

Item 2

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

AREA 1 FORUM

Spennymoor Town Hall,
Committee Room.

Monday,
15th December 2003

Time: 6.30 p.m.

Present: Councillor J. M. Khan (Chairman) – Sedgefield Borough Council; and

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|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Councillor Mrs. A. M. Armstrong | - | Sedgefield Borough Council |
| Councillor Mrs. B. Graham | - | Sedgefield Borough Council |
| Councillor A. Gray | - | Sedgefield Borough Council |
| Councillor A. Smith | - | Sedgefield Borough Council |
| Councillor Mrs. C. Sproat | - | Sedgefield Borough Council |
| Councillor K. Thompson | - | Sedgefield Borough Council |
| Councillor N.C. Foster | - | Durham County Council |
| M. Khan-Willis | - | Durham Police Authority |
| M. Fordham | - | Sedgefield Primary Care Trust |
| Inspector S. Winship | - | Spennymoor Police |
| C. Bell | - | Eden Residents Association |
| A. Stapleton | - | Eden Residents Association |
| E. Croft | - | Local Resident |

Apologies: Sedgefield Borough Council

Councillors M.T.B. Jones, B.M. Ord, G.W. Scott and W. Waters

Spennymoor Town Council

Councillors Mrs. S. Fleetham and Mrs. E. Summerson

Durham County Council

Councillor E. Foster

Local Resident

D. Gordon

AF(1)24/03 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27th October 2003 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (For copy see file of Minutes).

AF(1)25/03 AGENDA ITEMS

The Chairman reported that a letter had been received from Councillor Mrs. E. Maddison requesting the addition of two items to the agenda:

- To discuss the development of a scheme used to collect and dispose of garden waste in Newton Aycliffe and to question how successful it had been and whether it could be developed for the Spennymoor area.
- To discuss funding to increase the levels of staff at the Community Care Force Centre after the introduction of two new cameras.

It was explained that contact had been made with the appropriate officers regarding the items and further information would be presented to the Forum when available.

AF(1)26/03 POLICE REPORT

Inspector Steve Winship, the new Community Inspector for Spennymoor was present at the meeting to give details of the crime statistics for the area.

It was noted that for a number of years, Durham Police had been very successful at reducing levels of crime, however, after a recent British crime survey, they had been found to be poor in giving the community a sense of security and safety. It was explained that the Community Inspector would be responsible for a team of Beat Officers who would work with a number of public and private organisations, to tackle problems that have an impact on the community as a whole, such as vandalism, noise and anti-social behaviour. The role of the Officers was to achieve vision, accessibility and familiarity.

It was reported that crime figures were low for November with just one dwelling-house burglary. Two teams of two had been arrested in conjunction with burglaries that had taken place and were in custody. There had been four thefts of vehicles and four thefts from vehicles, as well as ten reported assaults. Domestic violence incidents had increased, although that was thought to be as a result of more incidents being reported. Specific reference was made to Operation DART, which would target dwelling burglaries and Operation Bullseye, which would target drug dealers, handlers of stolen goods and burglaries. There had been a number of drugs and stolen property seized and the operation would run until Christmas.

It was noted that the front desk of Spennymoor Police Station would be open between the hours of 8.00 a.m. and 8.00 p.m., however, if it was vital to see an Officer, or get into the station, there was a telephone at the front door which would enable people to speak to an Officer, who would then open the doors electronically, if needed.

Questions were raised as to whether the Police would be targeting the shops that sell alcohol to under-aged children. It was explained they would be targeted, as well as those who sell alcohol on the street.

The Forum was given details of the powers of the Community Police Officers.

Inspector Winship was thanked for his attendance and presentation.

AF(1)27/03 SEDGFIELD PRIMARY CARE TRUST

Melanie Fordham was present at the meeting to give a presentation on the latest health matters as well as the figures of recent surveys, which were distributed at the meeting. (For copy see file for Minutes).

Specific reference was made to the fact that the target had been met for patients waiting to see a GP within 48 hours. The target had not been achieved last year resulting in the Trust receiving a 1 'star' rating as opposed to a 2 'star' rating.

It was reported that, unfortunately, four breaches of in-patients waiting longer than twelve months had occurred in October, mainly as a result of staffing problems. An action plan had been implemented in November to stop further breaches, which had been successful.

It was noted that the target set for the ambulance service to reach incidents within eight minutes had not been achieved as a result of the location of the ambulance stations, however, a financial plan was being considered for next year to improve the locality of the stations.

Specific reference was made to the award of the LIFT contract which would renew surgeries in the Borough, with Spennymoor Health Centre being the first to benefit under the scheme.

It was explained that the Primary Care Trust had been recently assessed for Working Lives and had achieved 3.5 out of 5.

M. Fordham was thanked for attending the Forum and her presentation.

AF(1)28/03 COUNCIL ACTION ON ABANDONED VEHICLES

Ian Bestford was present at the meeting to inform the Forum of his new role as a Vehicle Action Co-ordinator. He had been employed by the Council since August 2003. Prior to that he had been employed as a Road Traffic Officer by Durham Constabulary.

It was explained that the problem of abandoned vehicles would escalate in the future as cars could no longer be taken to a scrapyard. They now needed to be disposed of through authorised treatment facilities.

His job was to remove abandoned vehicles, vehicles parking on and causing damage to Borough land, untaxed vehicles and abandoned caravans from Council land. Any other type of complaint, such as vehicles creating a nuisance through noise, driving and obstruction should still be reported to the Police.

Questions were raised regarding the funding of the service. It was explained that it was jointly funded by the Northern Regeneration Fund and the Council. Contractors would be employed to remove the vehicles and would charge the Council £50.00. It would cost the owner of the vehicle £105 for the Council to take the vehicle away, the vehicle would then be stored for a period of seven days at a cost of £12.00 per day, if, after the seven days, the vehicle was unwanted, £50.00 would be charged for the disposal of the vehicle.

It was reported that burnt out cars would be removed immediately in view of the risk of leaking chemicals. The above costs would be incurred.

With regard to vehicles being sold from the roadside or car parks, at the present time a note would be left on the vehicle explaining that it was an offence and requesting the vehicle's removal.

Specific reference was made to Operation Daggerboard, where the Council had worked in conjunction with the DVLA to clamp and remove vehicles on the spot. Through that operation 13 cars had been removed from Ferryhill and 12 from Spennymoor.

It was reported that overall in Spennymoor there had been 24 abandoned vehicles, with three of those having to be forcibly removed.

I. Bestford was thanked for his presentation.

AF(1)29/03 COMMUNITY CARE FORCE CENTRE

An informal report was received from Mrs. Bell who had attended the visit to the Community Care Force Centre on Tuesday 18th November 2003. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Specific reference was made to the fact that previously it was thought, by some members of the public, that the CCTV cameras were not operational all the time. The visit had confirmed that the cameras were operational 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

It was pointed out that the Control Centre was manned by four multi skilled Communications Officers who were responsible for monitoring 70 CCTV cameras that were located throughout the Borough, as well as manning the Carelink system, and answering and logging telephone calls.

Forum members praised the work that was being carried out, however they questioned whether more staff were needed and whether sufficient funding was available. It was explained that there were certain criteria that had to be met to receive help with funding, however the Council was always monitoring and considering ways to fund schemes.

It was agreed that a letter of thanks would be sent to the Community Care Force Centre on behalf of the Forum.

The Forum had found the visit to be extremely helpful and answered all their questions.

Mrs. Bell was thanked for her report.

AF(1)30/03 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday, 16th February 2004, at Spennymoor Town Hall, Council Chamber, at 6.30 p.m.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Sarah Billingham, Spennymoor (01388) 816166, Ext. 4240

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