
Meeting	Skelton, Rawcliffe & Clifton Without Ward Committee
Date	29 January 2009
Present	Councillors R. Moore, Watt and Waudby
In Attendance	34 Residents Safer Neighbourhoods Team Andrew Williams, Street Environment Officer Terry Kiernan, Young People's Service Charlotte Drummond, Student Socialworker Damon Copperthwaite, City Strategy Zoe Burns, Neighbourhood Management Unit Michael Hawtin, Neighbourhood Management Unit Michelle Kelly, Neighbourhood Management Support

1. INTRODUCTION, WELCOME AND MINUTES

Residents were welcomed to the meeting by Cllr. Watt, chair of the meeting. Councillors agreed the minutes of the previous meeting and these were signed by the chair.

2. THE TRAVELLER SITE

Charlotte Drummond, a student social worker who has recently been working with a family at the Traveller Site on Water Lane, spoke to the meeting about living conditions at the site to dispel negative myths about travellers.

Gypsies and Irish travellers are recognised as distinct ethnic groups and as such they, and their nomadic lifestyle, have the full protection of the Race Relations Act. They are nonetheless among the most excluded ethnic minorities in Britain: life expectancy among gypsies and travellers is ten years below the national average, women are twenty times more likely to lose a child, and less than a quarter of children achieve five or more A*-C GCSEs. They pay taxes, including council tax and, in spite of common perceptions, there is no evidence of higher crime rates among travellers than among the rest of the population.

There are three permanent traveller sites in York, including the one at Water Lane. The sites are not managed by the City of York Council Housing Service but by Parks and Open Spaces, leaving their service delivery isolated from other residential services in the city. Although the site at Water Lane now caters to many more families than originally planned, the water infrastructure has not expanded accordingly. This means that the water supply is frequently interrupted or that pressure is not sufficient to meet basic domestic needs. In the case of electricity, demand also exceeds supply leading to loss of power at intervals during the day. The cards that residents of the site are required to use to access electricity are charged at the commercial rate of electricity, unlike residents in other parts of the city.

One family on the site reported that they felt they were being treated like second class citizens and expected to accept a lower standard of living. As evidence of the discrimination facing travellers, Ms Drummond gave the example of a representative from the Job Centre who suggested to a job-seeker from the site that they use a different address for job applications.

Q. What about the criminal damage that has been caused by people from the site? We've had trouble with people from the site for the past two years.

A. I've been trying to deal with facts rather than opinions. Criminal damage and anti-social behaviour can be investigated on a case by case basis.

3. **WARD TEAM UPDATE**

Safer Neighbourhood Team

PC Ian Richardson explained that there is a new inspector in the team, Insp. Alisdair Day, and that he and Sgt Musgrove would join the meeting later.

PC Richardson explained that the policing priorities of residents in the ward in 2008 were

- Anti-social behaviour
- Police response times
- Speeding

Calls to police reporting instances of anti-social behaviour have dropped. The police have found that, contrary to expectations, anti-social behaviour peaks at 8pm on Thursdays, so the Safer Neighbourhoods Team have been trying to target this period. They have also arranged more patrols to target locations in the ward where anti-social behaviour is a particular problem.

The Safer Neighbourhoods Team have secured nine Acceptable Behaviour Contracts with known offenders in the ward area and a Criminal Anti-Social Behaviour Order has been issued on one known offender.

The police are monitoring calls reporting anti-social behaviour. Police response times are a wider organisational issue and not just down to the Safer Neighbourhoods Team.

PC Richardson also drew attention to the new Speeding Concern Report, which can be used to record concerns about speeding in particular locations in the ward. The form will facilitate tasking relevant agencies and departments with investigating the problem.

The recent consultation on residents' policing priorities slightly altered the order of the priorities:

- Anti-social behaviour
- Speeding
- Police response times

In addition to residents' policing priorities, the police crime reduction priorities are:

- Auto crime
- Dwelling burglaries

The crime figures have been steadily declining since November 2008. Auto crime and theft rose by 31% in November, largely as a result of one individual who has since been prosecuted. In December 2008 crime rates were down by 7.7%, with a notable reduction in non-dwelling burglaries, and in January 2009 there was a drop of 54%, particularly in burglaries and auto crime. Overall, the figures show a drop of 25% in crime rates since April 2008.

In December the Safer Neighbourhoods Team ran a three day Safer Cycling Campaign to address the problem of people cycling without lights and cycling on pavements. Over the course

of three days they issued 60 verbal warnings, 15 Fixed Penalty Notices and 2 court summons. They also gave out some bicycle locks and PCSOs are going in to schools in the area to discuss the cycle laws with pupils.

Neighbourhood Watch in Clifton Without has proven successful and they are hoping to expand it to Skelton and Rawcliffe. They are also looking at extending the Shipton Road Business Watch (modelled on the one at Clifton Park Avenue) to the Skelton area.

In other initiatives, the Safer Neighbourhoods Team have been holding joint drop-in sessions with social landlords to facilitate finding solutions to problems and PCSOs are planning to take part in youth activities with Youth Services.

Q. As we don't get a response after 12am, would it not be good idea to a high fence with a lockable gate at the park?

A. The possibility of installing a gate has been discussed in the past and we could revisit the idea.

Q. What's a CRASBO?

A. A CRASBO is a Criminal Anti-Social Behaviour Order and people that have been issued with one face more severe penalties for breaking the law.

Q. Do you realise that the Traveller's Site is perceived as a no-go area by the public?

A. The Traveller's Site is not a no-go area; members of the Safer Neighbourhoods Team patrol there on a daily basis and it is no different to other streets in the ward. The individual responsible for the instances of criminal damage mentioned earlier in the meeting has been prosecuted and is no longer at the site.

Insp Alisdair Day introduced himself to the meeting and invited questions. He pointed out that nowhere in the ward is a no-go area.

Q. (Cllr. Moore) How will the Safer Neighbourhoods Team address the potential increase in crime as a result of the credit crunch?

A. The Safer Neighbourhoods Team is very successful and will continue to be. Crime rates are vulnerable to local issues and we don't yet know what will happen in the ward area in terms of employment, etc. Nationally, burglary and crime are increasing, but for now, this is a very safe ward and a very successful Safer Neighbourhoods Team.

Q. Councillors often refer residents to the police, even though police resources are limited.

A. The police have finite resources, especially at night, so they need to allocate resources to the most serious incidents. They will respond or attend all complaints if they can.

Councillor Watt pointed out that the Safer Neighbourhoods Team have been very successful and that the situation in the ward has improved as a result.

Street Environment

Andrew Williams highlighted what had been happening in the ward over the last few months and mentioned about the new 'report sheets' which can be used to report an issue. These were available at the back of the room.

The two biggest issues for the Street Environment team are litter and dog fouling.

To address the problem of dog fouling;

- New signs are going up around the ward
- The visible presence of Animal Health Officers acts as a deterrent
- If incidents of dog fouling are reported to the York Pride line, someone will respond within two hours.

Councillors have asked him to address the litter problem. There are particular problems in the Rawcliffe Lane area and he is meeting with the head teacher at Canon Lee School to address this. Parish councillors have also written to the school to address their concerns.

There has been a change of policy when dealing with littering by those aged under 18. The Street Environment Officers were issuing fixed penalty notices but the policy has changed due to government advice on best practice. The new policy is that under 18s will be asked to pick up the litter and issued with a warning, which will be shared with the Youth Offending Team. If necessary, a fixed penalty notice (£75, £50 if paid within ten days) can be issued in the presence of a parent or teacher. It is also possible to offer offenders the opportunity to make reparation instead of a fine. If the offender fails to make reparation or pay the fine, they can resort to a court appearance, but this is a last resort.

Q. As the dog fouling problems are mainly after dark, is it possible to report incidents out of hours?

A. It is possible to report incidents but a response is not available out of working hours.

Q. There is a problem with paper litter at the entrance to the lake.

A. The Probation Service is working to clear the litter there. The Council is also looking at the cleansing schedules to address the litter problem in the ward.

Q. Could training be provided to people working in rubbish collection, especially recycling collection, as it seems to create a litter problem?

A. Often recycling is not left out securely. To address the problem, cleansing crews follow the rubbish collection.

Q. Is the council responsible for the Rawcliffe Grange area?

A. At the moment it is still Barratt's responsibility. The Parish Council and the Probation Service are working together to address the problem on the Recreation Field. Once it is the City Council's responsibility a schedule will be implemented to include the estate in the council's services.

4. WIGGINTON ROAD PARK AND RIDE

Damon Copperthwaite, Asst Dir City Development and Transport, said that three new Park & Ride sites have been proposed in York:

- A59 / Poppleton Park

- Wigginton Road
- Askham Bar.

The Wigginton Road Park & Ride site is at an early stage of development and the team is looking for ideas and views about it. They were originally looking at four separate sites around the roundabout at the Ring Road but this will be refined to one preferred site, hopefully by Spring so that they can begin to develop detailed proposals.

Park & Ride has been a successful innovation for transport in the City. The main problems on Wigginton Road are commuter traffic coming from the North and traffic going to the hospital, so the Park & Ride site is planned to intercept this. The plan is for a 500 space car park with attendant facilities, very similar to the site at Monks Cross with bus priorities on Wigginton Road.

The entire project (all three sites) will cost £26m which will come principally from the Government. These funds have not yet been secured, but the team will be submitting the bid in the coming months. Once the funding has been secured they will submit the planning application, then develop more detailed designs and invite tenders from contractors. It is expected that it will be ready for use in late 2011. They would like to return to the Ward Committee meetings as the project develops.

Q. (Cllr Watt) Is there a risk that you won't get the funding?

A. The risk is quite low. The scheme would be endorsed by the Government Office Yorkshire and Humber and is then approved by the Government, subject to stringent tests that it will provide the service they claim. There is no reason to doubt that they will get the funding.

Q. What is the preferred site?

At the moment there are four potential sites. The team are weighing the benefits and drawbacks of each site and will eventually present them to the council. They will use a questionnaire and further public consultation to help with this.

Q. Will access to the site be from the roundabout? This is a concern because the roundabout is so busy.

A. One of the potential sites could be at the roundabout, but if this were to be the case the roundabout would need modification.

Q. The success of Park & Ride is dependent on the speed of public transport – what will happen about the traffic on Gillygate?

A. The route is not intended to go down Gillygate, but there may be problems with the traffic lights at Clifton Moorgate and Crichton Avenue. They will have to work on ways of resolving this, for example, by implementing bus priorities like on Malton Road.

Q. Will the bus finish at 8pm? If it runs later it could serve people going out in York.

A. In the past they have tried to run Park & Ride services in the evening but the numbers have been too small to justify it.

Q. Will the buses coincide with hospital visiting times which are from 3-8pm?

A. (Cllr. Watt) There will be flexibility to meet hospital visiting times.

Q. What about the impact on traffic at Clifton Moor?

A. Park & Ride works because it serves a purpose at either end, in this case, the City Centre and Clifton Moor. It will be an opportunity to improve the bus service at Clifton Moor.

Cllr. Watt commented that Kettlestring Lane is not well served by buses at the moment, which makes the traffic worse.

Cllr. Moore informed the meeting that, as he is a member of the Planning Committee which will consider the Park & Ride application, comments and queries should be directed to Cllr. Watt and Cllr. Waudby.

5. WARD COMMITTEE BUDGET

Cllr. Watt invited supportive comments or questions about the schemes on the ballot list.

One resident spoke in favour of scheme SK-09-25, a grant to Skelton Village Hall Management Committee to provide events for the elderly and vulnerable in the ward. The idea of this scheme is to combine meetings with a social event, offering afternoon tea and refreshments and creating an informal forum for social services, Help the Aged, etc.

Another resident spoke in favour of the schemes to introduce vehicle activated speed signs, as this has been very successful on Shipton Road.

Phill Thomas spoke in favour of scheme SK-09-10, a grant to Skelton Parish Council towards the cost of play equipment at Skelton playground, as the children of Skelton currently have no playground. The scheme is supported by the Parish Council, the Ward Committee and the local housing association have arranged for some basic equipment to be installed, but this grant will take the equipment to the next level.

Cllr. Moore announced that schemes SK-09-04 and SK-09-30 have been withdrawn.

A resident spoke in favour of scheme SK-09-28, a grant to support Rawcliffe Recreation Association to drain, level and re-seed Rawcliffe Recreation Field, which will provide a contribution to the overall costs.

Q. Regarding scheme SK-09-19, a grant to Rawcliffe Recreation Association to install a height restriction bar to prevent unauthorised access, will the police mobile unit be able to gain access with the bar?

A. The bar can be opened to allow them to gain access.

A resident spoke in favour of schemes SK-09-10, SK-09-11 and SK-09-12, to support the young people of the area.

Q. People haven't been balloted on schemes SK-09-32 and SK-09-33, so how do we know if people are in favour of them?

A. (Cllr Watt) We will just have to use our judgement

Q. Why is there a discrepancy between the figures as they appear in the minutes and on the ballot?

A. (Cllr. Moore) The cost of the signs has been increased to £3,000 and the cost of bus shelter has been increased to £6,500 to reflect realistic costs. When we get actual figures for the schemes, we adjust the figures accordingly.

There was a break in the meeting to allow the councillors to discuss the budget.

6. WARD COMMITTEE BUDGET - SCHEMES SUPPORTED

Cllr Watt announced the result of the budget decision. The total proposed budget is £35,652. The approved schemes are:

SK-09-06 and SK-09-07 – Vehicle activated speed signs on Clifton Moorgate and at Eastholme Drive.

SK-09-10 – A grant to Skelton Parish Council for play equipment (this has been increased to £2,400 as the project needs a kick start).

SK-09-11 – A grant to Young People's Service to fund three youth workers and for equipment.

SK-09-17 – Investigate the feasibility of a pedestrian crossing on Eastholme Drive.

SK-09-25 – A grant to Skelton Village Hall Management Committee for events for the elderly and vulnerable.

SK-09-28 – A grant for Rawcliffe Recreation Association to drain and reseed the recreation field.

SK-09-32 – A replacement bus shelter on Rawcliffe Lane.

7. HAVE YOUR SAY

Q. Can the councillors contact Barratt's about the lights at the skate park? Martin Grant is the person at Barratt's that they need to get in touch with.

A. (Cllr Moore) I will contact him tomorrow.

Cllr Watt announced that the next meeting will be on Thursday 16 April at Skelton Village Hall.

Cllr Joe Watt, Chair

[The meeting started at 7.00 pm and finished at 9.10 pm].