

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE**

**COASTAL AREA FORUM**

**HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6th DECEMBER 2006**

**AT SEATON HOLME, HALL WALKS, EASINGTON VILLAGE**

Present:-

**Representing the District Council:**

Councillor P. Stradling (Chair)  
Councillors Mrs. E.M. Connor, R. Crute,  
A.J. Holmes and M. Routledge

**Representing Parish Councils:**

Councillor W.B. Underwood and S. Peacock -  
Monk Hesleden Parish Council

Councillor Mrs. M. Burn, Mrs. E.M. Hopper and  
Mr. W.S. Day - Easington Village Parish Council

Councillor D. Boyes - Easington Colliery Parish  
Council

Mr. & Mrs. Barnett and P. Chicken - Seventh Street  
Residents Association

PC A. Holland and Sgt S. Hawkes - Durham  
Constabulary

Mr. Hoey, P. Foggan, R. Williams, H. Archibold,  
E. Kiers, D. Murray, Mr. Bowman,

**1. OPENING INTRODUCTION**

Councillor P. Stradling welcomed everybody to the Coastal Area Forum.

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

**(i) Confirmation of the Minutes**

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 13th September 2006, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were agreed.

**(ii) Matters Arising**

**Clean Up Wembley Pilot  
(Minute No. 5 Refers)**

Mr. Barnett queried if any progress had been made regarding the Mandatory Licensing Scheme. The Chair advised that the Head of Housing was currently drafting a report. The Democratic Services Officer would contact the Head of Housing and ask him to contact Mr. Barnett and a report be sent to him on completion.

**AGREED** that:-

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- (i) the Head of Housing be requested to contact Mr. Barnett;
- (ii) a copy of the report on Mandatory Licensing be forwarded to Mr. Barnett on completion.
- (iii) **Update on Anti-Social Behaviour in Attlee Avenue/Hart Crescent, Blackhall**

PC Holland explained that in the period from 13th June to 13th September 2006, there had been a total of 10 calls regarding the Attlee Avenue/Hart Crescent area. There were 16 similar calls in other areas of Blackhall. From 13th September to date, there had been a total of 6 calls and 19 calls in the rest of Blackhall relating to anti-social behaviour.

This was a steady amount of calls for anti-social behaviour and reflected well in comparison with other areas. One family in the area had recently received a 6 week notice for eviction and a member of that family had been given an Anti Social Behaviour Order. The youth on the ASBO had been to court twice and been given a conviction for breach of the Order. The Police had also been maintaining high visibility patrols in the area.

Councillor Crute referred to Pattison Gardens and explained that the problem had now escalated. There had been a number of fires on the site and East Durham Homes had been requested to block off some access routes and try to repair the damage as best they could. He added that Pattison Gardens was on the approach road into Blackhall and the East Coast Rail Line. He added that he was aware that Barratt Homes had been appointed as the agreed developers but no progress was being made.

Sgt Hawkes explained that he had upgraded the patrols in Pattison Gardens and was liaising with the Enforcement Officer at the District Council. There had been a delay in the demolition and he felt this area should have been looked at in partnership with the District Council. Arson had been reported the previous week and he had now been made aware of the serious problem that existed. A meeting had taken place with Council Officers and patrols had been upgraded. Prior to the arson, there had been low level nuisance but this was now a major problem. Patrols would be undertaken between 5pm and 8pm in partnership with the Street Wardens.

J. McLean explained that she was Senior Valuer at the District Council and all access points into Pattison Gardens had been secured that day. The blacksmiths had been to measure up the site and steel shutters had now been installed. Two security guards would be on site every evening.

Mr. Barnett queried if the statistics the Police had given were just Police incidents or were they combined with Street Warden reports. Sgt. Hawkes explained that they were Police statistics only but the Police did communicate with the Street Wardens on a daily basis.

The Chair explained that the Area Forum would need to determine if the efforts that had been put in in Blackhall were working and figures from the Police and the Street Wardens were both required. Sgt. Hawkes explained that he would pass his concerns onto the Enforcement Officer at the District Council.

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The Chair queried if Barratts had any input into the area. Councillor Crute explained that he had been dealing with the Asset and Property Management Section and the Housing Unit at the District Council as well as East Durham Homes. There had been some resistance from Barratt Homes. He had been informed that they were on the verge of signing a contract with a demolition company and he knew that the Asset and Property Management Unit were speaking to Barretts on a daily basis to try to make progress. He queried if the Council or East Durham Homes could do the demolition work and recharge Barratt Homes.

J. McLean explained that she had written to Barretts that day and they had been given a deadline for the following week to give a definite date for completion. If no date was forthcoming, then the site would be marketed.

Sgt. Hawkes explained that from a Police perspective, they had believed this was a short term problem. If they had known it would be a long term problem, a strategy could have been developed to police it. The Crime Prevention Officer could visit the site and advise on how best to secure it.

J. McLean explained that an Officer meeting had taken place between Housing Strategy, East Durham Homes, Health and Safety and Asset and Property Management and they were looking at developing a standard procedure on how to manage void properties. The Chair suggested that the Police should also be involved.

The Environmental Operations Manager explained that there was a problem with demolition as there could possibly be bats housed and a bat survey was required before any demolition could take place. If the houses were demolished and bats were found to be nesting inside, then DEFRA could impose a £5,000 fine per bat. An additional problem was that the survey could not be carried out whilst the bats were hibernating.

Councillor Underwood explained that the shelter in Attlee Avenue had now been installed on a 6 months trial basis.

G. Harrison, Area Manager for East Durham Homes explained that they had been successful in securing a demoted tenancy in Attlee Avenue and had also been to court that day and the judge had given another demoted tenancy in another area. East Durham Homes was the first ALMO to be successful in obtaining a demoted tenancy. The case in Attlee Avenue was proceeding although the tenant had asked that there was no publicity surrounding this so she was limited as to what information she could provide. A lot of joint working had taken place with the Police, Street Wardens and other Officers and had been very successful.

Mr. Barnett referred to the Empty Properties Officer at the District Council and queried what would happen in respect of enforcement powers that had been granted now he had left employment at the District Council. The Chair commented that the Empty Properties Officer had done a good job and had left Easington to work for another local authority. He added that he had attended a meeting with the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Manager but could not give any more advice on what was currently happening with the vacant post.

Mrs. Foggan explained that she was a resident of Blackhall and lived at the bottom end of Hart Crescent. She attended the Tenants Association in

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Blackhall Rocks and explained that she felt the area was improving. The streets were regularly cleaned and there was a lot of presence from the Police and Street Wardens in the area. She felt that the area was slowly improving.

**AGREED** that:-

- (i) the information given be noted;
- (ii) a progress report be submitted to the next meeting regarding Anti Social Behaviour in
  - (a) Attlee Avenue/Hart Crescent;
  - (b) Pattison Gardens, Blackhall

### 3. **YOUR QUESTION TIME, YOUR SAY ON SERVICE DELIVERY, YOUR CALL**

#### (i) **Seventh and Eighth Street, Horden**

Mrs. Chicken, a resident of Horden, explained that in the back lanes of Seventh and Eighth Street in Horden, were a number of gangs were going into yards and obtaining access into the empty houses. They had taken wood from the doors to access the property and the Street Wardens had attended to board it up. One particular house had been empty for a number of years and the Empty Property Officer had found the owner.

The Chair queried if the Police had been made aware of the situation. Sgt Hawkes explained that the Police patrolled Seventh and Eighth Street regularly and queried which number the residents had telephoned. Mrs. Chicken explained that she had telephoned the freephone number and a member of the Community Policing Team had visited her home but she normally telephoned the Street Wardens.

Sgt. Hawkes explained that he had been patrolling the area on Friday evening and taken alcohol from a number of youths. He added that he would identify this area as a hot spot and the area would be on the priority patrolling list for the next two weeks.

Mrs. Barnett explained that she tended to call the Street Wardens as they seemed to have a better relationship with the youths, although once dispersed they came back again. She explained that there had been an incident at her property the previous Friday where a gang of youths had been throwing themselves against her garage door. A neighbour had telephoned the Police but by the time the Police had arrived, the youths had dispersed.

On the Saturday morning, she noticed that her garage door was concave and the Police Officer in attendance on the Friday evening had not informed her that there had been damage to her garage. She added that she had telephoned Peterlee Police Station on the Saturday morning and an Officer had not attended until the Sunday morning. She and her husband had been left in a vulnerable position all through the night and anyone could have accessed her garage and through the door from the garage into her yard. She felt that the Police should have informed her that damage had been done to the property.

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Sgt. Hawkes explained that he could not comment why the Officers had not informed her of the damage to the garage. He added that he would investigate to find details of what had occurred that evening and look at the incident log.

The Chair explained that many residents were very active in the areas they lived and could become targets for vandalism. Sgt. Hawkes explained that he appreciated the efforts the people were making in their community and the Police did everything they could to protect them.

**AGREED** that the information given be noted.

### (ii) **Roseby Road, Horden**

The Chair explained that it had been brought to his attention that a bungalow in Roseby Road was on the open market for sale by the District Council. It was his understanding that bungalows were at a premium and was confused as to why this bungalow was for sale.

J. McLean explained that Asset and Property Management Unit did not have any keys for Roseby Road and the board must have been erected in error.

G. Harrison explained that East Durham Homes had a Bungalow Strategy and an Elderly Person Strategy and worked closely with the Asset and Property Management Unit at the District Council. Sometimes there was a surplus of a certain type of bungalow in certain areas, for example, one bedroom solid fuel bungalows did not have a high demand for them.

**AGREED** that J. McLean investigate the for sale sign on the bungalow in Roseby Road, Horden.

### (iii) **Thorpe Road, Easington Village**

Mrs. Kiers, a resident, explained that since the new entrance into the school had opened along Thorpe Road, there had been a lot more rubbish at the front and rear of Thorpe Road. She was also concerned regarding the children's safety coming out of the opening. They often ran across the road and she felt that someone would be hurt.

Councillor Mrs. Burn explained that there was an ongoing problem at the rear of Craig Terrace and the front of Carlton Terrace with youths throwing stones and one lady had a bottle of Tippex thrown at her window. She added that this was the worst stretch of road for children crossing and the children were running out of the gate and straight over the road. She felt that a child would be hurt or killed.

Mr. Murray, a resident, explained that he lived in Thorpe Road and none of the cars adhered to the 30 mph speed limit and he was also concerned regarding the amount of litter that was on the street.

Councillor Mrs. Hopper explained that Easington Village Parish Council had fought hard to stop the new access to the school and parents were starting to drop children off at that point rather than going round to the main entrance. There was a sign on the bank informing motorists of school children but they did not expect children to come out of that opening.

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Mr. Day, Clerk to Easington Village Parish Council explained that the gates were only open on a morning and an afternoon but the children were starting to climb over it during the lunch break.

Councillor Routledge explained that the District Council had objected to the new access for the school but a decision had been made by Durham County Council to allow the access to go ahead.

The Chair suggested that a letter from the Coastal Area Forum be written to County Councillor Barker, the Head Teacher of Easington Community School and Durham County Council regarding residents' concerns.

**AGREED** that a letter be sent to County Councillor Alan Barker, Head Teacher of Easington Community School and Durham County Council regarding residents' concerns at the access for Easington Community School.

### (iv) **West View, Easington Village**

Councillor Mrs. Burn explained that there was flooding at West View bus stop and the corner of Thorpe Road as well as a problem with litter. The Environmental Operations Manager explained that the street cleansing programme cleaned along Thorpe Road on a daily basis. He suggested that he met residents on site the following day to resolve the problems regarding the litter and the flooding at West View.

**AGREED** that the Environmental Operations Manager visit residents the following day regarding the problems with litter and flooding in West View and Thorpe Road, Easington Village.

### (v) **Craig Terrace, Easington Village**

Councillor Mrs. Burn explained that she had contacted the Council approximately two weeks ago regarding the dog fouling problem on Craig Terrace next to the children's playing field. She explained that numerous people walked their dogs on the playing field and did not clean up after them. The Environmental Services Manager explained that if this was a regular occurrence, intelligence would be passed onto the Street Wardens who would monitor the area and issue fixed penalty notices as necessary.

Councillor Routledge explained that he had reported the issues regarding dog fouling and litter on numerous occasions. The Environmental Services Manager explained that there was now the Pride in Easington Initiative and three Officers were in post. They had been to Easington Community School to speak to the Headmaster regarding reducing litter around schools and fast food outlets in the Village. An Action Plan had been drawn up and they would be tackling problem areas.

**AGREED** that the Environmental Services Manager pass the complaints onto Envirocall.

### (vi) **No Tipping Sign - Craig Terrace**

Councillor Mrs. Burn explained that the 'No Tipping' sign outside of 21 Craig Terrace had been damaged. The Environmental Services Manager explained that he would arrange for a new sign to be erected.

**AGREED** that the Environmental Services Manager arrange for a new sign to be erected outside of 21 Craig Terrace.

(vii) **Graffiti**

Councillor D. Boyes, Easington Colliery Parish Council, referred to the graffiti between Horden and Blackhall on the viaduct and explained that it was spoiling a beauty spot in the District and queried if this graffiti could be removed.

The Environmental Services Manager explained that the District Council had a dedicated Graffiti Removal Service which had been very successful. He was aware that the District Council were currently negotiating with utility companies and the rail company to obtain Service Level Agreements. If the Service Level Agreements were not signed, then the District Council may consider taking enforcement action. He added that the District Council was measured on the standards of cleanliness throughout the District even if they didn't fall in the Council's ownership. He added that he would write to the Rail Authority regarding the graffiti.

**AGREED** that the Environmental Service Manager write to the Rail Authority regarding the graffiti on the viaduct between Horden and Blackhall.

(viii) **Heritage Coast**

Mr. Bowman referred to Cliff Top Meadows at Easington Colliery and explained that the meadows were often cut when the birds were only fledglings. Works were often carried when birds were nesting and caused damage.

The Chair suggested that the National Trust be contacted and express concerns of the Coastal Area Forum over their management of the National Trust land.

**AGREED** that the National Trust be contacted and concern be expressed over their management of the Heritage Coast from Crimdon to Hawthorn.