such as, buses, lorries. Suggest a one-way system introduced in such incidents by police.</b></p> | <p>The official diversion route used by CCC does not indicate diversion via Coveney, Wardy Hill and Witcham. However, it is known that there are many local drivers who make their own decision as to how to get around if this road is closed, which neither the Highway Authority or the Police can regulate or control.</p> <p>It is difficult to see how a permanent one-way system would operate and certainly a part-time restriction of access would be almost impossible. There could be serious effects to the economic use of this area, as a one-way system would need to apply to all motorists; this would include residents, buses and all landowners.</p> |
| <p><b>Collectively get together in Parishes to reduce speed restrictions, e.g. reduction of 40mph zone in Wardy Hill play area</b></p>   | <p>This issue had also been addressed during the ECDC update. If parishes wished to consider extension or relocation of speed limits, they should be aware of the system, policy and procedure via the information literature sent to them previously by the Highway Authority regarding the scheme 'Your Parish, Your Speed limit'.</p> <p>Clarification of procedures and requirements can be obtained from the local highways offices on request.</p>   |

Cllr Nick Border disagreed with the CCC statement regarding the diversion route as details of a known effective one-way system in the area could be provided.

Cllr Read stated that CCC needed to be aware that in the event of a road closure due to an accident at Witcham Toll, traffic diverted via Wardy Hill and Coveney, which was why the Panel had requested more by-pass areas.

Cllr Goodge also noted that following a the recent accident at the A142 Mepal that closed the road, it had resulted in traffic diverting via Sutton Gault through to Chatteris, which had also caused serious congestion.

Cllr Wilson agreed that the CCC needed contingency plans.

Inspector Ormerod clarified that when the Police close a road they notify CCC of the road closure and it is the responsibility of CCC to map the diversion route. The Police role is to manage the incident.

Referring to the state of the local roads, Cllr Winters disagreed that this was as a result of drought damage and he stated that the Council not maintaining the verges had caused the damage. Cllr Winters stated that some roads were in such a poor

state of repair that vehicles could travel no faster than 20mph. By-pass areas were required as the verges were not suitable for vehicles to drive on.

Cllr Goodge noted that the method of repairing holes in the road had changed. Previously once the hole had been repaired it was sealed to prevent the break up of the road the following year. He suspected that the public would prefer the repairs to take longer if the remedial work was done properly.

Cllr Day requested that CCC provide the Panel with the criteria for assessing road repairs and he noted that the condition of A1123 was horrendous. Cllr Day travelled on this road everyday and that the speed of vehicles on some parts of this road were reduced to 5mph.

Cllr Read suggested that a CCC Highways Engineer be invited to attend the next Neighbourhood Panel meeting, which was supported by the Panel.

Cllr Roy Harknett suggested that weight restrictions be introduced on some roads to prevent road deterioration.

A member of public noted that some 'patch-up' repairs had been undertaken on the road through Haddenham and Wilburton. However, these repairs had not resolved the problems with this road.

Cllr Winters noted that Black Bank between Little Downham and Littleport was in a dangerous state as there was no verge either side of the road.

### **Policing Priorities**

Subsequently the Panel received an update from Inspector Ormerod on the policing priorities raised at the previous Panel meeting.

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| <p><b>Speeding – The Americas in Sutton; Station Road in Haddenham, particularly near pond area, Bury Lane in Sutton.</b></p> | <p>Members of the Safer Neighbourhood Team and members of the Special Constabulary visited The Americas in Sutton and Station Road in Haddenham and conducted speed enforcement. However, following assessment, due to the layout of Bury Lane in Sutton, it was deemed that the Safer Neighbourhood Team officers are not qualified to operate speed enforcement in this area.</p> <p>Following the speed enforcement exercises:</p> <p>29 Endorsable Fixed Penalty Notices were issued for speeding<br/>         1 Endorsable Fixed Penalty Notice was issued for using a mobile phone<br/>         9 Letters were sent to drivers speeding at lower speeds<br/>         1 driver was summonsed to court as the speed was in excess of the limit penalised by a Fixed Penalty Notice.</p> |
| <p><b>Greenlaning in Witcham, Wardy Hill, Coveney, Little Downham, Haddenham areas</b></p>                                    | <p>Contact was made with people affected by greenlaning. Patrols were conducted at the problem areas. However, the Police were advised that the droves and lanes used by greenlaners had been closed due to the inclement weather and therefore problems with greenlaning had not occurred. These droves and lanes were to remain closed throughout the winter. The Police had not received calls for service relating to 'greenlaning' and had not identified any</p>  |

The Police had been supporting Sanctuary Hereward Housing regarding issues with a property in Stretham. The Panel were informed that the tenants of this property had now been evicted and some of those tenants were no longer residing in the district. Since the tenants had been evicted the Police had not received reports of any problems.

Approximately 2 months ago an offender had been identified who was responsible for burglaries in Sutton, Mepal and Suffolk. The offender had been arrested and bailed to attend court.

A series of commercial burglaries had been experienced on the small industrial estates within the Panel area, such as Witcham and Witchford. Incidents of commercial burglaries had since moved to other Panel areas such as Soham, Fordham and Burwell.

Two weeks ago Police received a call regarding an attempted break-in at Fordham. The Police were involved in a vehicle pursuit with the offender, where a stinger was deployed in Burwell and the offender rammed a Police vehicle. The suspect was eventually arrested and since there has been a reduction in crime in the district.

Total crime in the West Neighbourhood Panel area had decreased in comparison to the same period the previous year

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| June – August | 198 offences committed in 2011 and 150 offences committed in 2012 |
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Total Anti Social Behaviour had decreased in comparison to the same period the previous year.

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| June – August | 127 incidents committed in 2011 and 82 incidents committed in 2012 |
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Cllr Hunt stated that speeding should remain a police priority and enquired whether there were any particular roads that the Police thought were an issue. Inspector Ormerod stated that Station Road in Haddenham had been identified as a problem area.

A member of public wished to discuss a matter related to the Stretham eviction. The Chairman reminded the Panel that specific matters related to individuals should be discussed with the police in private outside of the meeting.

Cllr Read had been requested by a resident to raise an issue regarding an incident of vehicles racing in The Brook, Sutton. The Police informed the Panel that there had been a one-off incident in Mepal and that the Police regularly received reports of these vehicles meeting at Angel Drove Business Park in Ely.

Sergeant Davies encouraged people to contact the Police or their local Police Community Support Officer with any queries. Contact could be made by dialling 101 or via the Cambridgeshire Constabulary website <http://www.cambs-police.co.uk>. The West Area Neighbourhood Panel was within the East Cambridgeshire Ely North section and could be emailed on [eastcambsnorth.npt@cambs.pnn.police.uk](mailto:eastcambsnorth.npt@cambs.pnn.police.uk)

Sergeant Davies noted that Cambridgeshire Constabulary could also be followed on Facebook.

## **WNP12/14 Ouse Washes Habitat Creation Project Update Presentation**

The Panel received a presentation on the Ouse Washes Habitat Creation Project from Mr Peter Doktor, Project Manager of the Environment Agency. Mr Doktor noted that he had delivered a presentation on the Ouse Washes Habitat Creation Project to the Panel last year, and this presentation would provide an update on the progress with the Project.

A summary of the presentation is as follows:

- Since the 1970s there had been a decline in certain bird populations, which had been caused as a result of changes to rainfall patterns and flooding.
- There is a legal obligation on the Government to take appropriate steps to address the ecological decline.
- To address this decline it had been decided that the most effective solution, and the solution most likely to be a success, was to replace the habitat outside of the washes.
- Therefore the aim of the Habitat Creation Project was to create a minimum of 500 hectares of new wet grassland habitat.
- A map detailing the location of the Ouse Washes was displayed.
- The habitat proposals were grazed grassland. The water table would be raised in spring and summer. The sites would incorporate water management infrastructure and storage to enable the collection of water in winter for use in spring/summer.
- Since last year progress had been made with securing the land for both the Habitat Creation Projects at Coveney and Sutton. The Environment Agency was in the process of purchasing the last piece of land relating to the Coveney site and continued to purchase land for the site at Sutton.
- The design of the Coveney scheme had been revised since last year. Initially a reservoir was proposed for the storage of water. This has since been amended to a lake.
- Haddenham Level Drainage Commissioners had expressed concerns regarding the Sutton site relating to the operation of the site and how the Drainage Commissioners managed their drainage systems. These concerns had been discussed with the Environment Agency and a potential solution had been identified.
- Due to the summer flooding there had not been any breeding birds in the Washes.
- A map detailing the boundary of the Habitat Creation Project area at Coveney was displayed, although it was noted that not all of the land had been secured.
- The Environment Agency did not intend to promote the site as a bird watching site. However, it would undoubtedly attract some birdwatchers. It was therefore necessary to provide a small car park to avoid people parking on the verges. Based on previous experience, and as there would not be a visitors centre, a car park to accommodate 10 vehicles was planned. It was anticipated that the site would attract a maximum of 1,500 visits per year. The Environment Agency was aware that some concerns had been expressed regarding the car park being used for unlawful purposes. The Environment Agency had spoken to the Crime

Prevention Society and the Police to seek advice in order to deter any potential anti social behaviour issues arising.

- Public consultation on the Coveney Ouse Washes Habitat Creation proposals would commence on 8 October 2012 and conclude on 14 December 2012. There was to be a public exhibition at Coveney on 25 October and at Witcham on 6 November, both from 1pm – 7pm. Mr Doktor stated that if requested he would attend Parish Council meetings.
- Further information was available at [www.environment-agency.gov.uk/ousewashes](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/ousewashes)
- Future plans for the Projects were:
  - Public consultation on the Coveney site proposals.
  - Completion of environmental assessment.
  - Submission of a planning application for the Coveney site to the District Council in spring 2013
  - Continue to work closely with landowners to secure suitable land in Sutton.
  - Continued use of the Washes for flood risk management.

At the conclusion of the presentation the Panel raised a number of questions and made a number of statements, which were responded to accordingly as follows:

- Had the Environment Agency been working with Anglian Water on the Projects? No as the Projects were concerned with water collection for irrigation purposes.
- The Project involved engineering works that required planning permission as it was considered a change of use.
- The issue was the time of year that water was required and the way water was allocated. There was little or no spare water in the summer. Therefore water needed to be collected and stored in the winter.
- Referring to the archaeological investigations at the Coveney site, it was explained that there was a particular section of land where these investigations were to be focused as it was expected that remains of the past might be found. The next stage in the archaeological investigations was to dig holes at the site.
- The lake would be sited at the same place as the previously proposed reservoir.
- The total budget for the Projects was £18 million, which included securing the land and construction.
- The river at Sutton Gault to Earith and at Mepal had been dredged. The issue was siltation the other side of Denver Sluice and how that was managed. It was now to be managed by sending as much water through the eye of the sluice to prevent the siltation problem as well as managing flows differently.
- The future management of the scheme was yet to be considered.
- The Environment Agency was imminently meeting with the Internal Drainage Boards to consider run-off issues and the proposed resolutions.
- River dredging was taking place in the wrong parts. Looking at the river via Google Earth it was clear to see where siltation developed, which therefore restricted river flow.

## **WNP12/15 The Importance of the Citizens Advice Bureau in today's Economic Climate**

The Panel received a presentation from Mr Mark Hucker, a Trustee of the Citizens Advice Bureau.

A summary of the presentation is as follows:

- The Citizens Advice Bureau provides advice to people that need it; nationally looks at policies and practices that effect peoples lives; provides independent free advice that is confidential and impartial; values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination.
- The first Citizens Advice Bureau opened on 4 September 1945 originally to advise on rationing and re-housing following the war.
- 3,500 Citizens Advice Bureaus in England and Wales that are managed by 382 individual charities.
- 97% of the public have heard of the Citizens Advice Bureau and 41% of the public have used a Citizens Advice Bureau.
- The Huntingdonshire Citizens Advice Bureau had gone into administration.
- Of the 28,500 people who work for the Citizens Advice Bureau, 21,500 are volunteers.
- All volunteers have to attend a 6 week classroom based training course followed by 3 assessed interviews.
- The East Cambridgeshire Citizens Advice Bureau has dealt with 3,228 individual clients and 11,119 separate problems. The main 3 problems being related to benefits, debt and employment.
- The Citizens Advice Bureau provides online advice 24 hours a day.
- The Citizens Advice Bureau relies on financial support from Councils. 30% of funding is received from local authorities and 70% from other sources.
- The East Cambridgeshire Citizens Advice Bureau would be taking on the volunteers following closure of Huntingdonshire Citizens Advice Bureau, which would have a financial impact on the East Cambridgeshire Citizens Advice Bureau.

Cllr Winters noted that he was a Trustee of the Feoffes charity and that Little Downham Parish Council donates to the East Cambridgeshire Citizens Advice Bureau. However, the Bureau was unable to provide detailed information to the Parish Council so that it was aware of the number of Little Downham Parish residents that used its service. Mr Hucker explained that recently the Bureau had introduced a system so that it could allocate a query to a parish. The Bureau would be looking to amend the grant form to include the number of queries that it had received from a parish and the likely future need of the service from its parish residents. Currently each visit to the Bureau cost £55.

Cllr Allen enquired whether the Citizens Advice Bureau could do more to raise its profile and how active/effective the Bureau was nationally, particularly when a change in government policy could result in the Citizens Advice Bureau receiving more queries. Mr Hucker explained that the Citizens Advice Bureau was not political. However, its representations had influenced the housing reform bill and the Bureau continued to make representations regarding the universal credit scheme. Information gathered from clients was supplied to the central Citizens Advice Bureau in London for evidence when lobbying government.

At the request of the Panel it was confirmed that the Project Officer (Leisure and Community Services), would circulate the Citizens Advice Bureau presentation to Panel Members.



**WNP12/16 Discussion of Neighbourhood Issues Raised by Audience and Panel Members**

The following issues were raised by Parish representatives/public:

| <b>LOCATION</b>                  | <b>ISSUE OF CONCERN</b>   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Coveney and Wardy Hill</b>    | <p>Diversion issues</p> <p>State of the verges (maintenance)</p>  |
| <b>Haddenham</b>                 | <p>What is the Cambridgeshire County Council Highways criterion to determine need for repair of roads and verges? State of A1123 from Haddenham towards Earith, near children's camp particularly bad.</p> <p>Road between Haddenham and Wilburton – wavy road due to weight of the lorries, especially when A14 is closed</p> <p>Haddenham to Wilburton road (part not resurfaced)</p>   |
| <b>Little Downham and Pymoor</b> | <p>No verges on sides of roads</p> <p>No maintenance of verges – emergency maintenance needed along Black Bank</p> <p>(Black Bank &amp; Pymoor Common) – Little Downham to Littleport road is dangerous</p> <p>Pymoor / Welney – dips in road. Needs attention (toward bank river – where 20 mph sign is located)</p>   |
| <b>Little Thetford</b>           | <p>Sunken boat at river – bottom of Little Thetford, past bridge (maintained area).</p>   |
| <b>Mepal</b>                     | <p>Hosepipe ban concerns – more houses being built. What are plans to cope with it?</p> <p>Water shortages, lack of pressure (district-wide).</p> <p>Cllr Wilson to mention to Anglia Water. Include on forward agenda. Cllr Goodge noted that he would also raise these issues with the Environment Agency as the issues went hand-in-hand.</p> <p>Parking – yellow lines on one side of the road (where school is located). Cars coming out of school have to turn the wrong way.</p> |
| <b>Stretham</b>                  | None  |
| <b>Sutton</b>                    | None  |
| <b>Wentworth</b>                 | None  |
| <b>Wilburton</b>                 | <p>Dog bins overflowing all of the time particularly at Doghouse Grove and dog bin near The Pound</p> <p>Rubbish around seat not cleared away on High St (at The Pound) near Station Road</p> <p>Straw lorries still coming through Wilburton. Some of these lorries are coming from Cambridge. It was suggested that the registration number as well as the time of the incident</p>   |

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|   | <p>be obtained and the incidents reported to the manager of straw burning plant.</p> <p>People not checking car lights (broken lights)</p> <p>Reports of some tractors and trailers driven dangerously or carelessly – A1123 Wilburton</p>   |
| <b>Witcham (&amp; Wardy Hill)</b>         | <p>Witcham Toll to Wentworth cycleway to be added to forward agenda</p> <p>Ely Bypass – Cambridgeshire County Council figures show 10% increase in traffic. Cycleway becomes more important as road becomes increasingly dangerous</p> <p>Impacts of bypass (especially how it affects cycleway)</p> <p>Cambridgeshire County Council Highway representative to attend next Panel meeting</p> <p>Cycling Campaign – lack of funding available to deliver project</p> <p>Forward Agenda item – Cycle campaign</p> |
| <b>Witchford</b>                          | None   |
| <b>General or crossing cutting issues</b> | Details of the October West Neighbourhood Panel meeting are not accurate on the Neighbourhood Panel section of the Council's website.  |
| <b>POLICING PRIORITIES</b>                | Speeding – in previous priority areas (The Americas in Sutton)   |
| <b>OTHER PRIORITIES</b>                   | None   |

### **WNP12/17 Forward Agenda Plans**

The Forward Agenda Plan for 2012 was received. The following items were added to the forward agenda plan:

Cambridgeshire County Council Highway representative to attend next Panel meeting to discuss highways maintenance issues and a cycle way between Witcham Toll to Wentworth cycleway.

It was suggested that Anglian Water be invited to attend the meeting regarding water shortages, flooding and water pressure issues and the impact housing growth will have on these issues.

The Head of Environmental Services explained that officers in consultation with the Chairman would consider the forward agenda plan and its priorities.

### **WNP12/18 Assessing the Purpose and Effectiveness of Neighbourhood Panels**

A list of the individual comments made during discussion is as follows:

- Did not like the new layout as some people had their backs to the top table.
- Difficult to hear what people are saying when they have their backs to you.

- At the next Panel meeting use a round table format that was the same layout used at Fenland District Council Neighbourhood Panel meetings.
- Liked not have set seating so that Panel Members were mixed up – better interaction.
- The Police were having 3,500 visits to their Facebook page and agreed to attach the Neighbourhood Panel meeting dates.
- The business on the agenda should be more interesting; at the moment it was mundane.
- The Neighbourhood Panels did not alter the agenda of Cambridgeshire County Council. If people felt that the Neighbourhood Panel meetings influenced matters then more people would want to attend the meetings.
- Some Neighbourhood Panels have their own budget and determine how it is spent.
- Important to get the Police in the same place as the public.
- Neighbourhood Panels create a better link with the Police.
- Not having a high public attendance at the meetings was not necessarily a bad thing if people are feeding into ShapeYourPlace and Facebook etc.
- Advertise a 'hot topic' for each forthcoming meeting.
- One presentation only per meeting to allow more time for Panel discussion.

The Meeting closed at 9.35pm.