

**Notes of the WASHINGTON PRIDE MEETING
held at the MILLENNIUM CENTRE, WASHINGTON
on FRIDAY, 27th JULY, 2007 at 2.00 p.m.**

Present:-

Councillor Sleightholme in the Chair

Councillors Trueman and Whalen

Councillor Allan	-	Portfolio Holder Resources
Insp. Mick Wright	-	Northumbria Police
Sgt. Ken Robinson	-	Northumbria Police
Sharon Hodgson, M.P.		
Dave Leonard	-	Development and Regeneration, Sunderland City Council
Rob Stone	-	Challenge Project
Gareth Thomas	-	Challenge Project
Gareth Johnson	-	North Washington Youth Inclusion Project
Chris Foreman	-	Web Analyst, Sunderland City Council

Members of the Washington Community

Apologies

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors P. Walker, J. Walker, J. Stephenson, W. Stephenson, Young, Miller, Timmins, Williams, Fletcher and Cuthbert.

Notes of the Last Meeting

The notes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record.

Police Report

Inspector Mick Wright and Community Beat Sergeant Ken Robinson, gave an update on crime and disorder in the Washington Area for the period April to June 2006 in comparison with the same period 2007. The overall crime was down by 1% and the actual figures were broken down into the following category's:-

	2006	2007
Total	1095	1084
Criminal damage	332	296
Violent Crime	256	228
Robbery	10	8

Theft - Vehicle	73	147
Burglary – Dwelling	51	39
Burglary – Other than Dwelling	54	65

Insp. Wright advised of a number of initiatives being run by Northumbria Police to help improve and reduce the level of crime within the Washington area, which included a campaign to raise awareness with motorists to remove satellite navigation systems from vehicles overnight. He advised that thieves were locating the devices using Bluetooth, so that, even if the system had been removed from its base, thieves would know it was present in the vehicle somewhere.

He reported that articles were to be published in local papers highlighting key issues and that a stall was to be set up in the Galleries shopping centre offering advice and giving out security pens so residents could mark belongings. The Inspector advised members of the community that the police were trying to offer a more dynamic response to crime issues and asked that they continue to report crime and disorder using the 101 telephone service.

In response to a query regarding the sale of alcohol to under age youths, Insp. Wright advised that schemes were very much reliant on the public and parents advising, through the 101 service, of off-licences and shopkeepers suspected of selling alcohol to youths. He informed the group that the Local Authority used 'test' children to attempt to make purchases from shops on a regular basis.

Sharon Hodgson, Member of Parliament for Gateshead East and Washington, advised of a scheme which was running in Gateshead where shopkeepers were asked to mark their bottles / cans so that they could be referred back to the source when picked up by the Police. The Inspector advised that this was not a failsafe scheme as there was no guarantee that all of the products were being marked and that in Sunderland the police used the barcode on the product to identify which shop it was bought from.

With regard to the Community Beat Officer for the Barmston area, Sgt. Robinson reported that interviews had been held for the post and that they were confident they could appoint in the near future.

Insp. Wright reported that in the near future local press would be reporting on the 101 system and its ties into Police work and reporting crime. He informed the group that Northumbria Police were also starting an appointment system for call outs to resident's homes after they had reported a crime or incident so that this would improve communications and follow up with members of the public once they had contacted the police.

In response to a query regarding Police Forums, Sgt. Robinson advised that they did still meet every 3 months, at varying locations and that they were advertised through the Sunderland Echo. Bill Craddock advised that he had a timetable for future meetings should anyone require a copy.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for their report.

Pride Website Update

The Chairman welcomed Chris Foreman from the e-neighbourhood Team, ICT, Sunderland Council and Councillor Dave Allan, Portfolio Holder Resources.

Mr. Foreman took the Group through the Washington Pride website explaining that advice and support could be offered to all community groups wishing to be linked to the site. He advised that the team could also offer training on a wide range of related subjects which would allow communities to effectively market and manage their own site on a day to day basis.

Councillor Allan praised the Washington website and felt it was something which other areas of the city could follow suit in creating. He commented that it was a good example of how technology could be used to benefit all within a community and improve accessibility to services and provisions. He thanked the group for inviting him to the meeting and congratulated them on their work to date.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Foreman and Councillor Allan for their attendance and input.

Challenge Project

Rob Stone and Gareth Thomas, Exchange Group, advised that they were now based at Washington Town centre Library and offered IT access and adult training in English, Maths and IT qualifications, with courses from beginner level onwards. They informed the group that they had had great success so far in increasing numeracy and literacy within the Washington area and that they were now aimed at reaching community groups to attend and train with a tutor, free of charge.

They advised that they were a private company which received funding from Learning direct to provide local residents with basic skills qualifications, and offered incentive schemes to those who take part. They circulated contact details and advised they were available within the library or over the internet if anyone required further information or was interested in taking part.

The Chairman thanked Mr Stone and Mr Thomas for their attendance and involvement.

North Washington Youth Inclusion Project

Mr. Gareth Johnson of the North Washington Youth Inclusion Project advised that the project was aimed at reducing crime committed by 13-19 year olds and was based in the Washington area.

He reported that the project had had transport problems previously but thanks to a donation from Strategic Initiatives Budget and funding through the Variety Club they had been able to purchase a mini bus. He informed the group that the bus was also loaned out to other users to ensure it was accessible throughout the community.

He thanked Washington Pride for their involvement and advice on securing funding.

The Chairman thanked Mr Johnson for his attendance.

Washington Partnership Report

Mr. Dave Leonard, Development and Regeneration, Sunderland City Council, advised that the new Area Regeneration Officer had been appointed. He reported that Ms Sue Lancaster had accepted the position and would be joining the section in October.

He advised that until that time he should be the main contact for any issues or queries.

Any Other Business

The Chairman advised that tenders were being invited in the near future for the bus station at the Galleries shopping Centre, Washington.

He also advised that work had begun on the site for the new retail park.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and involvement and closed the meeting.

Date and time of the next meeting to be arranged.