

**SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
AREA 4 FORUM**

Sildon Sunnydale  
Leisure Centre

Tuesday,  
10 July 2007

Time: 6.30 p.m.

**Present:** Councillor B. Stephens (Chairman) – Sedgefield Borough Council and

Councillor V. Chapman	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor J.G. Huntington	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor Ms. I. Jackson	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
K. Vasey	–	County Durham Primary Care Trust
L. Robson	–	County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust
Acting Inspector S. Ball	–	Durham Constabulary
J. Johnson	–	New Sildon Residents Association
C. Thompson	–	New Sildon Residents Association
M. Stott	–	Pilgrim Club
B. Carr	–	Sildon Community Safety Group
C. Fletcher	–	Sildon Community Safety Group
Councillor D. Hancock	–	Sildon Town Council
Councillor F. Timmiss	–	Sildon Town Council
M. Quigley	–	SWDCU
C. Hind	–	Local Resident

**Apologies:** Councillor G.M.R. Howe - Sedgefield Borough Council  
H. Robinson - Eldon Parish Council

**AF(4)1/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
Members had no interests to declare.

**AF(4)2/07 MINUTES**  
The Minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**AF(4)3/07 POLICE REPORT**  
Acting Inspector S. Ball was present at the meeting to give the statistics for the area.

The reported crime figures for May and June, 2007 were as follows :-

	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>
Total Recorded	104	65
Violent Crime	14	13
Robbery	0	0
Burglary (Dwelling)	2	1

Burglary (Other)	7	3
Criminal Damage	35	16
Vehicle Crime	13	11
Theft of Vehicle	8	3
Theft from Vehicle	5	8
Shoplifting	7	5
Total Theft	38	32

With regard to the number of thefts that had been reported, it was pointed out that a large number were the theft of garden artefacts such as ornaments, barbecues and gas heaters that had been left outside. The importance of storing such items away out of view was reiterated.

The Forum was informed that a clean up operation would be taking place later in the month combining both the Police and Borough Council responsibilities.

Concerns were raised regarding parking in the area of Byerely Road. It was felt that the number of parked cars on both sides of the road was hazardous, disrupting traffic flow and causing obstructions for crossing the road, particularly for school children. It was explained that the issue had been raised with Durham County Council and the Police, however, during a site visit there were no apparent problems. Acting Inspector Ball agreed to take concerns back to the Traffic Management Officer at Durham County Council for further monitoring.

Concerns were also raised regarding youngsters congregating around “the Courts” area causing a nuisance. Acting Inspector Ball was not aware of any problems, however, would look into the matter. He pointed out that instances needed to be reported otherwise action could not be taken.

#### **AF(4)4/07**

#### **COUNTY DURHAM PRIMARY CARE TRUST**

K. Vasey, County Durham Primary Care Trust attended the meeting to answer any questions from the Forum relating to local health matters.

K. Vasey answered concerns from the previous meeting regarding doctor’s surgeries using premium rate telephone numbers. The Forum was reassured that calls were not charged at a premium rate. It was pointed out however that an article published in The Northern Echo stated that all 0844 numbers were charged at 5p per minute. It was also questioned why the number was changed from the local number. K. Vasey agreed to take concerns back to the relevant officer and look into the matter.

L. Robson, County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust also attended the meeting to answer concerns regarding Bishop Auckland Hospital.

Concerns were raised regarding the management of the pharmacies where it was explained that, on occasions, due to staff shortages the ground floor pharmacy had been closed whilst the more inaccessible pharmacy upstairs was left open. It was also pointed out that pharmacists often went on the same lunch, which resulted in it being closed over

lunchtime. As prescriptions from hospital could only be dispensed at hospital pharmacies, it was felt that it was unacceptable.

L. Robson explained that the pharmacy upstairs in the hospital was better equipped to cover both in and out patients therefore was the most efficient to stay open. With regard to staffing over lunch periods the matter would be taken up with the Pharmacy Manager.

Discussions were also held regarding Pharmacists salaries, were it was pointed out that those working within the private sector were on higher salaries than those working in the public sector. It was unfortunately a problem around the country as those working in the public sector had a national pay rate set by the Government. Members of the Forum expressed their concerns regarding the issue.

Consideration was also given to ward closures in hospitals within the North East. It was explained that the Foundation Trust was working on improving its efficiency, with a new Five Year Plan being developed to ensure the organisation was kept financially viable.

With regard to the movement and closure of wards, it was explained that services had been moved to the better-equipped hospitals. Some had moved from Bishop Auckland to Darlington and vice versa as there was a need to keep specialist areas. As a result of ward closures, Members of the Forum outlined experiences, specifically of being turned away as there were no beds available in any of the North East hospital and admission had ceased. L. Robson re-assured the Forum that she had not been aware of all hospitals stopping admissions, only that one may need to and then the patient would be admitted to another.

Concerns were finally expressed regarding the maternity ward and the problems that had been associated with Bishop Auckland not admitting known complicated pregnancies and transferring those where complications occurred. It was explained that there were not enough admissions to warrant keeping both Darlington and Bishop Auckland open as two main maternity wards. As Darlington was better equipped its maternity ward would be the main maternity hospital. It was pointed out however that Bishop Auckland still received 300 admissions.

It was pointed out that the Prime Minister had identified health as a priority area therefore there would be a number of changes introduced. It was therefore suggested that the MP for Bishop Auckland be invited to discuss the plans and identify where Shildon would fit in to the Governments plans.

**AF(4)5/07**

## **QUESTIONS**

### **Health Profile 2007**

Reference was made to the Sedgefield Health Profile 2007, which gave a snapshot of health in the area. The Forum's attention was drawn to the map highlighting income inequalities, which identified Shildon as one of the most income deprived areas in the Borough. It was therefore suggested that the MP, officers from the PCT and the Borough Council be invited to a

future meeting to discuss what steps could be taken to target and significantly improve health issues in the area.

### **Shildon Sunnydale Leisure Centre**

Questions were raised as to why, on a number of occasions, the lights in the above car park had not been switched on. It was agreed that concerns would be taken back to the Director of Leisure Services.

### **Grass Cutting**

It was pointed out that the grass verges around Dabble Duck Industrial Estate were in need of cutting. It was explained that there was an issue of ownership and responsibility, however, concerns would be taken back to the relevant department.

### **Street Signs**

It was explained that the new Brosley Estate was still not signposted. It was agreed to highlight the issue with the relevant officer and identify who was responsible for signposting the estate.

**AF(4)6/07**

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

25<sup>th</sup> September, 2007 Shildon Sunnydale Leisure Centre at 6.30 p.m.

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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 Miss. S. Billingham, Tel 01388 816166 Ext 4240, sbillingham@sedgefield.gov.uk