

Notes of the Washington Pride Meeting

Held on Friday 30 November 2007
2pm at the Millennium Centre, Washington

Present:

Cllr Derek Sleightholme (Chair)
Cllr Peter Walker
Cllr Dennis Whalen
Cllr James Walker
Cllr Linda Williams

Sgt Ken Robinson - Northumbria Police
Julie Stamp - Bridge
Sue Bartlett - Regeneration, Sunderland City Council

Members of the Washington Community

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Jean Stephenson, Cllr William Stephenson, Cllr Jill Fletcher, Cllr Eric Timmins, Cllr Graeme Miller, Inspector Mick Wright (Northumbria Police), Sue Snowdon (Children's Services, Sunderland City Council) and Chris Foreman (E-communities Team, ICT, Sunderland City Council)

2. Notes of the Previous meeting

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

3. Police Report

Sergeant Ken Robinson provided an update on crime and disorder in the Washington Area for the period April to October 2007.

	2006	2007	April to Nov	% change compared to previous period
Total Crime	1095	1084	335	-9%
Criminal Damage	332	296	96	-21%
Violent Crime	256	228	62	-23%
Burglary – dwelling	51	39	22	+5%

Sgt Robinson informed the group that predominant hot spot areas were Concord public house and the Groove Nightclub for Violent Crime. The Groove Nightclub is due to attend a licensing review on 4 December 2007, following ongoing police work and feedback regarding the issues raised.

It was noted that there had been a spate of anti-social behaviour on Usworth Estate, but there had been positive results following directing of resources to tackle the issues raised.

Sgt Robinson was asked how effective he felt the Community Police had been, and whether or not there had been a corresponding drop in crime generally. Sgt Robinson responded that through his experience, he felt that there had been good in-roads made, and this had been complemented by excellent work that had occurred with youth diversionary activities also.

Concern was raised about 'battles' on the street in the region of 3-4 weeks ago, where gangs of individuals from surrounding areas had been congregating in Rickleton and Oxclose. Sgt Robinson told the meeting that additional resources had been focussed on that area, and to date, there had been no further incidents to date. However, the meeting were asked to report any incidents to the Police to ensure awareness and that appropriate action could occur.

A3 posters with the Community Police Team names and numbers were available for members of the meeting to take.

Bill Craddock told the meeting that the National Neighbourhood Watch had sponsored a leaflet informing individuals how to stay safe.

4. Report from the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

Colin Bowman, Community Fire Station Manager informed the group that he was there on behalf of Peter Moody (TWFRS) to provide an overview of the activity over the Bonfire Night period.

Mr Bowman informed the meeting that in conjunction with other partners (Northumbria Police, Local Authority & Gentoo), a number of initiatives had been undertaken in the lead up and during Bonfire Night, including

- Wheelie bin stickers (asking residents to take bins in to reduce risk of arson)
- Contacting contractors to empty skips
- Removing unauthorised bonfires

Hotspot areas for illegal bonfires in the Washington area were as follows:

Sulgrave	8
Blackfell	3
Usworth	7
Oxclose	2

Overall, in the Sunderland Local Authority boundaries, there were in the region of 150 illegal bonfires removed by the LA, with an additional 50 removed by Gentoo.

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) have released financial equivalents to the average cost of an illegal bonfire, which equates to £104,410.

Mr Bowman indicated that there were a number of lessons learnt:

- Earlier planning with partners
- Additional, enhanced training for uplift teams
- Further investigation of hot spot area, where time illegal bonfires were constructed were in school times, therefore links could be made with police and truancy officers
- Legislative & Technical, eg some identified sites in industrial estate, as material readily available.

Washington area accounted for 29% of all incidents in Tyne and Wear. Cllr Trueman indicated that in part this was due to the large amount of open spaces in Washington, coupled with available of fuel and heightened about environmental layout & demographics of Washington.

A query arose regarding the lack of an organised bonfire, and whether or not research could be investigated as to the number of illegal bonfires surrounding the Saltwell Park area in Gateshead, who have an organised bonfire.

In terms of Washington hosting an organised bonfire, it was noted that this was a lengthy and expensive process.

It was noted that the 101 service had worked very well, with significant referrals made through this number. However, funding had ceased for 101, although the Police were investigating currently and will provide an update to Cllr Sleightholme.

5. Washington Pride Website Development

Julie Stamp informed the group that the website was launched in July 2007, with the first online newsletter having been produced, and if individuals wished to be placed onto a mailing list, to contact Julie directly (juliestamp1_bridge@yahoo.co.uk). Chris Foreman, e-Communities Team at Sunderland City Council had indicated that whilst this was still a very new site, it had been very well used and was exceeding expectations.

6. Update from Children's Services

Wendy Cook introduced herself as the new Community Involvement Worker in the Children's Centre, from December 2007.

It was agreed that an update on changes in Children's Services would be presented to the next Washington Pride Meeting.

7. Chairman's Report

7.1 Future Administration of Washington Pride

Cllr Sleightholme informed the meeting that he was due to retire in May 2008, and was looking for a Member to take the helm, to ensure that the connection between Washington Pride, Area committee etc remained.

7.2 Galleries Management

Work on the bus station is due to start 7 January 2008. Once completed, the management and maintenance will be with Nexus.

7.3 Teaching Primary Care Trust

Due to be completed Spring 2008. Noted that this is an ideal site on land adjacent to the leisure centre to the North of Princess Anne Park, although access is still to be sorted.

7.4 Library, The Galleries

The library at The Galleries will be closing for refurbishment in January 2008. The timescale for completion is not yet known.

7.5 School Refurbishments

There will be an £8million refurbishment carried out at Biddick Comprehensive School, whilst school still operational.

In Washington North, work will start on Washington Comprehensive next year.

St Roberts is also due to be refurbished next year.

7.6 Free Travel

Issue of Free travel passes is due to commence January -February 2008 to those entitled to travel passes. This does not include the Metro system.

7.7 Community Chest

Cllr Sleightholme informed the meeting that this fund offered an opportunity for groups / organisations to apply for small grant monies (groups must be constituted), and is an ideal opportunity to use for pump priming projects and the like.

8. Any Other Business

8.1 Northumbria in Bloom

Bill Craddock informed the meeting that the Friends of Washington Old Hall had raised £500 for Northumbria in Bloom.

8.2 Washington History Society

The Group had received £1,800 Community chest money to relaunch the Washington History Society. The next meeting is due to be held Thursday 7 December, 2pm in the Library.

8.3 Millennium Centre

It was noted that currently, 28 registered groups use the Millennium Centre, with 1,200 individuals registered to use the gym.

8.4 Concord Road

Cllr Walker informed the group that Concord Road was due to be widened and the path taken in by May 2008.

8.5 Oxclose Centre

Due to be finished in the new year (2008).

8.6 Concord Front Street

Disabled parking now available on Concord Front Street. More traditional bays are to be marked out, and loading bays to be removed, with a view to getting more disabled spaces.

8.7 Washington Community Development Trust

There is the possibility that there may be access to small funds (up to £300) from the Washington Community Development Trust. Forms are available in the Millennium Centre.

8.8 Band of Brothers

Funding has been received to support a newly formed Washington Band. There has been good press coverage in the Sunderland Echo and Evening Chronicle.

8.9 Glebe Mining Disaster Service

A service will be held on 20.2.08 in the church following the 100 year anniversary of the Glebe mining disaster. All are welcome to attend. Children are actively involved in the service through singing and the Junior Academy Band will be playing.

8.10 Glebe House

A query was raised in relation to the sale of Glebe House. Cllr Sleightholme confirmed that this was a private sale.

9. Date and Time of Next Meeting

To be arranged.