

**EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL**

**PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE – 7<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

Present: Councillor Mrs Mockford (Chairman)  
Councillor Mrs Bennett (Vice Chairman)  
Cllr Whittaker (Town Mayor)  
Cllr Favor (Deputy Town Mayor)  
Committee Members: Mrs Belsey, Mockford, Ody, Mrs Russell, and  
Webster  
Other Councillors: Cllr Hodges

Officers present: Town Clerk

Others present: Inspector Dommitt (Sussex Police), Beverley Lake and two other  
colleagues from Street Pastors, Jo Crerar from SECAMB and 7  
members of the public,

280 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

As follow up from the meeting where the Police & Crime Commissioner attended, it was asked what the Police were doing proactively so that they are not called in the first instance if it is not a police matter.

The Chair advised that she would ask that Inspector Dommitt address this in his update. He offered to respond at once and advised that since Christmas there have been a number of social media and poster campaigns, to educate and publicise the correct ways of contacting the police. The police are also writing articles for inclusion in parish magazines and other local publications regarding 101.

It was asked how the Council defined “stakeholders” as it was noted that consultations and projects often referred to this. It was advised that the stakeholder would be any interested party. So this will usually include the councils, other agencies such as the Police, Fire and Ambulance, Doctor’s surgeries, Street Pastors and then residents groups or individual members of the public. It really depends on the subject as to who would be deemed a stakeholder.

The Police and Crime Commissioner last year attended a meeting and said that there would be more money for more police officers, how many were allocated to Mid Sussex?

Again Inspector Dommitt replied that he has had 3 new PCSOs and the first started in January. They clock on in Haywards Heath but are for the whole area. So, yes a net increase of three officers since the meeting last year.

281 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies had been received from the following Councillors

Saull	Personal Commitment
Wyan	Mid Sussex DC Commitment

282 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the Chairman sign the minutes of the 6<sup>th</sup> December and 17<sup>th</sup> January meetings as previously circulated, as a true record of those meetings.

283 CHAIRMANS UPDATE

The Chairman advised of the following:

As a delegated decision, following a discussion with the local NPT, The Clerk wrote to the P&CC in February to ask that the Police hub be used to house a small local team of a PC and PCSO's, to put the feet back on the beat in the town. The letter has been acknowledged but we await a response. The news headlines have shown a correlation between the removal of the beat cop and knife crime and ASB, we are trying to address this with the P&CC and CC to change the model, especially in light of the ASB concerns that we have all experienced and are growing not diminishing. We will report back further

The new CCTV cameras are all up and running, the Clerk and Leader went to Lewes on Monday to see it in action and it is very clear images, with better replay functionality. The Police are confident that convictions will be brought from the newer images as the ability to zoom, from distance results in good quality images. The additional cameras will be installed in the coming weeks.

The Public Rights of Way work has been completed for this year; we have been advised of works to one boardwalk, one gate, one set of steps and one surface drainage to a path.

Vegetation cuts are due this summer on 5 footpaths totalling 1014.24meters. If anyone wished to know which paths have been attended to or are on the schedule, the Chairman had the list available.

The Speed indicator Device that was stolen has been replaced by WSCC and will once again start the rounds, East Grinstead will have it twice per year. In addition the Council have agreed to purchase a second device within the northern cluster of parishes which will mean we have a further 2 months of a device for our use, totalling 4 months per year for a month at a time. In addition the new hand held speed camera will be purchased after April as this has been budgeted for, for speed watch.

We are delighted to hear that the terms have been agreed between Age UK and the County Council regarding Glen Vue and they will move in hopefully around May time. Papers are still to be signed but this is nearing conclusion. Congratulations to Age UK and WSCC for reaching the agreement which is very good news for the town.

BT Phone Boxes, there have been some mixed messages of late. The box in Lingfield road/ Hermitage road has been removed following the request from a resident and the evidence that it has only been used for 2 calls in the past year. EGTC had previously objected to the removal but on the basis of the lack of use this was withdrawn following the resident request as the box was in poor order. Of the remaining boxes BT have removed some, this was the confusion as one operative

said they were all going, others said only three. Officers are still trying to establish the exact situation.

Sackville School received an interim light inspection from Ofsted which confirmed that the Good rating was still in evidence and recognised much of the good work the school, governors, teachers and pupils had done.

The Secondary Schools are meeting with the Town Council, Street Pastors and MSDC to talk about vulnerable youngsters, supporting them in the outdoor spaces and improving the reputation of the few youngsters where ASB has occurred. This was requested by the Town Council and we are looking to take a full partnership role in this.

Safe Places: to be launched next week, we are registered, the forms are all ready to go and the cards can be produced, the first places are EGTC at East Court, Library and the Police Hub at Chequer Mead, we are just finalising a few queries with Chequer Mead and the Fire Station but hope to have them confirmed by next week. Glen Vue will come on board when Age UK moves in and we are still discussing with the Hospital. The Safeguarding training is still to be delivered but the conditions have been sent out to the venues and all has been made clear.

Applications for cards will be made to the Council and the template has been set up. Jonathan Ansley who will be the key liaison person, but all Council staff will be trained up for dealing with any enquiries. Once up and running we will be contacting the care homes and at our meeting with the Schools tomorrow will be bringing them up to speed, but the youngsters are phase 2, by which time more venues will hopefully be signed up. This is encouraging and it should be noted that having started the process interest from Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill to become involved has been stated. The press release and invitations to councillors to attend the launch will be issued shortly.

The Vice Chairman asked to record her thanks to the Clerk, Inspector Dommett and Jonathan Ansley for their work in preparing the scheme. In turn she was thanked for her Chairmanship of the Working Group.

#### 284 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Webster, Mrs Belsey and Mrs Russell advised that they had to leave the meeting at 7.40 to attend another meeting with apologies.

#### 285 POLICE MATTERS

Inspector Dommett was welcomed, he commented that the recorded and published figures for crime in East Grinstead remain on a downward trend. This of course is contrary to public perception and it must be stressed that Mid Sussex is a low crime area. Knife crime continues to be reported in the social media, often sensationalised but on the police report there is no mention of a knife. The Schools are working with the police and other partners on knife crime, in the whole of Sussex there were 20 incidents of knives on school premises last year.

The catapult damage has died off, this is the same pattern as last year, while the police would like to think this is now finished the same thing happened last year. The investigation led by Surrey Police continues.

The Police are working with EGTC and MSDC regarding the anti-social behaviour on the path way to Spring Copse (scooters and motorcycles being ridden on the path at speed).

Chip Oil theft has been a significant problem again in the town. The Chippies have to account for the oil; it is certificated by environmental health rules. However thefts have occurred from the external vats where it is collected from by the contractor.

The Crime and Police Act 2014: there is statutory guidance for front line professionals re Anti-Social Behaviour; to start at the bottom so schools, parenting etc. and deal before it becomes a police interest matter.

Mid Sussex DC however have taken on some more powers and have taken the decision through their committee to introduce sanctions for anti-social behaviour. This includes noise, fires, environmental issues, as well as low level crime matters.

A warning can be issued (and these can be issued by police / MSDC/ wardens and potential others too), if this warning is not heeded then a community protection notice can be issued (this will be where MSDC convene a meeting to discuss and agree this). If the notice is breached then this becomes a criminal offence which is taken to court and can result in prison and a subsequent criminal behaviour order being issued. The result in Blackpool where this was brought in recently was over 90% success in warnings being heeded and not going to the next stage. This would be welcomed as intervention, support but also the threat of the next steps will be seen as effective to change behaviours.

Questions followed:

It was commented that these new powers were welcomed and Mid Sussex were looking to work with partner agencies such as the Town Councils, housing associations etc. to make the warnings effective. It was noted that where the housing associations had threatened the parents with eviction due to child behaviour issues had been effective. It was also commented that ridding the growth of the "low level" drug use from the streets was a main aim.

It was asked whether the extra police that had been brought in were now using new stop and search powers? It was replied that there was new guidance rather than powers but they were used as appropriate.

It was further asked if the Police were tackling the drugs on the streets, the response was that hotspots were responded to and intelligence is in place with undercover police presence in East Grinstead. The Police are looking to educate and reform behaviour rather than criminalise youngsters as far as possible, each case would determine the individual action.

It was asked about safety of pedestrians and what the police could do in instances where cars were parked so badly that pedestrians were forced in to the road. Residents wanted to know if reporting this to Op Crackdown was worthwhile?

It was replied that if the car had been reported already then if they were pulled for speeding or bad driving then they would be more likely to be issued a ticket or a fine than a warning. Parking is a bigger issue. The use of Speedwatch and Speed Indicator devices can result in the police coming to the town, hot-spotting and issuing tickets where a problem presents itself.

## 287 STREET PASTORS

The Chair welcomes Beverley, Mike and Sarah who were attending from the East Grinstead Street pastors. They gave a background to how they had started and then outlined some of the changes such as the nightclub closing which has changed the emphasis of their rounds.

They would like to have ideas from the Council as to where they would be best to include and also whether there are times that would be worth considering. In conversations with the Clerk the potential for an end of school patrol was being considered and there were to be discussions with the senior schools tomorrow to explore this further.

The Street pastors have always worked well with the police but they are not the police and therefore their presence often has a calming effect as they are non-threatening and hold no authority. They are willing to listen and often find that they can be a good escape route for a youngster who perhaps wants to disengage from a group they are with by chatting to the street pastors for a while.

The Committee were keen to thank the Street Pastors for the job that they do, it is very much valued by the Council and the town as a whole.

There were concerns that the street pastors should not be engaging where there are drugs present and the Police should be called in every instance to deal with the drugs. Bev replied that the kids on the whole were not bad kids and by chatting to them they can change behaviour and maybe stop the drug purchase or taking. The pastors are in contact with the base at all times and if needed they can call the police.

The safety of the street pastors has not been an issue as they are trained; they are not associated with the police and always in a group of 3 or 4. There has never been any violence towards street pastors, in the 6 years they have been operational.

The Vice Chairman gave a vote of thanks and the committee showed their appreciation in the usual way.

## 288 AMBULANCE SERVICE

Jo Crerar was welcomed and she gave a presentation as to the current way that 999 and 101 work with the ambulance service.

There are 3,300 staff over 110 sites, these are emergency despatch centres. There is a need to re-educate the public to make sure that they use the right path for calling and to ensure that the ambulance service are able to despatch the right treatment and the right service.

The targets used to be that there were 4 priorities; priorities 1 and 2 would have 8 minutes to respond priority 3 30 mins and priority 4 60 mins. This has now changed and it is about the right treatment being despatched, should a call come in that someone has fallen over and may have broken bones, this would be a different response to a stroke or heart attack. First responders are used to get the emergency assistance as soon as possible while the ambulance is on the way. The targets now are that the right assistance has been despatched P1&2 within 7 – 15 mins P3 10-40 mins P4 up to 120 mins and p5 up to 180 mins.

This is why it is important that lots of questions are asked to allow the despatcher to ensure all the information is available to weigh up the priority and then alert a crew as soon as possible.

Calls are stacked now – so if you are not P1 or P2 you will go on to the list and when you come up a unit will be issued, however as higher priorities come in then the lower on the list and more time it may take it is not simply a first come first served response.

The first responders are vital to the service and the community defibrillators are important. East Grinstead has a number of these and they can be used by the public under instruction from the 999 operator while professional help is on the way. This is vital.

Questions followed:

The Committee thanked the service for all that they do, but felt that the 999 operators needed more training and to deviate from the script as common-sense and the information given allowed this. For example recently a councillor had to make a call for an incident they had happened upon and they were being asked to visually examine a person's abdomen when that person was lying face down. This was clearly not practical to do so.

The wait for the ambulance was also 2 hours when the lady was outside laying on a stone surface with an identified bone disease. Onlookers who were not medically trained could not risk moving her.

Jo replied that the script is to be thorough, but accepted that there was still a way to go to get the service perfect, but it had made great strides and there were new protocols coming in to trigger faster responses. She could not comment on a specific case.

999 and 111 are not connected, if a call from 111 gets referred to 999 the triage starts again as the information is not automatically transmitted.

The Vice Chairman gave a vote of thanks for all that the service do and thanked Jo for her frank and honest update. The service was continuing to change and recognise that the demands are always changing. The Committee thanked Jo in the usual manner.

289 COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICER

The report was noted.

290 CONSULTATIONS

The report was noted.

291 CYCLE AND WALKING GROUP (LCWIP)

Councillor Hodges as Chairman of the Working group presented the report from the group and explained the need for the survey and canvassing of views.

There was an offer to provide the leaflets free of charge from a Committee Member, which was gratefully received.

It was suggested that the schools should also be engaged with for their views.

RESOLVED: 1 ) The Committee confirmed that the survey should be undertaken  
2) To recommend to Finance and General purposes to approve up to £300 to meet any costs associated, noting that the leaflets would be donated.

292 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY (REPLACEMENT CHICANE)

The Chairman introduced the report and proposed the recommendation to proceed with the reinstatement.

Committee had mixed views with comment that the police should simply take the bikes away and prosecute the offenders to the replacement of the chicane showing that the Council were willing to step up and help to resolve the problem even where there was no land ownership or responsibility.

RESOLVED: To recommend to Amenities and Tourism to approve the funding for the project to replace the chicane at the entrance to the footpath.

The Chairman thanked the committee and announced the next meeting would take place as the Annual Town Council on 13<sup>th</sup> May with the next full meeting on June 6<sup>th</sup>. She closed the meeting at 8.32pm

SIGNED:

CHAIRMAN