

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE SOUTH HETTON NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 4 JUNE 2008

Present: **Representing the District of Easington**

Councillor R Davison (Chair)

Councillor R J Todd

Representing South Hetton Parish Council

Councillor Mrs M Davison, Mrs. J McCreath,

Mrs. C Charters and Mr M Laverick

Also Present: Mr S Ryall – Resident

Mrs J Rodgers – Resident

Mr M Rodgers – Resident

Mrs J Clementson – Resident

1 CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the District Council's South Hetton Neighbourhood Forum and introduced himself and the Officers present.

The Chair advised that a number of the people present had attended a pilot meeting in March at the Robin Todd Centre. The forum had been established to provide the community of South Hetton with an opportunity to comment and shape services provided by public authorities including the police and the District Council.

There were a number of Officers present who would discuss a wide range of initiatives to tackle some of the issues identified as being high priority by those present at the pilot meeting.

The meeting would focus on the "Agenda for Action" document for South Hetton which had been circulated.

Representatives from the Council's Customer Services Section were also present to advise on individual queries at the end of the meeting.

J Brindle, Assistant Chief Executive explained the background to the establishment of the South Hetton Neighbourhood Forum and gave details of the pilot meeting which was facilitated by East Durham Trust. The pilot had identified issues which people saw as priorities and made up the "Agenda for Action".

M Fallow, Chief Executive of East Durham Trust explained that he had attended the March meeting. If any further priorities were identified these could be added to the 'Agenda for Action'. He added that the local authority took seriously residents' views.

2 SOUTH HETTON AGENDA FOR ACTION

- (i) Address Traffic Congestion and Unlawful Parking around South Hetton Primary School in Frederick Terrace**
- (ii) Control Traffic and Improve Pedestrian Safety on A182 through South Hetton by introducing a Pedestrian Crossing**

Inspector V Addison, Durham Constabulary explained that the two issues were both traffic related. He had spoken to the Traffic Management Team and the Road Policing Unit at Aykley Heads and a campaign had been organised by them. In a one month period, there had been fifteen fixed penalty notices issued for speeding, a number of Vehicle Defect Rectification Scheme (VDRS) forms issued and a number of verbal warnings given for speeding. The statistics were similar to other roads throughout the district. The first stage would be to collect evidence to present to the Highway Authority to make representations for traffic calming measures. He added that he would contact Maxine Stubbs, Traffic Management Officer to ascertain how to progress representations to the Highway Authority for a pedestrian crossing on the A182.

Mr Rodgers explained that the A182 was one of the main roads onto the A19. On entering Easington Lane, there were numerous traffic lights and pedestrian crossings on an A road. Inspector Addison explained that South Hetton and Easington Lane were managed by two different local authorities. He added that he was no expert on highways matters but lack of road calming measures on the A road through the centre of the village maybe a policy issue rather than financial.

Councillor Todd explained that road safety was not a new problem and had been raised for many years, although the position had deteriorated as the amount of traffic had increased. There had been a number of public buildings built ie. community centre, health centre, nursing home and a new housing development on the A182 which had exacerbated the problem. He had organised a petition to strengthen the argument for a pedestrian crossing. There had been no guarantee for a school crossing patrol but they would only be available at school times. The ideal solution was to have a controlled crossing.

A further problem was the access from Regents Court because it had a wide radius. The traffic situation on the A182 was a number one priority and he would be submitting the petition to the Director of Environment the following week. He had been informed that the cost of a crossing would be approximately £30,000.

Carol Charters explained that she was a school governor and a Parish Councillor and had been fighting for a number of years for road calming measures. The Parish Council and the school had written to Durham County Council on numerous occasions. There had been major problems eight years ago and the village was expanding.

Inspector Addison explained that he had conducted a foot patrol around the village earlier that week and had spoken to a number of residents. He had worked in the district for six years and did not know South Hetton that well because it was a relatively quiet village in terms of police presence.

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With regard to the traffic congestion around the school, Inspector Addison explained that two PCSOs had patrolled the area. He was aware that there was a problem with parking on a morning and afternoon when parents were taking their children to school. He gave a commitment that where people were parking, causing obstructions or endangering the public, the legislation would be enforced.

Mr Ryall explained that there were laws which empowered local authorities to issue tickets and queried if Officers of the District Council could become involved. The District Council had ran two high profile campaigns to stop parking on verges in Peterlee and Seaham and that was what was happening outside the schools. It was illegal to park in front of a dropped kerb and park on a pavement.

Inspector Addison explained that a lot of people parked on the footpath and this would be tolerated for the free flow of traffic as there had to be some common sense. Outside the school was narrow and he would continue to monitor the situation.

AGREED that:-

- (i) Inspector Addison contact Maxine Stubbs, Traffic Management Officer for guidance on the procedure to follow to obtain a pedestrian crossing;
 - (ii) the PCSO's to monitor the parking situation around South Hetton Primary School.
- (iii) Improved Facilities For Young People Specifically To Include A Youth Club And Access To Youth Workers And Continue To Support And Develop The Youth Shelter**

Steve Arkley, Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives explained that he was the lead officer for youth and also Chair of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. South Hetton had a youth club in existence but was ran by volunteers. Durham County Council took the lead on providing youth workers for centre based activities which were often located where there was a high incidence of anti-social behaviour. A feasibility study needed to be carried out but resources for Officer support could be given on a short term basis while this was being completed.

With regards to the youth shelter, there had been some good reports since it was erected. Some issues around anti-social behaviour had been reported and there were further plans regarding lighting and the pathway.

Youth workers were not centre based but were outreach workers. In areas where there had been high levels of anti-social behaviour, youth workers had been placed to act as a bridge to resolve problems. There were currently four youth workers, ran by Groundwork East Durham although their deployment came through the Crime Reduction Partnership. It was hoped that a further two would be employed.

Mrs Rodgers explained that there was a youth club in the community centre for younger children but there needed to be something for the elder children.

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The Chair commented that the community centre had pool tables and air hockey for the older children to use but there was no supervision.

Carol Charters explained that she had seen a leaflet for Durham City Council's leisure centres which had numerous activities for children over the school holidays with trained staff. She did not have the knowledge of how to obtain funding for trained staff but this would be a great idea in the school holidays.

S Arkley explained that the previous year was the largest summer holiday programme the District Council had ran and most activities were free. There were numerous outdoor activities including trampolining, gymnastics and football. The summer programme would be circulated in 2-3 weeks through schools.

Carole Forster explained that activities had been carried out in the Easter holidays by the Sports Development Team but was by invite only.

Carol Doyle explained that the information on the summer programme was publicised through Infopoint which was distributed to every household in the district.

The Chair commented that there had been youth workers previously in the village which had been fantastic but the funding had been withdrawn.

S Arkley explained that there were limited resources and youth workers were placed where they made the most impact and he would like them to have a geographical responsibility so there would be a dedicated person to lead on problems.

The Chair commented that the youth shelter had been quiet recently but there were some teenagers drinking around the industrial estate. The proposed lighting column was to be erected shortly.

AGREED that the information given, to noted.

(iv) Improved Frequency Of Public Transport (Particularly Early Mornings, Evenings And Weekends) To Enable People To Get To Job Opportunities Outside The Village Including Durham And Doxford Park

The Chair explained that Durham County Council had been contacted but no response had been received.

S Ryall explained that the only local authority in the North East of England that gave children half fares up to the age of 16 was Middlesbrough. All of the others were only up to the age of 14. He commented that this did not make sense and penalised children.

AGREED that the information given, be noted.

(v) Improve The Environment Of The Area By Revitalising The Fishing Lakes And Dealing With The Garage Site, A General Clean Up To Tackle Dog Fouling and Litter Was Required

The Chair explained that the fishing lakes referred to was a pond.

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Mr Rodgers explained that he thought the land was owned by Mr Frain. Pond areas in the other villages were made to look picturesque and for the benefit of the people of the village.

S Arkley explained that he would try to ascertain ownership and make contact with the owner to see if anything could be done.

S Arkley referred to dog fouling in the area and explained that South Hetton in the last year had 25 stray dogs collected and 6 dogs chipped. Three fixed penalty notices had been issued for dog fouling and litter. In comparison to other villages, this was rather small. He was aware that there was an issue with providing more dog bins and this was something that the Council could do.

Carol Charters explained that dog fouling was becoming a problem and felt that a leaflet to every household in the village explaining that people would be fined if they allowed their dogs to foul should be circulated.

Jim Yorke explained that there were a number of wardens who were currently erecting posters on lampposts. Authority had just been received to put the posters on telegraph poles to the entrance of each village. The black litter bins could also be used as dog bins. He added that if anyone had any particular incidences where people were allowing their dogs to foul then they should be reported to Envirocall on 0191 5275040.

J Yorke explained that 1 million poop scoop bags were given out the previous year. These were purchased with the funding from the fixed penalty notices and there would be enough this year to buy more supplies. S Ryall referred to horse manure and explained that twice he had to clean it from his doorstep which came from the stables at Snippersgate.

Carole Forster explained that horses were ridden up and down Derwent Terrace in large numbers and they were a danger to children and pedestrians as well as leaving their mess behind.

S Arkley explained that he was not sure on the law around fouling from horses but would speak to Officers at the District Council and report to the next meeting what enforcement was possible.

AGREED that

- (i) S Arkley ascertain ownership of the land around the pond and make contact.
- (ii) S Arkley report back to the next meeting on what enforcement action can be taken when horses foul the footpaths and highways

(vi) Increase Availability of Female Doctors And Clinical Staff At Health Centre

S Arkley explained that he had spoken to the PCT and they were doing a series of "Big Conversation" meetings to discuss issues such as this. Katrina Bage the PCPI Manager could be contacted direct or through the Patient Liaison Service (PALS).

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Councillor Todd explained that there was one resident doctor and one retired doctor on a temporary basis. A lady doctor should be available specifically for women.

S Arkley explained that he would invite Katrina Bage to the next meeting.

AGREED that S. Arkley invite Katrina Bage to the next meeting.

(vii) South Hetton Agenda For Action Document

B Garside explained that the South Hetton Neighbourhood Forum was a new initiative and asked those present if they were happy with the format of the meeting and the agenda.

Residents explained that they had seen the village change for the good but they often felt that South Hetton was forgotten. Discussing the priorities of the village was great but there needed to be some outcomes.

Mr Rodgers explained that there was a lack of choice in shopping in the village and felt that this area should also be added to the 'Agenda for Action'. J Brindle explained that she could ask an Officer from the District Council to talk about how to encourage businesses to come into the area.

AGREED that the lack of shops in the village be added to the 'Agenda for Action'.