

FAVERSHAM & DISTRICT ENGAGEMENT FORUM held in The Guildhall, Faversham on Tuesday 11 April 2017

1. WELCOME

The Mayor, Cllr Campbell, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their interest. Attendees gave a brief introduction of themselves.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies are noted at the end of these minutes.

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING from 10 January 2017

An idea to include narrow planks along the side of St Catherine's Foot bridge was mooted, but it was agreed that this should be taken to the Public Realm Group for discussion.

4. UPDATE FROM KENT POLICE

There has been a series of thefts from motor-vehicles in the Faversham area. A male was identified and arrested by PC Willson in connection with this series; he has been bailed pending further investigation. As a result the number of vehicles broken into has significantly dropped. However a number of the vehicles targeted were left insecure. Members of the public are reminded to ensure their vehicles are locked and any items not left on show.

ASB in Lower Road has been raised as an issue at the last two LEF meetings. PC Willson has been liaising with Cllr Geoff WADE regarding this matter. Enhanced patrolling has taken place and from the available data there is not a significant problem with ASB in the area of Lower Road.

There have been a number of reports of nuisance motor-cycles in the Bysingwood Wood and Ham Farm areas. The Rural Team and Local PCSO'S are paying regular passing attention at key times.

Havishams Café in Court Street had a window smashed. A male has been arrested for Criminal Damage in connection with this offence; he has been bailed pending further investigation.

On Saturday 1st April Superdrug in Preston Street had their shop window smashed as the Town Market was packing away. Two offenders have been identified and are actively being sought in connection with this Criminal Damage.

There have been reports of Criminal Damage (graffiti) on a building in George 5th recreation ground London Road. The Community Policing Team is currently investigating this offence.

5. JACK PACKMAN: COMMUNITY WARDEN

Jack Packman introduced himself as Community Warden, employed by KCC. His main role is to create links within the community and act as a facilitator between agencies. Jack gives advice to the elderly on scams and helps them if they have been a victim. He worked with other agencies to carry out a clean sweep of Whiting Crescent area recently to counteract anti-social behaviour. He is often the eyes and the ears of the police, being able to question people without a specific reason to stop them. Jack is working with the Town Clerk to encourage members of the community to volunteer for SpeedWatch in the town. He works with the Faversham business network to help educate groups of youths to see what type of behaviour is considered to be anti-social and last year together with the Abbey School got certain alleyways closed to students, due to intimidation and other types of anti-social behaviour.

Jack noted the new volunteer community warden scheme was open to all parishes and would enable them to contribute £1,000 for a warden to cover their area. They could also work with neighbouring parishes to share the cost.

How do you work with other enforcement agencies? Jack reports weekly to the CSU and reports graffiti etc and has special wipes which he can use to remove 'rude' words.

A group of youths cycling furiously along West Street, Preston Street and around Central Car Park were noted. Concerns were also raised regarding cyclists on footpaths particularly in West Street, riding on the footpath the wrong way on a one way street. Also around the Abbey Street area, where it is believed that a misleading cycle sign is placed on the footpath, was encouraging cyclists to use the path. A number noted they no longer felt safe stepping out of their doorway straight onto the foot path. A group of 'club' cyclists were also logged in the Market Place last Saturday, whilst the road was shut to traffic.

The number of cyclists without lights at night was also raised. It was generally agreed that education was the best way forward and the cycling proficiency test was raised. However, it was noted that some of these training groups had also been seen going the wrong way on a one way street!

Jack stated that he had already had a discussion with the Town Clerk that morning regarding cyclists using the footpaths in West Street. He confirmed that they would work together, using social media and other means, to help educate cyclists.

The drug problem in Faversham was raised, particularly around Whiting Crescent and Love Lane areas. Young people seem to think that taking drugs is normal; they needed to be spoken to on equal terms. It was felt that young people should be encouraged to come to the forums.

A request was made for a meeting for parents to discuss their concerns and issues around drugs and young people. It was felt that society was just accepting the use and something needed to be done.

It was also noted that local shops were selling alcohol and cigarettes to under-aged children. Jack took the details and will be passing the information on to the appropriate agencies. He confirmed again that the more intelligence he is given, he can submit the information to the CSU for action.

An update on lorry parking at the Gate Inn was requested, but Dunkirk councillors had sent their apologies. The destruction of road edges and footpaths around Dunkirk/Boughton was noted. A comment made by Anne Barnes last year was shared “local taxpayers should not pay for the inability of others to solve a problem”, which was thought to be very relevant.

Another issues raised were the HGVs missing the turning at the Gist depot and turning in Lakeside Avenue and Churchill Way. The KCC Freight Officer has now agreed to the siting of a number of ‘Unsuitable for HGVs’ signs in strategic places in Oare Road, Dark Hill areas. Although, unfortunately, these sign are legally unenforceable.

6. UPDATE ON FAVERSHAM FUTURE FORUM

Shiel Campbell felt that the FFFs had not achieved much so far, but had found it still had legs and there was enough interest to keep it rolling. Chris Wright, who has a background in transport, spoke on behalf of the FFFs and explained it was a group of people sharing ideas. He had asked members of the group to put forward their thoughts, which he had reproduced, judging against certain criteria/consistent basis to shape development. How can things be better; persuading developers etc.

Chris considered there to be three main areas:
Maintaining the character of a walking town –

Cycling from one place to another; new developments were further away where people would get in their cars and go out of the town; causing a disproportionate amount of car movement; make sure routes for walkers/cyclists were useable.

Developments are built with one way in and out, meaning the next layer of development is further cut off; more entrances/exits to enable connection with neighbours.

Housing market – buyers with money

More affordable housing required, single occupancy and sheltered housing accommodation. Estates five miles out of town will be useless in 20 years' time when the occupants are elderly. Developers are not building for the future.

Planning applications need to demonstrate a positive benefit to the built environment and for the town as a whole.

Mike Henderson stated that planners work under legislation made by central government by way of the Local Plan. Swale Borough Council's plan was expected to be approved in a couple of months' time. The FFF needs to look at the SLP, not just the approved plans, as Swale is already working on the next LP for 2031. The group needs to influence this and Faversham needs to be clear what it wants. Whether Faversham needs a neighbourhood plan for the whole area and how it engages with villages.

Boughton confirmed they were working on a NHP; traffic was an issue as was affordable housing. Their plan will state that new housing must come with car parking facilities and maintain the character of the village.

It was noted that traffic was made worse since parents were given a choice of schools. People need to be encouraged out of cars.

The sixth formers debate on BBC Radio was mentioned and it was noted that everyone at the meeting was speaking on behalf of young people and they will be the ones needing to buy a house.

Paul Cumberland felt that affordable housing should be made available to those with local jobs.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was noted that litter was a problem around the recreational ground and it was asked whether enforcement officers patrolled that area and ever gave fines. It was also agreed that the problem wasn't just with young people

and that all ages needed to be educated. Louise confirmed that Cllr Claire Belsom had already written an article for the next newsletter. Alice MacDonald confirmed that she knew someone who had been given a fine.

It was questioned what supermarkets and fast food outlets did to assist with litter.

Chris Wright raised the issue of yellow lines around the Guildhall, noting that Tim Stonor, a local architect, had come up with two schemes which did not involve yellow lines. He wondered why the Town Council had not voted on the scheme.

It was noted that 95% of the parking on yellow lines was blue badge holders. Vehicles parking outside Ozzies Fishbar were also highlighted as a problem, as large vehicles could not pass.

Red lines around the Guildhall were mooted. It was also noted that there were yellow lines around Canterbury Cathedral. Yellow lines do not deface buildings, but would actually allow tourists to see the pump and Guildhall.

It was thought that Tim Stonor's idea would cause problems with the market, the last planters were removed because they were used by skateboarders.

Gulliver Immink noted that it wasn't benches causing problems in the past, but the people using them.

Louise asked for any items for the next agenda to be forwarded to her as soon as possible and if anyone wanted specific speakers to attend.

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 11 July 2017 at 7pm in the Guildhall.

Apologies

Cllr David Simmons
Cllr Jeff Tutt
Inspector Gavin Wade

Cllr Mike Cosgrove
Cllr John Peto
PC Emma Willson

In Attendance

Carol Clayson
Chris Oswald Jones
Findlay MacDonald

Nigel Mannouch
Janet Turner
Vanessa Abrahamson

Archie MacDonald
Alice MacDonald
Terry Fitchett
George Bobbin
Claire Belsom
Gulliver Immink
Kevin Fraser
Peter Flower

Mark Woodcock
Charlotte Relf
Paul Cumberland
Mike Henderson
Sue Akhurst
Janice Ely
Roger Ely
Shiel Campbell
Louise Bareham