

West Mercia Neighbourhood Watch Forum

Annual General Meeting

Meeting Minutes

18th May 2016

Opening

The AGM meeting of the West Mercia Neighbourhood Watch Forum was called to order at 7:30pm on Wednesday 18th May 2016 in The Lecture Theatre, West Mercia Police Headquarters by Paul Leopold.

Present

John Campion; Amanda Blakeman; Paul Leopold; John Lakeman; Ning Kedwards; Chris Jefferies; Sarah Lee; Tony Webb; Pat Parminter; John Wickson; Chris Pyemont; Raymond Boyle; Tom Haynes; Craig Cox; Lady Deborah Cox; Graham Beale; Paul Tomlinson; Seth Pearson; David Butler; Peter Plunkett; Cyrus Baria; Brian Browne; Les Painting; David Cotton; Ian Balls; David Hirst; PC Mark Edwards; Geoff Ransted; John Pierpoint; Anne Kraemer;; Phil Payne; Sir Richard Buckworth-Herne-Soame, Bt; Shirley Cawte; Jillian Pagett; W.A. Burgess; Ruth Martin; David Cotton; Beverley Blaydon; Sue Taylor; Kevin Powell; Chris Cade; John Baines; Connie Baines; Tony Weavers; Ron Thomas; Richard Sims; Lynette Mantle; William Mantle; G.Scrimshire; Stephen Hornberger; Anna Greenwood; Margaret Payton; Roy Payton; Joy Muir; It is believed that others did attend but did not record their names on the attendance sheet circulated.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Unfortunately minutes of the 2015 AGM were not taken as the Secretary position has been vacant for the last 3 years.

Opening Remarks – Paul Leopold

Paul welcomed everyone to the AGM and introduced the newly elected West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner, John Campion, to the Forum. David Shaw, Chief Constable of West Mercia Police, sent his apologies for not attending the AGM and sent his thanks and well wishes to the Forum.

Presentation – John Campion, Police & Crime Commissioner

John took up his new office as the new West Mercia PCC on Friday 13 May 2016. He was in awe of how hard the volunteers worked with the Police to keep the community safe and how they had made a difference to the community.

Historically, the Police had not always listened properly nor supported the volunteers fully in order to help the Police keep the community safe. Going forward, John wishes to work with the West Mercia Neighbourhood Watch Forum (WMNWF) as a partnership and encourages the Forum to inform him

of our views and suggestions on what he can do to make Neighbourhood Watch more successful.

The nature of Police work is changing and John will work with the Chief Constable closely in order to adapt to the new Police requirements. John is looking forward to achieving the following areas at the end of his term in 4 years' time:

- Honest dialogue with Neighbourhood Watch;
- Improved safety in our own homes and in the community; and
- To have worked harder in supporting Neighbourhood Watch volunteers who have to put in long hours and travel long distances etc.

John then opened the floor for questioning.

Question 1: Ian Balls asked how to contact John Campion

Answer: John has an office at the West Mercia Police HQ. Members of the Forum can contact him via the web site, telephone, Twitter, FaceBook or see him in person when he is out and about.

Question 2: Connie Baines from Bridgnorth asked about funding for the voluntary sector

Answer: Previous PCC had set up grants for the voluntary sector. John wants to build on the funding support for his areas of priorities. He intends to provide Neighbourhood Watch with the right tools including funding so he will build on the grant.

Question 3: Sarah Lee, Wythall PC, commented on the support given to Neighbourhood Watch and their helpful meetings with the Police.

John thanked the Forum again and closed his presentation.

Presentation – Amanda Blakeman, Assistant Chief Constable

Amanda stated that her key priority is to work closely with Neighbourhood Watch in order to provide a service to Neighbourhood Watch. Some areas of collaboration were not as engaging and could be leading to some areas not delivering as intended. She would like to invigorate the Police and Neighbourhood watch collaboration. There are many different Neighbourhood Watch Schemes; some felt they were not supported; some were dormant and some which the Police have no information.

The Police intend to meet the needs and expectations of the various Neighbourhood Watch Schemes which take on the local public responsibilities. Amada supports regular meetings with Neighbourhood Watch in order to share information. The next presentation by Sue Taylor would provide update for the Forum on the progress of the new Messaging System.

It is important for the Police to have effective and regular contact with the Neighbourhood Watch Forum and agree a way to monitor it. The formal Neighbourhood Watch cooperation needs to be structured and is going through a review process.

Currently the Neighbourhood Watch Schemes provide advice to the community via the Coordinators. The Police want to encourage the community to access information via the new Messaging System. There will be early communication from mid May both internally and externally from the Police about the new Messaging System. Neighbourhood Watch has been identified as key stakeholders by the Police. The new system will identify what Neighbourhood Schemes there are. Everyone can register with the new system and select what local messages they want to access. This will help in crime prevention.

Amanda then opened the floor for questioning.

Question 1: Is the new system going to replace what we have currently?

Answer: It will replace what we have currently once the system is launched.

Question 2: Tony Webb: Worcester City Neighbourhood Watch held a meeting on 17th May and some 100+ people were not invited to the meeting. Tony Webb was not happy with this.

Answer: Paul Leopold informed the Forum that the meeting was a first attempt to hold a meeting to reform the Worcester City NW Association and only nationally registered scheme members were invited. Paul encouraged all unregistered schemes to register with the National Neighbourhood Watch Network to ensure they will be included in all future communications and meetings.

A discussion on the differences between registered and unregistered schemes took place. Unfortunately Tony Webb from Worcester City stated that in view of this he resigned from his unregistered scheme and left the AGM at that point.

Question 3: How does the Police Control Room log incidents or information reported by Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators? There are some inconsistencies in different SNT teams and the person taking the call. Examples were cited.

Answer: Amanda agreed with the need for consistency in the Control Room taking the calls. She agreed to take this point away and resolve it.

Question 4: Shirley Cawte from Stourport stated that she understood there were plans to cut Community Support Officers and services in the Stourport area. How can the Police regenerate the service with these cuts?

Answer: Amanda stated that there are no cuts planned to the numbers of PCSOs nor SNTs. During her time in post in the last 14 months, there were no plans to cut or reduce local policing since that is where all community intelligence comes from which is very important in solving serious crimes like terrorism.

Question 4: How do the Police know that they are dealing with the registered Neighbourhood Watch Schemes?

Answer: The new Community Message Service system will help the Police gather the information about the different schemes

Question 5: Arthur Burgess from SW Worcester City stated that his scheme was registered years ago and received their registration number. However, they did not receive any communication about the Worcester meeting on 17th May. However, they obtained the information from 2 other sources: West Mercia Police and the Worcester West Coordinator.

Answer: Amanda said that there is a need to capture all information and understand where the schemes and scheme members are. It was a clear miscommunication problem for the Worcester meeting on 17th May.

Question 6: There are rumours that the SNTs will take over the roles of Neighbourhood Watch?

Answer: Amanda assured everyone that will not be the case.

Question 7: David Hirst from Droitwich stated that currently there is 1 sergeant, 2 PCSOs and 2 PCs to cover the wide Droitwich area. Given the plans to increase the number of households in Droitwich by 1500, will there be increase in Police cover in the growing towns?

Answer: The Police are constantly looking at how to change to meet the changes in demand including expanding capacity to deal with the growing towns. There is a comprehensive review ongoing at the moment.

Amanda thanked the Forum and closed her presentation.

Presentation – Update on New West Mercia Messaging System Development by Sue Taylor

Sue was happy to report that the new Community Messaging Service (CMS) system is now ready to be tested. The CMS login side is up and running as of 18th May 2016. Neighbourhood Watch is the first group to be made aware of it. Sue invited all the attendees at the Forum to register on the system and inform Sue of any problems.

The new CMS is a joint system for Warwickshire and West Mercia. Currently there are 5 community voluntary coordinators in West Mercia and one community voluntary coordinator in Warwickshire. This system will help to distribute the workload and send out more messages on a timely basis.

Sue then gave a brief overview of the system and explained the 7 steps to sign up to the system. A copy of 'How to register to receive your CMS messages' was distributed to all attendees. Please register on line at <http://www.westmercia.police.uk/register>.

Sue then opened the floor for questioning.

Question 1: On the page where the registrant needs to tick a box to identify his role, is it possible to tick more than one box for multiple roles?

Answer: Sue will need to check and welcomed this type of question to help make the system work better for the community.

Question 2: John Lakeman from Teme Valley asked about the working hours of the CMS and whether the annual re-registration on the CMS will require re entering all the data again from first registration.

Answer: The CMS operates 24 hours daily. The registrant can decide when and how frequently they wish to receive messages when they register by ticking the appropriate boxes on the screen. Annual re-registration only requires the unique ID number and any changes to your requirements.

Question 3: Can successful outcomes of incidents be broadcast through the CMS?

Answer: Sue will work with the Control Room to see what can be done. She will also check with the SNTs to see how positive news can be distributed.

John Campion stated that he is keen to develop a system which can provide feedback on the information received. In the coming 4 years, John would like to see more feedback. There will be big shifts in the way the Police provide feedback, possibly through social media like FaceBook.

Paul Leopold reminded the Forum not to forget people who do not have computers or access to the Internet. The principles of Neighbourhood Watch is talking to our neighbours and passing information in the community.

Sue thanked the Forum and closed her presentation.

Presentation - The use of Social Media by Neighbourhood Watch by Craig Cox, Stourport Neighbourhood Watch

Stourport Neighbourhood Watch used to have regular meetings but only one or two people turned up. The meetings just died away. The Neighbourhood Watch Scheme had to decide whether to stop or move to social media.

Six months ago, a FaceBook Page was set up. There is no need to be a FaceBook user to access the Page. You can Google the Page and gain access. Stourport Neighbourhood Watch still has street coordinators talking to neighbours who do not want to use FaceBook.

The FaceBook Page administrators take messages from the Police and people in Stourport and then publish them on the Page. The Page works well and has the following guidelines:

- Focuses only on safety, crime and crime prevention;
- No chit chat or gossip on the Page;
- Keep relevant and credible;
- The identities of the information senders are protected and sensitive data is disguised;
- People can interact with the Page with comments;
- Clear policy statement on what is allowed and not allowed on the Page;
- Anti social comments are hidden from the Page;
- All prohibited words are entered on the FaceBook parameters to prevent disallowed words to appear on the Page.

- If people respond by putting names on the Page, the message will be taken off the Page and the sender will be encouraged to inform the Police directly.

The FaceBook Page has worked very well. 140+ posts were published in the last 6 months. The top message has reached 47,000 people so far and in the first 24 hours reached 36,000 people. It was a CCTV clip where someone was tampering with a car on a driveway.

Interesting facts:

- 5% of the posts classified as high interests – more than 5,000 views
- 24% of the posts classified as medium interests – more than 1,000 views
- 71% of the posts classified as low interests – less than 1,000 views
- Most posts reach hundreds of people
- 1,000 people have registered to get posts
- In the past, meeting attendants were in the 50-60 years old age group. 21% of the FaceBook Page users are in the 25-34 age group. It is reaching the younger generation, even the 13-17 age group is engaging with the Page
- People access the Page evenly throughout the day, everyday
- 86% of users access the Page via mobile devices
- People look at the Page even when they are not at home

Stourport Neighbourhood Watch has seen a resurgence of interest and 7 new Street Level Schemes have recently been set up. We have also assisted Teme Valley Neighbourhood Watch to set up the Teme Valley Neighbourhood Watch FaceBook Page. Flyers are being printed for targeted doorstep drops. This is sponsored by the West Mercia Police and Wyre Forest Council.

Key messages:

- Be informed of what is happening in your community;
- Don't become a victim of crime;
- Report unusual and suspicious behaviour; and
- Join recognised Neighbourhood Watch Schemes, if not one available, set one up.

Craig then opened the floor for questioning.

Question 1: What are the procedures for approving the Neighbourhood Watch Schemes?

Answer: The Schemes can be approved by West Mercia Police or the West Mercia Neighbourhood Watch Forum or the National Neighbourhood Watch Network. Currently, the Weekly Bulletin is cascaded down by Paul Leopold to the 19 people who are on his distribution list.

Question 2: Neighbourhood Watch should have procedures on how to register the scheme published on their web page.

Answer: Chris Cade, National Neighbourhood Watch Network responded by saying there are 4 pieces of information required to register a scheme:

- Name;
- Area the scheme covers;
- Contact details; and
- How many people in the scheme

Question 3: How many people are required to administer the FaceBook Page?

Answer: 2 or 3 people, mostly by Deborah Cox. Craig offered help to any scheme which intends to set a FaceBook Page up. If there are enough requests, he is happy to run a workshop.

Question 4: PC Mark Edwards, SNT for Stourport, commented the FaceBook Page has proved to be successful in engaging the community.

Craig thanked the Forum and closed his presentation.

Chairman's Report

I start with an apology for the absence of any minutes of the last AGM. We are in desperate need of a Secretary who can take notes at our meetings and subsequently produce minutes. If you would be willing to take on that role please let us know.

I am a firm believer that NW is, in very simple terms, about people in and around their homes doing their best to ensure that they and their neighbours do not become the victims of crime. I hope that I am not deluded by also believing that that level of NW activity is strong and effective in much of West Mercia. It could of course be even better and the whole purpose of bodies such as the West Mercia NW Forum and the local constituent NW Associations is to encourage the formation of NW Schemes in the streets of our cities, towns and villages. We have already heard this evening about the increasing use of modern rapid communication systems in Neighbourhood Watch and maybe it is these developments that are leading to a reduction in the enthusiasm for people to attend meetings and the consequent reduction in membership of local NW Associations as is being experienced in many parts of the West Mercia Police area.

The Forum has only met once since the last AGM and that was in February of this year. We had presentations from Chris Cade who is a Trustee of national Neighbourhood Watch about the changes that are happening at national level. These changes include the new NW logo. (Slide) In

connection with the new logo you should be aware that at the moment local associations cannot for example have signs made with it on. You should be aware that In due course when the details are finalised strict rules will apply to its use. We also had a presentation from DCI Tom Harding about the “We Don’t Buy Crime” initiative, which has been introduced in various parts of West Mercia. This initiative includes the creation of “Smartwater Villages” in some places.

You may or may not be aware that Paul Crumpton a former Police Inspector has been appointed to re-generate Neighbourhood Watch in Herefordshire. Paul is sponsored by the National Farmers Union Mutual and he is having significant success in his efforts.

The lack of Forum meetings doesn’t mean that I was twiddling my thumbs. You will be aware I am sure that there is an Alliance between West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police and similarly there is a NW Alliance Group and we met once at Hindlip and once at Leek Wootton the Warwickshire Police HQ. There were also two meetings of the West Midlands Regional NW group also at Leek Wootton. One of the things that came out of these meetings is the production of a booklet which when published will be a guide for Safer Neighbourhood Team members on encouraging and assisting residents in their SNT areas to set up Neighbourhood Watch schemes.

I also attended the event put on by National NW in Birmingham last December called “The Way Ahead for Neighbourhood Watch” This was a very wide-ranging event talking about the aspirations and intentions of the national NW body for making NW even more effective. This prompts me to remind you to register your local NW Scheme with National NW on their web site (Slide). For your scheme to be properly recognised as a Neighbourhood Watch scheme it needs to be registered. On the site click “Menu”, Click “Join Us”, complete the Registration Process. It’s as simple as that.

The other thing that I have been involved with is the North Worcestershire and South Worcestershire Citizens Academy.

Citizens Academy is a 10 week programme providing local people over the age of 18 with an insight into West Mercia Police’s work to protect people from harm, and improve residents’ quality of life. One of the subjects talked about is Neighbourhood Watch and I was invited to speak on this.

Lastly - National Neighbourhood Watch Week is from Saturday 18th June until Sunday 26th June. I mention this in particular to inform you that National NW will be sending out Members Guide Booklets and a supply of window stickers bearing the new logo courtesy of Cooperative Insurance the new sponsor of Neighbourhood Watch from 18th June and these will in turn be distributed to the various District Associations for onward distribution to members.

Treasurer’s Report

Accounts for Period to 31st December, 2015

Opening balance at Bank 1.1.2015	<u>£884.19</u>
<u>Income</u> Funds transferred from Shrewsbury NWA following its closure.	<u>£591.19</u>
<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>Nil</u>
Closing Balance at Bank 31.12.2015	<u>£1,475.38</u>

Election of Officers (Constitution Rule 4.1.)

Chairman

Ray Boyle was nominated by Paul Leopold and seconded by Margaret Payton
A vote took place by the members of the West Mercia Neighbourhood Watch
Forum and Ray Boyle was duly elected as the Chairman.

Vice Chairman

Paul Leopold was nominated by Ray Boyle and seconded by John Lakeman
A vote took place by the members of the West Mercia Neighbourhood Watch
Forum and Paul Leopold was duly elected as the Vice Chairman.

Treasurer

Connie Baines was nominated by Ray Boyle and seconded by Paul Leopold
A vote took place by the members of the West Mercia Neighbourhood Watch
Forum and Connie Baines was duly elected as the Treasurer.

Secretary

Ning Kedwards was nominated by Paul Leopold and seconded by Ray Boyle
A vote took place by the members of the West Mercia Neighbourhood Watch
Forum and Ning Kedwards was duly elected as the Secretary.

Meeting was closed at 10:15pm.