
MEETING	GUILDHALL WARD COMMITTEE
DATE	30 APRIL 2008
PRESENT	Councillors J. Looker And B. Watson
ATTENDANCE	32 Local Residents Safer Neighbourhood Team Ian Cunningham, Safer York Partnership John Wood, Street Environment Unit Elizabeth Wray, Waste Strategy Team Fiona Davies, Environmental Protection Unit Dawn Clarkson, Trading Standards Michael Hawtin, Neighbourhood Management Unit

1. DROP-IN SURGERY

The surgery was busy with the residents talking to; The Councillors, the Safer Neighbourhoods Team, John Wood the Street Environment Officer, Elizabeth Wray from the Waste Strategy Unit, Ian Cunningham from Safer York Partnership, Dawn Clarkson about Cold Calling Zones, Fiona Davies from the Environmental Protection Unit and the Neighbourhood Management Officer.

Apologies were sent from Andrew Calverly, Head of Park Grove Primary School due to other commitments.

2. WELCOME & MINUTES

Cllr. Janet Looker and Cllr. Brian Watson welcomed the residents to the meeting and suggested that we would try to get Mr Calverly along to another meeting. They explained briefly about the alleygating process, the legal requirements and how long it takes.

3. SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS POLICING TEAM UPDATE

Sgt. Colin Sutherland thanked residents for the comments and suggestions they made during the surgery. He thanked people for looking and commenting on the display the team had brought along. One of the issues highlighted was that if begging and he told the meeting that, while he couldn't comment on specifics, he was confident that the problem would be dealt with soon. There's a lot of work going on behind the scenes about this complex issue. He mentioned that there isn't a specific charge of begging but they are looking into getting a better solution to the process.

A resident asked what the difference is between a hawker and a beggar. Colin explained that hawkers and peddlers needed licences to operate. He told the meeting that buskers in the City needed to be licensed by the council.

He mentioned about the Summer Campaign to make the night-time economy safer. The team would look into anti-social behaviour in Museum Gardens and Duncombe Place. They are working with youth workers to try to alleviate the problem.

In Operation Beam the Safer Neighbourhood Team tackled graffiti in the Walmgate area. 2 People have been charged with over 40 offences. They worked with the Youth Offending team. At Rowntree Wharf the foliage has been cut back to reduce incidents and plans have been submitted for a fence to close off the area under the steps. Graffiti has moved up the list of priorities and there are schemes in place to try to solve the problem. There was a suggestions of a web site to tackle the problem to get the 'tags' to as many people as possible and to try to get the public to tell the team who is responsible.

In conjunction with Micklegate and Clifton the three main routes into the city were covered in a high visibility campaign to tackle cycling offences like riding without lights and riding on the pavement. A resident asked if the school did cycling education. They had come to the school and had to walk around several bikes laid flat at the gates. No one was sure whether they did or not. It was mentioned that it was illegal for a bike to be ridden on the pavement and for a bike to be not properly equipped. Lights and a bell are essential.

It was mentioned that cars constantly came through the No Entry sign at the end of Park Grove. Last year the sign was repainted and the council had been approached to lower the sign. The street is often used as a route to the school and taxis and council vehicles also use it. It was explained that the sign was put there as a deterrent and it wasn't actually illegal to drive through it. It was put in as a traffic calming measure some time ago. Sgt. Sunderland told the meeting that the team would do spot-checks to try to deter people driving through the No Entry sign and that maybe the school could try to do something about naming and shaming the parents seen going through it. He said he would speak to the traffic manager to check the by-laws to see what can be done.

4. HOME SERVICES DIRECTORY AND COLD CALLER CONTROL ZONES

Dawn Clarkson was introduced. She works as a project officer in Trading Standards. They started in November by launching 6 Cold Calling Control Zones. This involves collectively asking residents to say that they won't deal with cold callers at their homes. It needs everyone to agree to it otherwise the scheme won't work. Once the agreement is reached a sign is put up that tells legitimate traders no-one will deal with cold callers so they won't get any trade. If someone does cold-call the householder warns them that they are in a cold-calling control zone and if they don't leave their company details will be sent to Trading Standard. If they persist the householder will call Consumer Direct of the Police.

The 6 zones have been a success. They covered 554 properties, only 29 were visited by cold-callers. Most companies were shown the Cold Calling Control Zone letter and left. One company is being investigated by Leeds Trading Standards.

A zone doesn't always have to be the whole street. Sometimes just a section of the street becomes a Control Zone. It means that a resident can check traders and get rid of rogue traders.

It is very easy to request a Cold Calling Control Zone. Fill in a form and return it to the address on the form. It can't be guaranteed as the majority of residents have to agree to it. Not everyone returns the forms. If the bid is successful a pack is sent out to each home including stickers and a card.

There is a similar project for a Motor Traders' Fair Trading Scheme. There are 14 motor traders in the York area. Some of them offer free car-health checks, there isn't a directory yet but they are on the Motor traders Fair Trading web site.

5. HAVE YOUR SAY

There were some comments about the removal of the hedges at the play area on Haxby Road. Some residents thought it was more dangerous for the children since the hedges had been removed. Some smaller balls could go straight through the bars where they would have been stopped by the hedges. They felt that, because it is more visible it may encourage teenagers to misbehave. It was also felt that a small child could get out through the bars. Some comments were made about the residents not getting consulted. The response was that the area is just outside the Ward, it is in Clifton Ward.

The issue of buses using Lowther Street as a rat-run to get back to the depot was raised. It was mentioned that the installation of SatNav systems in the Dust Carts had been covered in 'The Press' and the resident wanted to make it clear that they thought it was a waste of money. Some of that money could have been used to supply another swimming pool for children.

There were no other issues raised.

Cllr. Janet Looker & Cllr. Brian Watson chaired the meeting
[The meeting started at 6.45 pm and finished at 9.10 pm].