

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE MURTON NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM
HELD ON MONDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2008

Present: Mrs A Naylor (Chair)
Councillors Mrs J Maitland,
A Napier and C Patching

Officers: P Walker – District of Easington
S Gwilym – District of Easington
J Maher – District of Easington
Inspector V Addison – Durham Constabulary
G Cockrell – Durham Constabulary
G R Smith – Durham Constabulary
J Murphy – East Durham LSP

Also Present: E A Cowley – Murton Parish Council
T Pinkney – Murton Parish Council
M Kelly – resident
D Bate – resident
F Thompson – Sunderland Echo

Apology: Ms E Farrelly

1 CHAIRS OPENING INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed everyone to the second meeting of the District Council's Murton Neighbourhood Forum. She explained that the meeting would focus on the priorities from the 'Murton Agenda for Action' which had been agreed at the first meeting in July 2008.

2 THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING held on 21 July 2008, a copy of which had been circulated, were **AGREED**.

3 MURTON AGENDA FOR ACTION

(i) Improve Range of Activities for Young People

At the last meeting of the Forum it had been agreed to investigate the possibility of developing youth facilities at one of the empty retail premises at Woods Terrace.

P Walker, Social Inclusion Officer reported on progress, stating that an application had been submitted for funding from Youth Build and a Business Plan outlining the proposals would be drawn up.

As this progressed, a full consultation exercise would be carried out with young people on the facilities to be provided within the premises.

It was hoped that more progress could be reported at the next meeting.

In relation to the proposed new multi-use facility at the Welfare Park, it was reported that an update would also be provided on this at the next meeting.

AGREED that the information given, be noted and an update on progress in relation to both the proposals at Woods Terrace and the multi-use facility be provided at the next meeting.

(ii) **Bus Services to Durham Colleges**

At the last meeting it had been agreed that S Day from DCC's Integrated Transport Unit would discuss timetables with the bus operators and start/finish times with the colleges in view of the difficulties experienced by students travelling to the colleges in Durham.

Information had been provided by S Day and circulated with the Agenda which stated that bus times had been revised from 1 September 2008 with the morning journey to Durham timed to run slightly earlier to help students who travelled to the Sixth Form Centre and New College, Durham.

With regard to funding available for travel, it was noted that students aged from 16 to 19 who attended full time education were eligible for a grant towards travel costs from Durham County Council, varying by distance travelled. Students travelling between Murton and Durham could receive either £110 or £130 per term depending on where they lived and whether they were going to the Sixth Form Centre or New College. Students attending New College could use the funding to get a place on the college special service which left Murton at 07.25am arriving at New College at 8.30am. Alternatively, it could be used towards a ticket giving unlimited travel on Go North East bus services in the region, costing £150 per term (students were required to pay the top-up of either £20 or £40, depending on which level of funding they were entitled to).

The Chair stated that whilst the young people who had raised this issue were not at the meeting, they would each have received the information with the Agenda papers.

AGREED that the information given, be noted.

(iii) **Problem of Underage Drinking**

Inspector Addison introduced his colleagues G Cockrell and G R Smith. He advised that since the last meeting, incidences of reported crime had been low, however he was aware that underage drinking, particularly in the Welfare Park, continued to be a concern for residents and would continue to be targeted by the Police.

A Paper circulated at the meeting provided statistics showing how the Police were performing against their priorities. It also outlined ongoing operations which included Operation Pikespoint targeting off-road motorcycles in Murton. It also set out the Community Safety Partnership priorities for 2008-11, which included reducing drug substance and alcohol misuse.

With regard to the operation to tackle off-road motorcycles, this had been raised at the last meeting specifically in relation to problems experienced on the old railway line. A Plan had been put in place which had resulted in a significant reduction in the number of complaints received and a number of bikes had been seized.

In response to a question from Councillor Patching, G Cockrell advised that the line was classed as a highway and therefore the riders had to possess the necessary documentation, but anti-social behaviour powers were available to the Police to seize bikes if necessary. The usual procedure was for a warning notice to be issued initially and any seized bikes would be permanently disposed of if the riders could not produce appropriate documents.

Councillor Napier referred to the off-road motorcycle that used to operate in the District and asked if the Police periodically reviewed the need for the service with a view to it possibly being re-instated. In response, Inspector Addison stated that it was a valuable resource and a bid for funding had been submitted for the purchase of one motorcycle for use by the Neighbourhood Police Team.

Councillor Mrs Maitland asked if there had been any complaints received relating to quad bikes in the Wembley area. Inspector Addison responded that he was not aware of any but would discuss the matter with Councillor Mrs Maitland following the meeting.

Following a further question by the Chair, Inspector Addison advised that there had been no complaints made to the Police in relation to vehicles gaining access and speeding along the Hawthorn link road currently under construction.

AGREED that the information given, be noted.

(iv) **Review of CCTV**

At the last meeting it was reported that a review of CCTV was currently being undertaken and that an update would be provided at this meeting.

On behalf of S Arkley, Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives, who was leading the review in the move towards the new single Council, Inspector Addison stated that the District had a limited number of cameras and it was unlikely that there would be any more erected within the next year.

AGREED that the information given, be noted.

3 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

In addition to the priorities from the Agenda for Action, the following issues were raised:-

(i) **Pedestrianisation of Woods Terrace**

T Pinkney stated that the Parish Council were concerned at the volume of traffic using Woods Terrace which was causing irreparable damage to the cobble stones. The Parish Council had met with DCC with a view to erecting bollards at the bottom of Woods Terrace to prevent this.

Inspector Addison advised that the Police had not been asked to comment on the proposals but that G Cockrell would discuss the matter with M Stubbs in the Police Traffic Section and liaise with DCC.

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A Cowley asked if it would be possible for Murton Parish Council to contribute towards the cost of a traffic warden to patrol the area on a twice monthly basis to help resolve the problem. Inspector Addison stated that PCSOs had traffic warden powers, and that it was not usual practice to charge for this free service. However, he would look into the Parish Council's request.

AGREED that the information given, be noted.

(ii) **Footpath – Calvert Terrace, Murton**

M Kelly from Calvert Terrace, Murton referred to the pathway/cut which ran alongside her property and the longstanding problems she had experienced of anti-social behaviour by youths who regularly congregated there. The Street Wardens and G Cockrell always responded quickly to reports made and she was pleased for their assistance, but she asked if the footpath could be stopped up altogether. This course of action was supported by all residents in the vicinity.

Members appreciated the problems experienced and were aware that this was a longstanding concern for residents in that area. They asked that the possibility of closing the footpath be explored, although it was acknowledged that a Stopping Up Order would be required which could be a lengthy process with evidence needed to support this course of action. Inspector Addison advised that the Police would support any permanent solution to resolve this problem and would also arrange for additional support for the Neighbourhood Team to police the area.

AGREED that the matter be investigated and Mrs Kelly be kept informed of progress.