

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE COASTAL AREA FORUM
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2006
AT BLACKHALL PRIMARY SCHOOL, MIDDLE STREET, BLACKHALL

Present: Representing District Council

Councillor P Stradling (Chair)
Councillors D Armstrong, Mrs E M Connor,
R Crute, A J Holmes and G Patterson

Representing Parish Councils

Mr W S Day – Easington Village Parish Council
Councillor Mrs M Robinson – Horden Parish Council
Councillors W B Underwood and S Peacock –
Monk Hesleden Parish Council

and R Moore, J Moore, M Hoey, T Phillips and
H Archbold

1. OPENING INTRODUCTION

Councillor P Stradling welcomed everybody to the Coastal Area Forum.

2. FOLLOW UP FROM LAST MEETING AND CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES

(i) Confirmation of the Minutes

The Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 9 November 2005, a copy of which had been circulated, were confirmed.

(ii) Update on Anti-Social Behaviour in Attlee Avenue/Hart Crescent, Blackhall

A Bailey explained that an Anti-Social Behaviour Order had now been issued on an individual living on the estate and a significant improvement had been seen but the public were still experiencing problems. The public needed to contact the Police or the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit when there were incidents. The individual on the ASBO was on a curfew and information was required if the ASBO was being breached, otherwise it would not be effective.

It was explained that there had been a number of incidents in Middle Street which had been causing concern. There had been a fatality on the railway and A Bailey had been working with the British Transport Police to have the area secured. One problem was that adults walking their dogs were breaking the fence allowing access onto the railway line. The Police were doing a lot of foot patrols around the area.

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Mr Hoey referred to Pattison Gardens and explained that a lot of trouble had been experienced around that area recently. It had taken a number of years for a decision to be made on what was to happen to Pattison Gardens. The elderly residents had been kept in the dark time and time again and they were now down to 4-5 residents. A number of youths were taking over and causing anti-social behaviour.

J Link-Emery explained that East Durham Homes were aware of the problem and were doing everything to protect the elderly residents. There were four residents living there and one was soon to move out. From 4.00 pm until midnight there was a security man based in the community centre. The Street Wardens regularly visited the area as well as the Estate Wardens and the Allocations Officers during the day. There was a meeting scheduled for Tuesday the following week to bring the residents up to date on current progress.

M Smith explained that the District Council had agreed the sale of the site to Barratt Homes and a meeting was to be held on Tuesday, 14 February with the residents. It was hoped that work would commence on the site in April and the first to be housed would be the residents that remained on the site.

It was explained that the Street Wardens were not in attendance in Pattison Gardens on a regular basis. A Bailey explained that the Street Wardens covered numerous areas across the District but did keep regular contact with Pattison Gardens. The Street Wardens did what they could with the resources that were available.

The Director of Community Services explained that if members of the public wanted the Street Wardens to help to respond to a particular incident, then they could contact them, they would attend and he did expect them to feed back to residents.

Councillor Crute explained that he was aware of the situation in Pattison Gardens and had spoken to Malcolm Vest and Dave Risley who had advised him that every tenant had been visited although Mr Hoey had informed him that his mother-in-law had not been visited. He had subsequently contacted the Street Wardens and had now been advised that she had been visited. He added that the Pattison Gardens redevelopment had taken a long time but he now had assurance that development would commence on site in April.

Residents explained that when they were contacting the Police to report incidents of anti-social behaviour, they felt that the person taking the telephone call was not recording the incident correctly, as when the Police were in attendance they did not have all the information that had been reported.

Councillor Crute explained that residents had informed him of a number of incidents that had happened over the previous weekend. He had contacted Sergeant Dickinson who had explained that one call had been logged on the Friday evening. He had been on patrol on Saturday evening with four other officers and there were no reported incidents. It was explained that there seemed to be a problem with public perceptions of what was happening on the estate and what the

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Police were actually doing. All agencies needed to be involved to alleviate the problem.

The Chair explained that similar concerns had been raised regarding reporting incidents to the Police and it seemed that there was a lack of cohesion between Councillors, members of the public and the Police.

The Director of Community Services explained that the Council had a positive working relationship with the Police and he would raise this issue with them.

A Bailey explained that the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit were trying to get access to Police systems so they could proactively search logs.

The Chair explained that this issue of anti-social behaviour had been raised approximately one year ago and asked residents if any progress had been made. Residents explained that they did not think that much had changed on the estate.

A Bailey explained that a survey was required on the whole estate to ascertain accurate feedback.

Councillor Holmes explained that he felt that anti-social behaviour on the Blackhall Rocks estate had improved since the Anti-Social Behaviour Order had been issued to one individual. He explained that he had visited Pattison Gardens on a Friday evening for the last three weeks at different times and had witnessed no problems of anti-social behaviour. There were no crowds on the street corners and no cans of beer littering the grassed areas. He added that he felt the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit had come together with the Police and thought this was going well at the moment.

Councillor G Patterson suggested that a Police Inspector be invited to the next meeting.

The Chair explained that it appeared that some progress had been made but not sufficient enough to satisfy the residents as there still seemed to be a problem on the estate which needed attention. Councillor Crute had also requested that better cohesion between Councillors, tenants and agencies be improved to try to deal with the situation and an update would be given at the next meeting.

AGREED that:-

- (i) a progress report be submitted to the next meeting;
- (ii) a Police Inspector be invited to the next meeting.
- (iii) the Director of Community Services raise the lack of cohesion with the Police

3. **YOUR QUESTION TIME, YOUR SAY AND SERVICE DELIVERY, YOUR CALL**

- (i) **Builder's Yard, Eden Street, Horden**

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Mrs Phillips explained that the builder's yard was in a deplorable state. The community centre was adjacent and they were currently trying to obtain funding for a play area. Until the builder's yard was cleared the play area would not be able to be built as this would pose too high a risk to the children.

The Chair explained this item had been raised on numerous occasions and was still occurring.

The Director of Community Services explained that it was the first time he had heard of the problem and would give an undertaking to raise this matter with Environmental Health and see what action could be taken and report back to the next meeting.

AGREED that the Director of Community Services request Environmental Health to investigate this matter further and report back to the next meeting.

(ii) **A1086**

Councillor Mrs E M Connor asked who was responsible for cutting back the trees and hedges on the A1086 as they had been "hacked at".

Councillor Patterson explained that he had spoken to Gary Shears, the Countryside and Tree Officer, who explained that Durham County Council were responsible for trimming the trees back.

The Chair explained that he would ascertain if Durham County Council was responsible.

AGREED that the Chair ascertain if Durham County Council was responsible for cutting the trees on the A1086.

(iii) **Rubbish in Yards of Empty Properties**

Mrs Phillips explained that rubbish had been dumped in yards of empty properties, especially on Seventh and Eighth Streets in Horden and asked who was responsible for clearing the rubbish away.

The Director of Community Services explained that responsibility lay with the person who had left the rubbish in that location and could be classed as fly tipping. If the rubbish imposed an Environmental Health risk then the Council could take action to clear it and recharge the owners.

The Chair explained that there had been a recent incident in Seventh Street with one property that belonged to Hartlepool Properties and had been reported. Other derelict properties in the area were empty and there was one property that had been empty for ten years. No one had lived in the property, the owners had never been traced and had been used as a dumping ground.

The Director of Community Services explained that if statutory nuisance could be proven then the Council did have a recourse of action. He explained that he would look at the property in question.

AGREED that the Director of Community Services investigate the properties in Seventh Street that were being targeted for fly tipping.

4 CONSULTATION ON STREET CLEANSING, REFUSE COLLECTION AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

The Director of Community Services give a detailed presentation of changes to street cleansing, refuse collection and grounds maintenance.

It was explained that the District Council proposed to go to a four day week refuse collection from Tuesday to Friday which would involve financial savings, reduce disruption caused by bank holidays and allow a catch-up day if required.

With regard to street cleansing/horticulture, it was proposed to combine operations, create four new teams each working in a zone and be linked with enforcement and local residents.

The Director of Community Services asked a number of questions to establish a baseline of the public's views, the results of which were as follows:-

Question 1.

How important was it to you that streets were kept clean and tidy?

50% vital/very important
50% important

Question 2.

How satisfied were you with refuse collection?

15% very satisfied
50% satisfied
20% neither satisfied/dissatisfied
15% dissatisfied

Question 3.

How satisfied were you with street cleansing?

11% satisfied
47% neither satisfied/dissatisfied
26% dissatisfied
16% very dissatisfied

Question 4.

How satisfied were you with horticulture/grounds maintenance?

70% satisfied
25% neither satisfied/dissatisfied
5% very dissatisfied

Question 5.

Around your neighbourhood, dog fouling on the streets?

70% is a big problem
20% is a problem
5% is only a minor issue

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5% is not a local issue

Question 6.

Around your neighbourhood, litter and rubbish?

30% is a big problem
60% is a problem
10% is not a local issue

Question 7.

Around your neighbourhood, fly posting and graffiti?

0% is a big problem
37% is a problem
58% is only a minor issue
5% is not a local issue

Question 8.

Around your neighbourhood, forced to choose the biggest problem was?

11% litter
78% dog fouling
11% other

Question 9.

Do you think things would improve if the plans were followed?

60% yes
25% no
15% don't know

Question 10.

Forced to prioritise, what was the most important area that needed attention?

40% Enforcement e.g. Fines
25% Operations e.g. More Sweepers
5% Involvement/Self Help Grants
25% Education e.g. Work with Schools
5% Not sure

Mr Hoey explained that reducing to a four day week would make the refuse crews go faster and spill more rubbish and litter would be more of a problem. The Director of Community Services explained that there was an expectation that refuse crews did not leave rubbish and there was a need for them to be reminded to avoid spillages. Residents could help by not overfilling bins wherever possible. The information that had been collected that evening would be used to inform the Clean and Tidy Action Plan and decide where to concentrate resources.

The Chair thanked the Director of Community Services for his presentation.

AGREED that the information given, be noted.