

PUBLIC MEETING - ARRANGED BY POTTON TOWN COUNCIL

Friday 13th December 2018 at the Pavilion, Mill Lane, Potton which started at 7.30 pm

To discuss anti-social behaviour issues in the town

Present:

Chairman of the meeting Potton Town Council Chairman Cllr Mr A. Macdonald,
Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) Cllr Adam Zerny,
CBC Cllr Doreen Gurney,
Superintendent Jim Lunn, Bedfordshire Police,
PCSO Ann Jeeves, Bedfordshire Police,
Stonewater Housing, Area Manager, Jay Gill

Also Present:

Twenty-six members of the public were in attendance.
Town Clerk.

Apologies for absence:

Chief Superintendent David Boyle, Bedfordshire Police,
Community Sergeant Rachael Welch, Bedfordshire Police,
CBC Cllr Adam Zerny for late arrival.

1 Welcome, introduction and detail of the format of the evening.

The Chairman welcomed and thanked the public for attending.

The Chairman introduced himself and also representative from CBC Cllr Doreen Gurney, representatives from Bedfordshire Police Superintendent Jim Lunn and PCSO Ann Jeeves.

Apologies were given for Chief Superintendent David Boyle, Bedfordshire Police, Community Sergeant Rachael Welch, Bedfordshire Police, CBC Cllr Adam Zerny for late arrival.

2 Open Forum

The Chairman asked for any questions from the public.

Key: **Q** = Question, **A** = Answer, **S** = Statement, (C) = Chairman, (AZ) = Cllr Adam Zerny, (DG) = Cllr Doreen Gurney, (JL) = Superintendent Jim Lunn and (AJ) = PCSO Ann Jeeves.

S – Incident in Willow Road, Potton on Thursday 6th December 2018, two persons from the travelling community attempted to remove a hot water cylinder from a house on the corner of Chapman Close and Willow Road. They were advised that the cylinder wasn't to be taken, but even after the cylinder was placed elsewhere the two men attempted to take the cylinder. Shortly afterwards the two men from the travelling community got into a van belonging to a contractor who was installing an artificial lawn in Willow Road and drove off. The contractor was able to track the van to the traveller's site in Potton, rang the Police and proceeded to the traveller site. A policeman would not go into the site, but the contractor went onto

the site. The equipment in the van had been unloaded, the travellers wouldn't let the contractor have the equipment back even after the contractor had offered to pay the travellers a substantial sum of money for the equipment they had stolen and then threatened the contractors if they didn't leave the site.

A (JL) Your correspondence was sent to Bedfordshire Police on the 12th December 2018 and we are unable to track down any report for incidents. No reason Bedfordshire Police wouldn't go onto the traveller site. Bedfordshire Police went onto the site for an incident on the 11th December 2018. Not aware of an incident on the 6th December 2018. Will take away and investigate.

A (AJ) If you can provide details of the companies, this will help with investigation of incidents.

A (JL) Police Officers went onto the traveller site with the owner of a vehicle for the incident on the 11th December 2018 to retrieve the vehicle.

Q Has Wingfield Drive debacle been successfully resolved?

(C) Wingfield Drive is better than it was in the Summer 2018.

S – Lots of commotion at traveller site on the 11th December 2018. Regularly low loaders visit Common Road arriving loaded and come out empty.

The Joint Action Group (JAG) meeting which took place in advance of the Public Meeting was mentioned and one actions from JAG is to install an additional security camera in Common Road.

S – Speeding on Wrestlingworth Road, currently 40mph to The Baulk request 40mph is moved to past number 7 Wrestlingworth Road. In the section between number 3 and 7 is a blind corner and various vehicles have crashed through garden fences of the properties on Wrestlingworth Road. Have sent CBC Cllr Zerny details and haven't received a response.

S (AZ) – Not yet received an email from residents.

S – Signs won't stop speeding.

(C) Took a fatality to get speed restrictions and rumble strips at Deepdale.

(AZ) Bedfordshire Police need to confirm if a blackspot.

(C) The town council have written to Highways at CBC and no response.

S – Signs advise safe to drive at National Speed Limit (60mph), drivers treat the road as a race track.

(JL) Request a copy of the letter the town council have sent to Highways.

(C) The town council will forward a copy of the letter sent to Highways.

Speedwatch Coordinator advised not allowed to carry out speedwatch on National Speed Limit roads due to Health and Safety.

S – Speeding in Horslow Street, has got worse and is like a rat run, Chief Superintendent David Boyle, Bedfordshire Police advised at the last meeting in September to bring it to the next meeting if no better.

(JL) Resources is a challenge based on budgets, speeding is happening in lots of rural areas.

S – Speedwatch isn't allowed in Horslow Street.

S – Willow Road is suitable for 40mph speed limit.

S – Willow Road needs to keep the 20mph speed limit.

S (AZ) – Concur Willow Road should remain as a 20mph speed limit.

(C) A 20mph speed limit requested so that hopefully drivers reduce speed to 30mph.

Q Is Common Road a public highway, lots of speeding incidents in Common Road.

A (AJ) Speed humps are going to be installed in Common Road.

Q Quadbikes are regularly ridden near the old quarry.

A (AJ) Quadbike unit will investigate all reported incidents.

Q Drivers coming out of Common Road don't wear seatbelts and have no insurance.

A (AJ) Can report all road incidents online (Bedfordshire Police website) or on 101.

S We never get a call back from Bedfordshire Police after reporting an incident.

A (AJ) Members of the public need to call all incidents in to build a picture.

Q Noisy vehicles that are speeding around Potton late evening 10pm – 11pm.

A (AJ) Need to report vehicles, locations, licence plates, times. We don't receive any reports for these incidents.

S Will get a party together to look for cars to gain information.

(JL) Encourage you all to report all issues, we know were not great at getting back to you after you have reported.

Q Communication between public and Police is poor, don't get any feedback after ringing 101. Can we not contact you by text.

A (AJ) Don't have the resources to cope with that!

S Resource issue.

S Don't want to bombard you. Old people won't go out in the dark. Two abandoned vehicles in Wingfield Drive.

Q When you ring 101 you get an answer machine multiple choice. Would like a point of contact.

A (JL) Ten years ago we had enough officers to do that (point of contact). Need to report on 101 and online. Bedfordshire Police review everything reported on 101 and online. We would love to respond to all of the reports.

S Resources spent on Common Road should be spent on us. Would like to know what action will be taken. The Common Road residents always get away with it.

(JL) Due to resources it is a challenge. Will investigate all reports of crime.

S We fear all the Traveller people.

(C) Jessie Smith carried out a waste collection, taking money from vulnerable people. Telephoned Police and the Police never responded.

S Close the Common Road Traveller site.

S Abandoned car in Wingfield Drive in June 2018. How are they getting away with it? If it was me, I would be locked up.

Q The actions of individuals on the Common Road Traveller site are they breaking the tenancy of the site.

As no one from CBC was present at the meeting the above question was unable to be answered.

A (AJ) As far as we were aware Jessie Smith hasn't been a problem.

S The residents of Common Road Traveller site have stolen chickens.

Q How many Police response Officers can deal with an incident if one happened now?

A (AJ) Fifty Police response officers available from Biggleswade, Bedford and Luton.

S Need more Policemen.

(JL) Hopefully will gain more funding.

(AJ) Have to look at threat, harm and risk for responding.

(JL) Work in partnership with residents. Encourage you to report and yes we get it wrong.

(AZ) £8,000,000 of extra funding for Bedfordshire Police announced on the news this evening by the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner.

(JL) Having Hubs in different areas, local neighbourhood policing. JAG (Joint Action Group) revisiting in March 2019. PCSO to help with crime prevention.

(DG) Will Police come across the border (for example Cambridgeshire to Bedfordshire) and what is the cost.

(JL) Police don't go across the border (Cambridgeshire to Bedfordshire). Major crimes unit is a cross border unit. Mutual Aid for Beds, Cambs and Herts. Roads Policing Officer from Cambs went on the Common Road Traveller site on the 11th December 2018.

(DG) Police Gun Unit goes cross border.

(JL) Fire Arms incidents do go cross border.

Q Why is nobody from CBC Gypsy and Traveller, Children's Services and Housing present at this meeting?

A (DG) An officer from CBC Gypsy and Traveller was present at the JAG meeting earlier this evening.

(C) Will soon probably have to fight expansion of Common Road Traveller site.

S One option for CBC is to increase the current Common Road Traveller site. Site was reduced by half in the 1990's.

(C) Representatives of organisations were invited to attend the meeting. They haven't sent any apologies for not attending.

(AJ) Partnership working with Housing Association.

S Want to share what has happened in Wingfield Drive. Raised issues via JAG and this has helped make things happen. Suggest people get involved with JAG. Closer access point with Bedfordshire Police and Central Bedfordshire Council.

S Time lapse is ridiculous.

(C) CBC should be present this evening to tell us how they can deal with these issues. Bedfordshire Police are here and CBC should also be present.

S Lack of representation from CBC. Alistair Burt (MP) set these meetings up.

(C) Alistair Burt (MP) didn't set the meetings up. The town council set up the meeting and invited Alistair Burt (MP) to attend.

S Lack of CBC being present at this meeting. Pottton is working on a Greenwheel for Pottton and having to divert away from Common Road Traveller site. Common Road Traveller site in the wrong place. The site should be moved to another location. The site needs to be relocated to place where people can see what is going on in the traveller site.

Q Why isn't the CBC dedicated site manager of the Traveller site present at the meeting?

(DG) The CBC dedicated site manager is frightened to go up to the Traveller site.

(DG) I have been threatened on my own door stop by Common Road Travellers. For thirty-five years I have visited the Traveller site, I am now frightened to go and visit the site. The Traveller site is a potential fire hazard and health and safety issues. If the site could be closed, residents would need splitting up. CBC are putting in two transit sites, one in the east and one in the west of Central Bedfordshire.

Q How many plots does the Common Road Traveller site currently have?

(DG) Thirteen and two new plots.

Q How many people on each plot?

(AZ) Have asked CBC to confirm if people who have been in prison aren't allowed on the site.

(AZ) No formal limit on how many people are allowed on each plot.

S Need to limit how many people are allowed on each plot.

(AZ) I could ask CBC if they could have a limit on the number of people allowed to live on each plot. Would need to see overcrowding.

S What is overcrowded.

(JL) Bedfordshire Police can't decide what is overcrowding on a traveller plot.

S We don't know who lives on the Traveller site. Need to have a meeting at the Common Road Traveller site.

(C) Who is controlling the Traveller site.

(DG) Manager of the site had tyres slashed. Police Helicopter went over

the site and five police cars with armed Police officers had to visit the site to get an armed person.

(C) CBC have a responsibility.

Q How many Police Officers have visited the site on a liaison basis?

A (AJ) The Police have previously carried out monthly walkabouts with the CBC Manager for the site.

Q Do they know (residents of Common Road) in advance when you are visiting the Traveller site?

A (AJ) Since new CBC manager, no joint visits with the Police and CBC Manager have taken place, no engagement on the site with Police and CBC. Police now visit the site without the CBC Manager.

Q Do you (PCSO Ann Jeeves) feel threatened when you visit the site?

A (AJ) I don't feel threatened when I visit the site?

Q Were the residents of Common Road Traveller site invited to attend this meeting.

A (C) This is a Public meeting anyone can attend the meeting.

(AJ) Asked would someone from the Common Road Traveller site would like to attend the JAG meetings.

S Police carry out a fixed speeding watch once a year. Speedwatch volunteers on the 18th December will be carrying out speedwatch in the morning on Gamlingay Road. CBC aren't attending, the Police are attending.

Q Can the Police helicopter take a photo of the Common Road Traveller site to then show the site to the public?

A (C) The Environment Agency took photos over Pottton. I will look at the photos to see if one of the Common Road Traveller site and then send out.

(C) I wasn't invited to JAG.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting and advised that a follow up meeting will take place in March 2019.

(JL) Pottton is in my area and I am happy to attend the March 2019 meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm.