

West Mercia Neighbourhood Watch Forum

Annual General Meeting

Meeting Minutes

3rd May 2017

Opening

The AGM meeting of the West Mercia Neighbourhood Watch Forum was called to order at 7:00pm on Wednesday 3rd May 2017 in The Lecture Theatre, West Mercia Police Headquarters by Ray Boyle, Chairman of West Mercia Neighbourhood Watch.

Present

John Campion; Charles Hill; Lianne Taylor; Ray Boyle; Paul Leopold; Ning Kedwards; Craig Cox; Deborah Cox; W Arthur Burgess; Paul Tomlinson; Simon Baldwin; Sarah Lee; David Poulton; Derek Humphries; Luke Serrell; Gemma Serrell; Geoff Ranstead; Andrew Carter; Les Painting; Paul Minshull; Sarah Beard; David Cotton; Ruth Martin; Andrew Sherrey; Margaret Sherrey; Andrew Mawby; Sharon Teasdale; Tom Haynes; Dave Tremellen; Godfrey Harvey; John Gwinnett; Brett Bailey; Susie Tetley; Judy Goodman; Malcolm Lamb; J Mills; Conway Hall; Cyrus Baria; John Chatwin; Chris Pyemont; Graham Beale; Richard Soame; David Hirst; Jacqueline Carter; Julie Baldwin; Sue Thompson; Bill Matthews; Tracy Ashby; Beverley Bladen; Sian Battle-Wych; Gary Shepherd

It is believed that others did attend but did not record their names on the attendance sheet circulated.

Apologies

Sid Stephenson; Conrad Palmer; Connie Baines; Chris Mair; Carol Toolley; Phillip Ralls; Margaret Watkins; Brian Watkins; Carole Gammond; Phil Bladen; Jeremy Thomas; Jim Duggan; Phil Payne

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the 2016 AGM were approved and will be posted on the West Mercia Neighbourhood Watch website, www.westmercianw.org.uk

Opening Remarks – Ray Boyle, Chairman of West Mercia Neighbourhood Watch

Ray Boyle welcomed everyone to the AGM and introduced the speakers to the Forum: John Campion, West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner; Charles Hill, Chief Superintendent of the West Mercia Police; Lianne Taylor, National Neighbourhood Watch Community Engagement and Membership Director.

Presentation – John Campion, West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC)

John Campion is a strong supporter of Neighbourhood Watch and considers this meeting very important. During his first year as the West Mercia PCC, He was happy to report the following:

1. **Support for Neighbourhood Watch** - Watch Groups in West Mercia are not always connected very well. John Campion has maintained the funding to support the Neighbourhood Watch in the area.

The digital revolution in Neighbourhood Watch in Stourport and other areas has increased the power of information sharing and in real time. The local Police teams need to connect with Neighbourhood Watch schemes more efficiently. At the moment, Police Officers have no mobile phones and they have to go back to the Police Station to access their PCs. To improve the efficiencies of the Police Officers, John Campion has committed to provide all front line Police Officers with smart phones and laptop computers in 2017. This will allow the Police Officers to engage with Neighbourhood Watch discussions in a timelier manner in order to achieve crime prevention.

2. **Future for Neighbourhood Watch** - John Campion has every confidence in Neighbourhood Watch schemes. We need to let burglars know we place a lot of importance on crime prevention. We will work on how we stop people become vulnerable to crimes.

The “We Don’t Buy Crime” and use of Smart water campaigns have proven successful and have deterred people coming into our area to commit crimes. Cleobury Mortimer is a good example. Since they have become a Smart Water town, the already low crime rate has been reduced further.

3. **Continuous Improvement** – the Police do not always get things right. John Campion has given his commitment to try and make things better. He welcomes feedback on what the Police are not doing right and urge the attendees to continue to provide comments.

John Campion also believes in the power of volunteers. Neighbourhood Watch has helped our areas to be safe and prevents us from becoming victims of crime.

John Campion thanked everyone for all the work that Neighbourhood Watch has done. He will continue to invest in Neighbourhood Watch to make sure Neighbourhood Watch is supported.

Presentation – Charles Hill, West Mercia Chief Superintendent

Charles Hill recalled that the last time he made a speech at the West Mercia Neighbourhood Watch Forum was 10 years ago when he first became Chief Superintendent. He is currently the Head of Local Policing for Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin. His key responsibilities are:

- Crime prevention;
- Licensing;
- Anti-social behaviour; and
- Youth engagement.

Charles Hill was disappointed to see there was no one under the age of 25 amongst the attendees. He believed that the Forum should be representative of the full spectrum of the Community. Within Charles Hill’s command, he introduced 3 of his team members: Bob Barnett (not present) – Watch Review; Gary Shephard – Watch Review Officer for 18.5 hours a week; and Sian Battle-Wych.

So far, £50,000 has been invested in the CMS (Community Messaging System). Before any further money is invested in the system, Charles Hill would like to see if the CMS is working as it is intended to. Other alternatives are being considered, like the use of Facebook. Charles Hill invited everyone to comment on the CMS and asked the attendees to encourage other people to do so too. You can provide your feedback on line, <https://www.snapsurveys.com/wh/s.asp?k=149313078175>

The survey is open until 31st May 2017.

West Mercia is a low crime area despite reports of increase of crimes. The reported increase is due to a change in the way of how the Police record crimes now on order to improve the integrity of the crime data. In the past, only validated crimes were recorded with a crime number. The new way of recording is when an incident is reported, it is automatically recorded as a crime.

There are also changes in the classifications of crimes. Houses are classified as dwellings and detached garages and sheds are classified as non dwelling & others. For example, if a building site of new houses was burgled, in the past, it would be classified as non dwelling but the new system would record it as dwelling.

Charles Hill would like to push for more volunteers in different roles to help the Police. Volunteering can come in many forms: part of the Safer Neighbourhood Team; send messages to Neighbourhood Watch; Special Constable for 2 hours a week or 8 hours a month.

If anyone is interested in seeing what the Police do, they can participate in the Police 'Stop and Search' work. It is a ride along scheme with the Safer Neighbourhood Police which you can apply online. Approval will be granted after appropriate vetting. Feedback is welcome.

Charles Hill then opened the floor for questions:

Question 1: With the new crime classifications, does it mean the Police will attend to all shed break-ins?

Answer: Not necessarily. Police responses are prioritised into 4 categories: 1 – Death; 2 – Serious injuries; 3 - Alarmed; and 4 – Distress. The Police will also focus on Post Incident Support.

Question 2: The time of the AGM starting at 7pm on a week day may have affected the people who can attend, e.g. working people and people with young families. Can anything be done to improve attendance from different age groups?

Answer: It is a challenge for all of us. We need to look at different ways to engage young people.

Question 3: Can we start something like 'Junior Connect Scheme' or 'Cadets for Neighbourhood Watch' in schools?

Answer: They are worth considering and would form better links with the Safer Neighbourhood Team.

Question 4: Stop & Search Scheme is a good idea. What the Police can do is provide more feedback on what happens after the crime is reported. Bromyard Newsletter is a good example as it provide news on what the Police has done and arrests.

Answer: Engaging with the Safer Neighbourhood Teams will achieve more results. Charles Hill will get the Safer Neighbourhood Team to provide the information.

Question 5: What are the areas covered by North and South Worcestershire?

Answer: North Worcestershire covers Wyre Forest, Kidderminster, Redditch and Bromsgrove; South Worcestershire covers Worcester City, Wychavon and Malvern Hills.

Charles Hill thanked the Forum and closed his presentation.

Presentation – Neighbourhood and Home Watch Network by Lianne Taylor, National Neighbourhood Watch Community Engagement and Membership Director

The National Neighbourhood Watch is sponsored by the Home Office and also receives sponsorship from Coop and ERA. The direction of the National Neighbourhood Watch is to grow the movement and reach as many communities as possible. The plan is to build tool kits for local Watches to use. This will help Neighbourhood Watch to diversify and do things differently in order to be flexible in meeting the needs of different people in the community. Flow of information is very important for us to protect the communities from cyber crime, sexual exploitation like grooming online, bank account scams, vulnerable elderly people, domestic violence etc.

Neighbourhood Watch was perceived as an organisation full of old people and high handed Police officers. We need to change that image in order to encourage all sectors of the community to participate in Neighbourhood Watch. Traditional meeting venues may not work well and we need to engage people through different channels, e.g. Facebook, Twitter etc.

Moving forward, National Neighbourhood Watch aims to be less bureaucratic and be more open. It needs to build an open flexible movement to encourage success and delivery at the grass root level. It has to be simple, accessible, interesting, relevant and fun. One of the examples is to develop badges for young people to encourage them to take part. We also need to register our schemes electronically so that we ensure the integrity of the contact details.

What we need to do to keep our neighbourhood safer is to look at crime trends and crime prevention. Therefore, tool kits will be in place for local schemes to use. More training will be needed for countering cyber crime. Keeping things local and relevant are key to engage people.

Lianne Taylor then opened the floor for questions:

Question 1: What is the internet address for National Neighbourhood Watch?

Answer: www.ourwatch.org.uk Information can be found in Knowledge base section. The Neighbourhood Watch logo was rebranded last year and now can be downloaded from the web site.

Question 2: City of London Police has a web site which allows people to register for Anti Fraud information. If you register via Ourwatch.org.uk, it does not work. Need to register directly with City of London Police web site.

Answer: Lianne Taylor will pass the feedback on.

Question 3: There is a recent case of cyber crime when an HR officer accidentally attached a file with 7,500 people's personal details in it. Educating people about cyber crime is very important.

Answer: June is designated for Cyber Crime Awareness. National Neighbourhood Watch will categorise interests groups and reach out to different groups of people. You can also download the 'Little Book of Big Scams' for cyber crime from the West Mercia Police Website.

Charles Hill also stated that the Police is funding an in-house Cyber Crime Officer starting on 1 September 2017.

Question 4: Some people are still experiencing difficulties in registering online.

Answer: The screen design is not very user friendly. The registrant may need to scroll down to the bottom of the screen to click the confirm button to complete registration.

Lianne Taylor thanked the Forum and closed her presentation.

Presentation - Social Media Update by Craig Cox, West Mercia Neighbourhood Watch Social Media Spokesman

The West Mercia Neighbourhood Watch website is live and the address is www.westmercianw.org.uk This is linked to the OurWatch web site. You can look up your scheme by post code. You are welcome to tell us what you want us to publish.

Craig Cox did a demonstration of what the web site looks like and examples of what information you can get from the website. There are 258 registered Coordinators in West Mercia which include 33 new registrations in the last 3 months (13 in February 2017, 10 in March 2017 and 10 in April 2017)

Social Media Update - In May 2016, Stourport-on-Severn Facebook Page had just over 1,000 followers and 71% of the posts reached less than 1,000 people. However, in May 2017, we now have Facebook pages for Stourport-on-Severn, Teme Valley, Droitwich Spa, Kidderminster, Redditch, Bromsgrove & North Worcestershire and Alvechurch & Wythall. There are over 7,230 followers from these pages which reach over 68,000 people with over 34,000 post engagements.

West Mercia Neighbourhood Watch Change of Constitution – The current system has 9 local authority areas only so not all areas are represented. The new system will have more than 35 towns and/or Safer neighbourhood Team areas and will have a fairer representation. In the Neighbourhood Watch national AGM 2016, they have also increased the representation from a handful of Police Regions to 43 Force areas. Please see below the proposed wordings change highlighted in red in the constitution as below.

Current wordings:

2. Membership of the Forum shall be limited to representatives of police-supported Neighbourhood Watch Associations **based on local authority areas**, and such other representatives as the Forum shall from time to time decide are necessary.

Proposed wordings:

2. Membership of the Forum shall be limited to representatives of registered and NHW verified Neighbourhood Watch Schemes or Associations **based on town or Police Safer Neighbourhood Team areas**, and such other representatives as the Forum shall from time to time decide are necessary.

After the break during the official AGM business, the voting representatives will be asked to cast their vote on this significant change.

Craig Cox then opened the floor to questions:

Question 1: Will the minutes be issued?

Answer: All agendas and minutes will be published on the West Mercia neighbourhood Watch website.

Craig Cox thanked the Forum and closed his presentation.

The Forum had a 15 minutes break.

Chairman's Report (extracts from Ray Boyle's notes) presented by Ray Boyle

The objectives for West Mercia Neighbourhood Watch are to work at force level, area association level and scheme level.

- *During the course of the year, I have attended the National Neighbourhood Watch AGM, been to a workshop in Leicester and down to London for a series of workshops, working closely with them to get best practice for our West Mercia area.*
- *Many visits with the Police both at Leek Wootton at Warwick and Hindlip, especially when discussing the Memorandum of Understanding which lays down the requirements of working with the Police and other partnerships.*
- *Lots of discussion about our West Mercia website which is now up and running.*
- *Defining the needs of how we in West Mercia need to align with National Neighbourhood Watch and local Policing areas, rather than previous Council areas used, which gives us a greater representation into towns and local SNT areas.*
- *We, as a committee, are working to keep existing members engaged whilst trying to recruit new schemes. As there were no official records kept by the Police, we had to start from scratch to identify where the schemes are. I have also started a health check on schemes to see if they were still up and running and to get their contact information where it is missing.*
- *It does not stop here. We have some important objectives for the coming year:*
 - *We need to continue to identify our membership;*
 - *Recruit new schemes to register;*
 - *Need to adopt SNT awareness and engagement with other partnership organisations;*
 - *Define a plan for commitment within the community and other committees;*
 - *The present Forum Executive Committee will take on a larger role to roll out the need for greater coverage and to disseminate information by increasing the active members on the Forum committee by vote. We therefore need to identify people and areas where we need coverage; and*

- *There is still a lot we want to do.*
- *I need to thank the following people for their help and support:*
 - *I will start with national Neighbourhood Watch – Amanda Sadler and Lianne Taylor;*
 - *Obviously the help and support from the Forum Committee and especially Craig and Deborah Cox and Ning Kedwards;*
 - *From the Police support at Hindlip, especially Bob Barnett (not present) for his work on the Memorandum of understanding;*
 - *Maria in John Champion’s Office;*
 - *Beverley Bladen, Tracey Ashby and Ruth Martin*
 - *And thank you All.*

Treasurer’s Report reported by Ray Boyle, Chairman of the West Mercia Neighbourhood Watch

Unfortunately Connie Baines was unable to attend the meeting. The opening bank balance was £1,475.38 as at 1st January 2016 and the closing balance as at 31st December 2016 is £1,473.89.

Vote on Constitution Change

All 9 eligible voting members voted to support the change to the Constitution. The motion is carried and will be duly changed. The new constitution will read as follows:

2. Membership of the Forum shall be limited to representatives of registered and NHW verified Neighbourhood Watch Schemes or Associations **based on town or Police Safer Neighbourhood Team areas**, and such other representatives as the Forum shall from time to time decide are necessary.

Election of Officers (Constitution Rule 4.1.)

The following block nomination was proposed by Richard Soames and seconded by Chris Pyemont:

Chairman - Ray Boyle;

Vice Chairman - Paul Leopold;

Treasurer - Connie Baines; and

Secretary - Ning Kedwards.

A vote took place by the members of the West Mercia Neighbourhood Watch Forum and the above Committee members were duly elected.

Any Other Business

Ray invited anyone who is interested in joining the Forum to send him an email to chair@westmercianw.org.uk

Question 1: Where will future meetings be held?

Answer: Local Forum Groups will hold their meetings locally and nominate representatives to attend the Executive meetings. Alternatively, we can adopt other methods like video conferencing to save travelling for representatives.

Meeting was closed at 9:15pm.