
MEETING	HUNTINGTON & NEW EARSWICK WARD COMMITTEE
DATE	30 APRIL 2009
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS ORRELL AND RUNCIMAN PARISH COUNCILLORS CRAWFORD AND REVELL MORA SCAIFE, NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT UNIT SARAH WALLBANK, NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT UNIT IAIN DUNN, STREET ENVIRONMENT OFFICER SHARRON HUTCHINSON, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES FIONA WILLIAMS, LIBRARIES PCSO JOHN ARMSTRONG 15 RESIDENTS
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLOR HYMAN

1. SURGERY

Residents had the opportunity to speak to:

- Fiona Williams, Libraries, about the new 'Explore' plans for the Central Library;
- PCSO John Armstrong, Safer Neighbourhood Team;
- Mora Scaife, Neighbourhood Management Unit;
- Iain Dunn, Street Environment Officer;
- Sharron Hutchinson, Children and Young People's Services.

Approximately 15 residents were in attendance.

2. WELCOME AND MINUTES

1. Cllr Keith Orrell welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. The minutes from February's meeting were agreed, although one spelling mistake was noticed which was agreed to be rectified.

3. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

1. PCSO John Armstrong introduced the Neighbourhood Watch scheme to residents.
 - 1.1 It is a campaign being put out in areas across Huntington and New Earswick, particularly in the Victoria – Geldof – Birch Park area (South) and the North Moor Estate area (North).

- 1.2 The main benefits of Neighbourhood Watch are:
 - You get to know your neighbours well;
 - It improves crime prevention; and
 - There is lots of funding available for signs, stickers, locks, sheds and other crime prevention measures.
 - 1.3 Deborah Palmer from Safer York Partnership is the organiser for Neighbourhood Watch city-wide.
 - 1.4 There were no questions about Neighbourhood Watch.
2. PCSO Armstrong highlighted the current crime figures as being down dramatically. The percentage drop from the 07/08 year is 22.8%. This is 350 less crimes. Auto-crime and burglaries are the main falls. The only area which has risen slightly is 'Other crimes'.
 3. PCSO Armstrong explained the policing objectives for the area and what was being done to tackle the three areas.
 - 3.1 Speeding – police have been distributing stickers for wheelie bins in the hot spot areas.
 - 3.2 Cycle offences – police are taking a hard line in cycling offences, particularly cycling on the footpath, which is given a on-the-spot £30 fine.
 - 3.3 Anti-social behaviour – this problem has increased in the past few weeks, probably due to the weather getting nicer. One of the main problem areas is the Victoria Geldof estate in South Huntington. In North Huntington there was a problem with motorbikers hanging around, but this has now been cleared up.
 4. Residents asked some questions about the second police objective, cycling.

Q: Is it illegal to cycle on public rights of way/footpaths?

A: Yes. The police are trying to stop this and have been starting to issue a lot more fixed penalty notices.

Q: One resident commented that it needs to be clearer where exactly the cyclists can cycle in the area, particularly where there are very dangerous roads, many have no choice but to cycle on the footpath.

Q: Is it illegal to park half on the road half on a cycle path? Vehicles doing this cause a problem for cyclists using the path.

A: No it is not officially illegal, but if it happens and is in the way then report it to the council or the police.
 5. PCSO Armstrong concluded by mentioning the drop-in sessions which are on this month. Posters will be put up around the ward giving details of these. He also recommended the Neighbourhood Watch scheme once again and invited residents to speak to him after the meeting if they were interested.

4. YORK CENTRAL LIBRARY

1. Fiona Williams, Head of Library Services, gave a presentation to residents about the new 'Explore' plans for the Central Library.
 - 1.1 There are 14 libraries in York, as well as one Mobile Library. There is also a home library service, which takes books to people who are housebound. A lot more advertising about this service is due in the next year.
 - 1.2 Books are really important. They are why libraries were set up in the first place and still account for 80% of our usage.
 - 1.3 They are looking at buying more books in paperback, as that is what they have been told the public wants. If anyone is interested in helping to buy books, contact your local library and your name will be forwarded to Sarah Garbacz, the Stock Manager.
 - 1.4 The library is the only place that provides a free, impartial and neutral enquiry service, where you can ask about absolutely anything. It is this which makes libraries special and there is a focus on improving and emphasising this service in the future. There is currently a 24 hour internet service called 'Enquire', which works with Canada and America, which is proving very popular.
 - 1.5 The library has free access to ancestry.com, a subscription to which would cost £80 per year. There is also a very good family and local history librarian, David May.
 - 1.6 The library provides free IT training. Mostly these are very basic starter sessions and one-to-one sessions.
 - 1.7 Fiona Williams gave some statistics about York Libraries:
 - 1.7.1 80,000 people visit a York library every month.
 - 1.7.2 2,500 people took part in the Big City Read 2008. This year the Big City Read book is Sovereign by C. J. Samson. 5,000 free copies will be given out to encourage people to get involved.
 - 1.7.3 1 in 5 York children took part in the Summer Reading Challenge 2008. It is proven to keep literacy levels up during the holidays.
 - 1.7.4 14,400 people joined last year, which is one of the biggest % rises in the country.
 - 1.7.5 They lend over 1 million books a year, which places them 18th out of 150 unitary authorities in the country in terms of lending.

- 1.8 The new plans for the 'Explore' Library play to the building's strengths and keep in style with its history. The plans include a café, children's library, learning rooms, flexible space with shelving on wheels which can be moved for events such as author days, and self-issue machines, which are much quicker and will free-up the library staff from issuing duties so they are able to help people and take a more active role in the library.
- 1.9 The library will close sometime in September 2008 and will re-open near Christmas. They are on schedule with the process, and the current stage is that they are just about to apply for listed building consent.
- 1.10 Other features of the new library include extended opening hours, including Sundays and evenings until 8pm. The hope is that the library will provide a safe place in the City Centre where the community can come together.
- 1.11 Residents were given a chance to ask questions:

Q: Will people be able to go straight in to the café without going through the library?

A: Yes. It is hoped that the café will draw people in and encourage them to stay, especially those who wouldn't normally. From the café they will be encouraged to use the books, and even go on literacy and numeracy courses.

Q: If I want a rare book from many years ago can I get it?

A: In theory you can get every book which has ever been published. There are 150 authorities in the U.K., and each one has an active catalogue. There is currently a process of 'Universal Membership' which is trying to get all the catalogues working together. In York you can request any book for free to any of the other libraries. However if a book is ordered from outside of York there might be a small charge.

5. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT

1. Mora Scaife from the Neighbourhood Management Unit gave a presentation on the Sustainable Communities Act. Residents were given the chance to ask questions.

Q: Can the suggestions be about anything? Are they meant to benefit individuals in York or the area of York?

A: Yes, it can be suggestions which cover either. Just suggest anything you can think of and even if they are not picked up under the Act, they will be passed to the relevant council department.

Q: Does the act bring funding closer to us as individuals?

A: The Act is not so much about funding, as about powers. We do already have some powers, but this will enable us to request more. For example, the power to have more allotments, or the power to insist on grooming existing properties instead of building new ones.

6. HAVE YOUR SAY

Residents were asked if they had any issues about the ward which they would like to raise.

1. Q: I am concerned about the reduction in bus services. Are the council or the bus company short of money?

A: Cllr Runciman:

- This is a constant issue. The council does not control the bus services. The bus companies (First/Arriva) get the tenders. The council does however subsidise some services, usually the late night or the distant area ones.
- We also have to think of local residents who live on bus routes and might be disturbed by the noise of buses constantly passing their houses.
- A colleague of ours is constantly liaising with the bus companies so the issue is not static.
- The council is not able to dictate to the bus companies, but we can try to negotiate. There is currently a traffic commission which is looking into bus routes, but they have no power to say which ones will be formed or be kept.
- The number 5 has been cut a lot recently as well as lots of evening services. Unfortunately the best way to increase reliability is to cut regularity, but this is not what people want.

Q: There has been a 15% rise in Park and Ride bus fares.

A: We agree with your concerns but we cannot control bus prices. This is up to the company. The council only provide the sites, with the aim to stop traffic congestion in the city centre.

Q: Why are the sites not put out to tender and the bus services controlled by the council through that?

A: We do put out to tender, but we cannot use this as a means to control pricing.

Q: Why couldn't the council raise the rates of the site if the bus company raises prices?

A: In actual fact the council makes a profit from the lease of the Park and Ride sites, which is unusual. The council also spends a lot (£600,000) on pensioners' bus passes every year.

Q: The council recognises that there is a problem with fly-tipping, but the council make it very difficult to get rid of garden waste and large items. The new permit scheme is not helpful – I applied for service in March but still have not had my permits through.

A: The councillors encouraged the resident to email them the details and said they would sort it out for her the following day.

Q: The government are giving £4m to re-open Haxby Station. Is this financially viable?

A: The council has proved that there will be enough demand for it through local surveys and investigations. The purpose of the station will just be a 'halt', to get traffic off the roads into York, for example Wigginton Road.

Q: The planned Park and Ride site near Rocco gym at Clifton Moor will put more of a strain on the journey from Clifton Moor to Huntington which is chaotic and can sometimes take 1 hour in the rush hour. I am concerned it will create more traffic issues, rather than fewer.

A: The councillors said they were not sure about the effects of this Park and Ride, but re-assured residents that the traffic department are looking in to it. They will feed back this information to Paul Thackray who will be able to feed it into the system and ensure it gets picked up on.

Q: Will the alleygating and speed ramps have to wait for more money from the budget or can we go ahead with the work?

A: The councillors believed that there was enough budget for it, but they agreed to find out and do their best to ensure there was no hold up.

2. The councillors closed the meeting by thanking all the guests and attendees and encouraging the residents to use their local libraries.

, Chair

[The meeting started at 7.00 pm and finished at 8.45 pm].