

# Item 2

## SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

### AREA 1 FORUM

Middlestone Moor,  
Community Centre.

Monday,  
5<sup>th</sup> April 2004

Time: 6.30 p.m.

<b>Present:</b>	Councillor J. M. Khan (Chairman) –	Sedgefield Borough Council and
	Councillor Mrs. A. M. Armstrong -	Sedgefield Borough Council
	Councillor Mrs. B. Graham -	Sedgefield Borough Council
	Councillor A. Gray -	Sedgefield Borough Council
	Councillor B.M. Ord -	Sedgefield Borough Council
	Councillor A. Smith -	Sedgefield Borough Council
	Councillor Mrs. C. Sproat -	Sedgefield Borough Council
	Councillor K. Thompson -	Sedgefield Borough Council
	Councillor E. Foster -	Durham County Council
	Councillor N. Foster -	Durham County Council
	Inspector S. Winship -	Durham Constabulary
	Sergeant I. Rodgers -	Durham Constabulary
	R. Cant -	Sedgefield Primary Care Trust
	Mrs. M. Fordham -	Sedgefield Primary Care Trust
	Councillor Mrs. S. Fleetham -	Spennymoor Town Council
	Councillor Mrs. E. Summerson -	Spennymoor Town Council
	I. Geldard -	Tudhoe Grange School Council
	V. Hall -	Tudhoe Grange School Council
	E. Spowart -	Boxing Club
	A. Stapleton -	Eden Residents Association
	S. Armstrong -	Local Resident
	S. Brown -	Local Resident
	E. Croft -	Local Resident
	A. Everson -	Local Resident
	M. Farrow -	Local Resident
	E. Maddison -	Local Resident
	R. Stewart -	Local Resident
	G. Turnbull -	Local Resident

**Apologies: Sedgefield Borough Council**

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

**Local Resident**

D. Gordon

**AF(1)37/03 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2004 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (For copy see file of Minutes).

During discussion, it was explained that the next Town Centre Forum would be held on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2004 at 7.00 p.m. at the Combined Services Club, Spennymoor. Members of the Forum and members of the public could attend.

### **AF(1)38/03 POLICE REPORT**

Inspector Winship, Community Inspector and Sergeant Rodgers from Spennymoor Police were present at the meeting to discuss crime figures for the area.

It was explained that compared with figures for the same period for the previous year, the total number of crimes had decreased by 20%.

Inspector Winship explained that since the previous meeting the Beat Officers had taken up their posts on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2004. To enhance and strengthen their work a Re-assurance Strategy had been launched with four main themes:

- Presence of authority
- Environmental and physical
- Effective response
- Communication

It was noted that as well as the Beat Officers, two PCSO's would take up their posts the following week. The PCSO's had been employed to address the Strategy and tackle anti-social behaviour problems. One officer would be based in Ferryhill and one in Spennymoor.

The Forum expressed concern regarding the recent difficulties in contacting the Police Station via telephone. It was explained that the staff at the Station were aware of the problem and had been actively trying to combat the problems encountered. Inspector Winship suggested a small group from the Forum could visit the Call Centre to see how it operated. The Chairman agreed that it would be a good idea and would discuss the possibility with the Inspector.

### **AF(1)39/03 SEDGEFIELD PRIMARY CARE TRUST**

Melanie Fordham attended the meeting to give an update on recent performance figures and local health matters.

It was explained that targets continued to be met for patients waiting to see a GP within 48 hours. The target for the ambulance service responding to Class A calls within the maximum response time of 8 minutes had also been reached. Only one patient had been waiting for a transfer of care.

Members of the Forum questioned whether the introduction of the financial penalties for delays in discharge had resulted in a reduction in the quality of services provided to the public. M. Fordham explained that although there had been an increase in the amount of work that would need to be carried out, there was no evidence to suggest that

there had been any deterioration in the quality of services provided by the PCT.

M. Fordham explained to the Forum that a three year plan had been developed by the PCT in 2003 and funds had been invested into the health service. It was noted that £600,000 had been invested into the new hospital and mental health services based at Darlington. The remaining funds would be used to purchase an extra critical care bed, emergency drugs, support for the back pain in the community service and to provide support in the angiography department in North Durham and North Tees Hospitals.

It was also pointed out that research had been carried out throughout the Borough to identify the risks of osteoporosis. M. Fordham explained that special hip protectors would be made available once the research had been completed. The research would then be used to identify which areas would benefit the most throughout the Borough to receive the protectors.

With regard to the out-of-hours service, it was reported that all GPs in the Borough had opted out of the service. The PCT was currently advertising externally for GPs to opt into providing the out-of-hours service.

**AF(1)40/03 LITTERING, DOG FOULING, FLY TIPPING**

E. Beevers, Environmental Health Service Manager was present at the meeting to give a presentation regarding the above.

It was reported that regulations appertaining to the Dogs (Fouling of Land Act) 1996 came into force in December 1996 and Sedgfield Borough Council had agreed in April 1999 to designate land in the Borough to which the Act applied. Under the legislation a person in charge of a dog was required to clean up immediately if the dog had defecated on a land that had been designated. Failure to do so was an offence unless the person placed the faeces in a bin on the land provided for that reason, the owner/occupier or person in control of the land had consented to the faeces being left or the person in charge of the dog was registered blind.

The Act applied to all Borough Council, County Council and Town Council land with the exception of:

- Carriageways with a speed limit in excess of 40 m.p.h. and land running alongside them.
- Land used for agricultural or moorlands.
- Land, which was mostly marshland, moor or heath.
- Rural common land

Any person who allowed their dog to foul in a designated area was guilty of an offence and they could be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice or legal proceedings may be implemented in the Magistrates Court where, if found guilty, a fine of up to £1,000 may be imposed.

It was noted that the Council was not required to provide suitable bins for faeces, however, over 350 poop scoop bins were located throughout the Borough.

It was noted that the Borough Council employed an Environmental Enforcement Officer to enforce the Fixed Penalty Notice provisions under the Dogs Fouling of Land Act 1996 and the Environment Protection 1990 for offences of Dog Fouling and Public Littering. During the period April to December, 2003 the officer had served 104 Notices, 33 of which related to Area 2.

It was pointed out that as the Council had only one Environmental Enforcement Officer to cover the whole of the Borough. Public assistance was needed to identify offenders and any information provided would be treated in confidence and arrangements would be made for the officer to visit the area concerned at appropriate times.

It was also pointed out that the Police Community Support Officers and Beat Officers were empowered to serve Fixed Penalty Notices. The role of Community Force was currently under review.

The Forum was informed that fly tipping was not as big a problem in Sedgefield as it was in other districts in the County. There had been 160 reported fly tips from April, 2003.

It was explained that FLYCAPTURE a new national database had been implemented that day. The information collected would be used to enable local authorities to compare the scale of the problem of fly tipping locally and nationally.

Members queried how often street cleaners visited the surrounding towns and villages. They also expressed concern at the amount of rubbish that was collecting in the trees along the Spennymoor by-pass. It was explained that confirmation would be sought and reported to the next Forum.

#### **AF(1)41/04 QUESTIONS**

##### **Tudhoe Grange School Council**

It was noted that a letter of appreciation would be sent to the school regarding the attendance of two pupils from Tudhoe Grange School at the Area Forum.

##### **Council Tax**

A number of questions were raised and were answered accordingly by the appropriate members of local authorities who had attended the Area Forum.

**AF(1)42/04 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Date to be agreed at Annual Council.

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**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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