

**SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
AREA 4 FORUM**

Hackworth Suite,  
Shildon Sunnydale  
Leisure Centre,  
Middridge Lane, Shildon

Tuesday,  
13 January 2004

Time: 6.30 p.m.

**Present:** Councillor D.M. Hancock (Chairman) – Sedgefield Borough Council and

Councillor G.M.R. Howe	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor J.G. Huntington	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Mrs. I. Jackson Smith		
Inspector A. Neill	–	Durham Constabulary
Sergeant Ball	–	Durham Constabulary
C. Hind	–	New Shildon Residents Association
J. Johnson	–	New Shildon Residents Association
C. Thompson	–	New Shildon Residents Association
Councillor Mrs. L. Goldie	–	Shildon Town Council
Councillor M. Stott	–	Shildon Town Council
Mrs. M. Quigley	–	SPICE
G. L. Cook	–	Local Resident
A. Robinson	–	Local Resident
J. Smith	–	Local Resident
G. Swinbank	–	Local Resident

**In**

**Attendance:** E. Beevers and Mrs. G. Garrigan

**Apologies:**

Councillor J.M. Smith	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor Mrs. L. Smith	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Mrs. K. Vasey	–	Sedgefield Primary Care Trust

**AF(4)26/03 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2003 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (For copy see file of Minutes)

**AF(4)27/03 POLICE REPORT**

Inspector Neill and Sergeant Ball were present at the meeting to give details of crime statistics.

Inspector Neill informed members of the Forum that he had been recently appointed as Community Inspector covering the areas around Sedgefield, Newton Aycliffe and Shildon. He would be responsible for a team of beat of officers and sergeants, who would work with the public to tackle problems that had an impact on the community such as vandalism, children causing a nuisance and anti-social behaviour. He reported that Durham Constabulary had worked very successfully at

detecting crime, however, a recent crime survey had found that it was very poor in giving the community a sense of security and safety.

It was reported that during the month of December there had been 332 reported incidents, of which 102 were crimes. 43 arrests had been made.

The crime statistics were as follows:

<u>Type of Crime</u>	<u>December 2003</u>
Youths causing annoyance	29
Assaults	21
Dwellinghouse burglaries	5
Criminal damage	33
Thefts from Motor Vehicles	4
Motor vehicle thefts	5
Arson	1

It was noted that 3 of the 21 assaults had been serious and one arrest had been made. It was also pointed out that during the month there had been 2 drug seizures. Ecstasy worth over £400 had been recovered.

With regard to criminal damage, it was noted that a number of the incidents related to car tyres being slashed or wing mirrors being broken off cars.

The Forum was informed that the Beat Support Unit had recently been deployed in the Redworth Road area in response to the problem of youths causing annoyance, and three youths had been arrested and charged.

Specific reference was made to the work undertaken by PC A. Lawton in relation to compiling a form to provide information to private landlords regarding prospective tenants. It was noted that the legality of the form had been checked and the Police needed the support of the Borough Council to introduce the forms. It was pointed out that Police were in the progress of arranging a meeting with private landlords to discuss their legal responsibilities.

Members of the Forum expressed concern regarding the decision to remove the direct telephone line to Shildon Police Office. Inspector Neil pointed out that the decision had been taken before he had taken up post, however, he would ensure that their concerns were reported to the appropriate officer.

Members of the Forum queried whether victims of crime were informed when the persons charged, were to appear in Court. It was reported that all victims should receive a letter giving them that information. It

was also reported that victims of dwelling house burglaries in the Sildon area were visited by the local Beat Officers to give advice on what further measures could be taken to improve the security of their homes.

Members queried when the CCTV camera would be back in operation on Jubilee Estate. It was noted that Inspector Neil was currently investigating a number of issues in relation to the usage of the camera equipment.

**AF(4)28/03 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 Sedgefield 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 land that had been designated. Failure to do so was an offence unless:

- The person had a reasonable excuse for not cleaning up - lack of a suitable device or means of removing faeces or being unaware of the defecation were not considered reasonable excuses.
- The owner, occupier or person in control of the land had consented to the faeces being left.
- The person placed the faeces in a bin on the land provided for that reason.
- 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.

Specific reference was made to the training programmes that the Borough Council had run in conjunction with the National Canine Defence League.

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.

It was noted that during the period April to December 2003 the officer had served 104 notices, of which 22 related to the Shildon area. The Council had prosecuted 3 offenders and 13 cases were pending prosecution.

It was pointed out that as the Council had only one Environmental Enforcement Officer to cover the whole of the Borough, the public's assistance was needed to identify offenders. 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 may be empowered to serve Fixed Penalty Notices. The payment of a Fixed Penalty Notice of £50.00 would prevent the offender from having a criminal record.

It was explained that the legal enforcement of fly tipping provisions was dealt with under Section 33 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. It was noted that the Local Government Association and the Environmental Agency had signed a Memorandum of Understanding detailing the types of incidents that would be dealt with by either the Environment Agency or local authorities.

Specific reference was made to the dumping of tyres. It was noted that there had recently been three incidents of illegal dumping of tyres on Council land.

It was explained that an EC Directive and EU Landfill Directive banned whole tyres from being disposed of in landfill sites from 2003 and shredded tyres from 2006. To address the problem of used tyres, the Environment Agency had launched a National Tyre Watch Programme, with a view to reducing illegal disposal of tyres to support sustainable disposal and recovery systems, and reduce the environmental risk from tyre stockpiles. It was pointed out that tyres could be sent for re-treading, used as a supplementary fuel or reprocessed into rubber granulate that could be used in the construction of athletic tracks. It was noted that under the Environmental Protection Act, provision had been made for fines up to £20,000 and imprisonment for each illegal deposit of waste.

It was reported that in an attempt to forge stronger links between District Councils in County Durham and Environment Agency, the

Agency had proposed to appoint an officer who would work for the Environment Agency to deal with enforcement issues on behalf of the County and District Councils and be based within the County.

It was pointed out that fly tipping was not as big a problem in Sedgefield Borough as it was in other districts in the County. There had been 140 incidents for the period April to December 2003, which equated to approximately 186 per year.

Concern was expressed regarding the tyres and builders rubble dumped on land at Eldon owned by Eldon Estates. It was pointed out that as the land was in private ownership it was not the Council's responsibility to remove the material. It was up to the owner of the land.

Members of the Forum gave details of other areas of land in Shildon where litter needed removing. These included land at All Saints and along the Shildon by-pass. They also requested that more litter bins and dog fouling bins be provided and that the latter be emptied on a more regular basis.

Members of the Forum proposed that officers from the Council's Street Cleansing Department should be invited to attend a future meeting to give details of the current cleaning regime in the Shildon area.

**AF(4)29/03      QUESTIONS**

It was requested that an officer from Leisure Services be invited to a future meeting to give details of the proposed introduction of a 'No Smoking' Policy in the Council's Leisure Centres and the facilities/activities provided by Shildon Sunnydale Leisure Centre, with particular reference to the Internet Café and school holiday activities for 5 – 8 year olds.

**AF(4)30/03      DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2004 at 6.30 p.m. in Shildon Sunnydale Leisure Centre.

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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 Gillian Garrigan Spennymoor 816166 Ext 4240