



Chiltern Community Forum – 26th May 2020 – Held via Zoom.

Chair: Andy Garnett

Introduction – AG – Welcome and introduction to purpose of forum. Slightly unusual to have the meeting via Zoom but we currently have 48 people connected which is higher than normal meetings. AG explained that for various reason the usual survey has been done by Robert Gibson for this quarter and wished to thank him for his hard work.

Survey results – RG – said it was interesting to see what the priorities would be at this time with the Covid 19 restrictions. Residential burglary is still the number one issue for residents but not as dominant as previously. There was more concern for shed and garage burglaries.

Speeding was the number two concern overall. This was particularly noticeable in the Missendens.

There was an increase in concern about littering which is probably linked with the closure of the council refuse centres.

Notice that there is an increase of complaints about dog fouling on various Facebook groups and it now features in the top ten priorities.

ASB and drug dealing are prominent and concerns about drug dealing in Chesham are high.

Violence against the person is again a low concern.

Parking has dropped out for the first time.

Many thanks to people who completed the survey at short notice.

Police report – Inspector Richard Vine. (RV)

TVP have had a new structure in place since lockdown to ensure resilience. All police officers on the neighbourhood teams have been put onto teams. The remaining PCSO's have been mainly concerned with Covid 19 – engage, explain, encourage and enforce.

Burglary

Over the last year (Apr 19 to Apr 20) there has been an overall reduction across Chiltern & South Bucks of 1%. At the beginning of 2019/20 it looked as though we might be on course for a 30% increase.



There have been 525 burglaries 19/20 across C&SB policing area.

There has been a 37% reduction across the Chiltern area from March to May.

Chesham + 82% (9 extra burglaries – offenders arrested)

Amersham - 65%

Chalfonts – 69%

Missendens + 47% (1 extra burglary)

Drug dealing

Drug dealing has gone up by 5% from March to May. This equates to 2 extra offences. Covid 19 has meant a big reduction in crime due to social confinement. This has meant that criminals have become more visible and obvious. Because there has been an increase in burglaries in Chesham there has been an increase in police presence. This in turn means that more people have been stopped and found with drugs.

Anti-social behaviour

There have been less reports of ASB due to no night time economy. There has been more reports of domestic violence but overall violence against the person offences have shown a significant reduction. There have been 1200 Covid 19 reported incidents which have dealt with mainly by PCSO's.

General matters

AG – Andy thanked Buckinghamshire Council for the support they have given to vulnerable, the ill and people on their own during this pandemic.

Q – Post Covid, what pressures may come out of that? Particularly domestic abuse. RV – We have concerns about what will happen when the pubs re-open. There is likely to be excessive demand which may feed into domestic violence. There may also be a catch-up in reporting of domestic abuse when social confinement ends. Bucks Council have been working to support vulnerable children. We have been conducting welfare checks on people who have previously reported domestic abuse and have not been contacted for a while. There are numerous helplines and charities and many rooms now available for victims of abuse. I would encourage anyone experiencing abuse to report.

AG – often people want a solution to their domestic situation rather than turn it into a crime and this is why there is a reluctance to report.

Q - Can you give us a breakdown of the burglary and drug figures for the areas?



RV -

	BURGLARY	DRUG OFFENCES
AMERSHAM	26 down to 9	9 down to 7
CHESHAM	11 up to 20	12 up to 18
CHALFONTS	29 down to 9	11 down to 8
MISSENDENS	7 up to 8	6 down to 2

Q – There was a significant number of Covid 19 offences. What were the majority?

RV – The majority were people being at addresses they shouldn't have been or social gatherings. Out of the 1200 incidents, 350 had police attendance and 33 penalty notices were issued. This put Chiltern & South Bucks in the middle of penalty notices issued by other TVP areas and TVP are near the top in the amount of penalty notices issued.

Q – There have been a number of crimes in the hill top villages. These rural crimes have not been mentioned.

RV – I have looked at crime in the whole rather than just rural crimes. We have recently got access to drones which are particularly useful in rural areas. They are considerably cheaper than helicopters and more readily available. They are good in tracing suspects and missing persons especially in rural areas. Every month we hold a cross-border operation with other Police areas, both within TVP and/or with other forces. Our most recent one focussed on thefts from farms.

Q – What do you class as ASB?

RV – ASB is not a crime but anti-social behaviour without a specific description. It could be kids playing football, loud music. It can overlap with criminal offences.

Q – Chesham does not appear to be showing improvement. Do you have any strategy to combat this?

RV – Chesham is the third largest town in Buckinghamshire with lots of young people. There was a spike in burglaries and suspects have been arrested and charged. Crime comes in peaks and troughs. We will continue to work with Herts Constabulary, Surrey Police, the Metropolitan Police and the British Transport Police to combat burglaries. Obviously, we have not been able to do this in the last few weeks.

Q – When will the police officers return to the neighbourhood teams?



RV – We are still waiting for a decision. Officers are working the same shifts as team officers but are available for NHPT work if not required. If there is not a spike then a decision should be made shortly.

We are a small team. At full strength we only have four constables, two sergeants and myself. Gill Gillespie from Chesham has been promoted and I am waiting for a replacement who should be in post shortly. I have also acquired another PC temporarily who will work with both the Chesham and Amersham teams.

Q – I have not noticed many police about. There is a particular problem with cars speeding in Chesham between 11pm and 4am. This is a regular occasion and it is not just one or two cars but lots. It is in St Mary's Way. What can be done?

RV – As a neighbourhood team we do not work beyond midnight so dealing with this would be the responsibility of night duty officers. I will tell Roy Evans the Chesham sergeant so he can include it in the patrol plan. At the moment the number one priority is burglaries, specifically, burglaries committed by offenders using the A40/M40/A413 and coming from the Middlesex area. CCTV is an option.

AG – I should invite someone from Roads Policing to these meetings as it is not a good use of the neighbourhood team resources to be constantly concentrating on speeding.

Q – Regarding drug dealing in Chesham. Is the level of policing in and around Chesham enough to reduce the crime figures? Also, where are the burglars from?

RV – recently a group of burglars from Chile were caught and remanding in custody. The advantage of using foreign criminals is that it is unlikely that we have their fingerprints and DNA. Local offenders have been arrested and charged for the recent spike in burglaries in Chesham. Do we have enough police? That is an issue for which the government and the PCC are responsible. The secondment of an extra PC means we have a 25% increase in strength!

The figures appear high because we have extra resources concentrating on Chesham because of the burglaries. A consequence of this is that more people get stopped and more drugs are found. Most of the drugs found are either cannabis or nitrous oxide pellets.

Chesham market is already open. We continue to engage, explain, encourage and report to the council if there are market breaches.

Q - There is a big increase in HS2 traffic coming shortly, and potentially more protestor camps.. Are there discussions with TVP as to how it is going to be handled?

RV – The sites are the responsibility of Buckinghamshire Council. TVP has a proper structure and team headed by a Chief Inspector who are responsible for the policing of



protests. It is resourced to minimise disruption and Transport for Bucks deal with roads and roadworks etc.

Q – Talking to farmers they are having issues with people invading their land, crops being trampled and dogs worrying livestock. How can the police support the farmers?

RV – If there is an identified time and location where there are regular problems then it may be possible to do something. It is very resource intensive. The operation two weeks ago was in response to farmers complaining about motorbikes on their land. If there are offences we will deal with specific incidents. We cannot stop people walking across farmers' lands.

Q - What technology are you using and going to get?

RV – We are still in the process of having ANPR's (Automatic number plate readers) into cars. We are the only policing area in TVP to get them. They are normally only in traffic cars and armed response vehicles.

As said previously, drones are being deployed regularly and a brilliant tactic to combat suspects who make off from police and to help search for missing people.

Windows 10 laptops are being rolled out to officers.

Mobile fingerprint machines are also being investigated. These can save a massive amount of time by being able to identify a person within seconds rather than having to travel to a police station.

Q – 101 and online reporting. How does it get to local officers and is it efficient?

RV – If it is just information then it passed on to local officers by email. If it is a crime, then to is allocated to our Smarter Resolution Team who will decide who should deal, are there any lines of enquiry and if not contact the victim to inform them of the outcome.

Priorities – Burglary, Anti-social behaviour and drug dealing. AG to look into how additional resources and attention can be brought to bear on Speeding.

Date of next meeting - 6pm on Wednesday 23rd September 2020, venue: Library, Amersham School, Stanley Hill, Amersham, HP7 9HH – subject to restrictions.

Chiltern Community Forum website:

www.chilterncommunityforum.org



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