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Chiltern Community Forum – 20th February 2019 – Chalfont St Peter Parish Council Office

Chair: Andy Garnett

Attendees:

- Andy Garnett - Chair
- Jane Fallon – Little Missenden Parish Councillor & Holmer Green Village Society
- Inspector Richard Vine - TVP
- Sergeant Darren Walsh – TVP
- Guru Guruswamy – Chesham Bois NHW
- Robert Cunningham NHW
- Peter Martin – Bucks County Council
- Valerie Boakes – NHW
- Kathy Beattie – NHW
- Mario Amato – Resident
- David Alder – NHW
- Karen Dickson – CSP
- Lynne Gibson – Resident
- Norma Bowes – NHW
- Robert Gibson – Dovedale Design
- Martin Hulme
- Claire Annison – TVP Schools Officer
- Tony Shinner – CSP
- Len Adams – NAG
- Helen Cavill – Street Association
- Plus 3 others names not on list

Apologies:

- Colin Thirsk
- Katie Galvin

Introduction from Andy Garnett and from attendees. Robert Gibson confirmed from attendees that is was okay for him to take photographs for the website.

Police report – Inspector Richard Vine (RV). RV stated that this forum was not just about crime but causes and concerns to the community. It is not just what the police can do to help but what the community, councils, councillors and charities can do to assist.

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Burglary. There has been an increase in burglary over the last quarter for the Chiltern area but less than other Thames Valley Police areas. The Detective Inspector for Chiltern & South Bucks who has responsibility for burglaries has been involved in cross border investigations with the Metropolitan Police and Hertfordshire Constabulary. There are a small number of individuals involved in burglaries and often they are from outside the area. Chiltern & South Bucks have a dedicated burglary investigation unit who are working hard to target the individuals involved.

A question was asked as to whether most burglaries were committed by drug users to feed their habit. RV replied that no, this was not the case, most burglaries in this area are committed by experienced burglars who target certain types of house and property. Drug abusers tend to commit low level crimes.

RV said that there had been a number of operations by the Neighbourhood Policing Team over the past few months. Operation Greenfield had run at the beginning of February to combat rural crime. This involved the neighbourhood team, Special Constabulary and Road Policing. Lots of good results with arrests and intelligence.

Drug Dealing. RV explained that drugs was not a TVP priority set by the Police & Crime Commissioner but a local priority set by this forum. Any information received by police on drug dealing is acted upon. There had been a recent County Lines (explained by RV) operation in the area. Two individuals had been moved on and premises where “cuckooing” had been suspected have been disrupted.

Knife crime. There is very little knife crime reported in the Chiltern District Council area. RV notes that it features more prominently in the youth priorities survey than it does in the over 18 survey. There was discussion as to whether that was due to reality or perception. There have been two knife arch operations recently. Zero knives were found. A knife amnesty recently produced only 4 knives.

Staffing. RV stated that the neighbourhood team is very small compared to most other areas. RV said that normally the NHPT runs at 12 officers and recently it has been at 7/8, but there is to be one transfer in, and 3 in training, which would bring it up to strength.

Q. Is violence with burglaries a common occurrence? RV replied yes sometimes. However, it is rare and they have the highest priority. Two suspects were arrested recently for this type of burglary and the offences have now stopped.

Q. What is the law in homeowners protecting their property? RV explained that force that is reasonable in the circumstances can be used. It is difficult to quantify what is “reasonable” as it depended on the circumstances. Likewise, residents can perform “citizens’ arrests”.

Andy Garnett said that he and Robert Gibson recently met with the Thames Valley Police & Crime Commissioner and a big priority of his was cyber-crime.

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Guest speaker PC Claire Annison Schools Liaison Officer –

CA explained her role was to help in making school a safe environment and work with schools in keeping students out of the criminal justice system.

She had taken on the role in September 2018. The last three years there had not been an officer in the role so she was working hard to build relationships with the 23 secondary schools and colleges for which she had responsibility.

CA stated that she had arranged two knife arch operations at two schools. No knives had been found. It was often difficult to sell to schools who didn't want knife arches at their school. Some schools are happy with knife arches. She was trying to convince heads that they had little to fear and that it may assist in keeping schools safe. There is a knife crime week of action in March. Most schools are happy for her to speak to assemblies.

Schools are encouraged to pass any information they have on crimes or intelligence to her if the students report things.

Guest speaker Helen Cavill - Street Association Project Leader –

HC explained her role in the Street Association and the aims of the project. Street Association Members to work with their neighbours, building on a sense of neighbourliness, to ensure everyone in the community feels safe, valued and cared for. A return to community spirit.

Information packs are available for people who may wish to set up and promote Street Associations. It works well with Neighbourhood watch. There are currently pilot sites at the moment throughout the county.

Priorities survey

Due to the unavailability of Katie Galvin, Robert Gibson gave an overview of the results of the survey. As usual there were two surveys; a general one and one specifically for under 18's. It is suspected that the latter was either mistakenly completed by some adults or used by people to air concerns about youth.

Residential burglary was by far the most popular choice as a priority. 53% of respondents said this should be a priority. Speeding and parking were common concerns. Drug dealing, ASB and littering/fly-tipping were highlighted.

As previously discussed, knife crime was twice more important on the youth survey than on the main survey.

There was a general discussion regarding priorities that were different in different areas. Concern about ASB was higher in the Chalfonts than other areas.

Violence and sexual assaults are the highest reported crime category locally, according to stats on the Police.UK website but never features as a high priority. Discussion as to why.

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RG stated that the meetings and priorities surveys are distributed in three different ways – community safety team at the council, TVP Alert and the Community Forum website. We probably need to broaden distribution to reach more residents.

RG and AG welcomed ideas of how the website can make a difference and made a request for volunteers/steering group to help.

Priorities –

AG explained that the group inherited topics for priorities and that there are some which are unlikely to make top 3 policing priorities.

After a general discussion, RV was asked in which priority areas the police could do most good for the community. He said it would be regarding safeguarding individuals. Most of these people have complex needs involving the police service, local authority, health service and often schools. All agencies have workloads beyond their capabilities.

Regarding ASB, RV felt using the criminal justice system can be more effective in forcing agencies to deal with youth offenders.

AG conducted a vote on priorities by a show of hands. The priorities that were chosen were

1. Burglary
2. Anti-social behaviour
3. Drug crime.

Chiltern Community Forum website:

www.chilterncommunityforum.org

Feedback, ideas, contributions, involvement welcome. Please send all comments to Robert Gibson – contact@chilterncommunityforum.org