



# Denham, Gerrards Cross & Chalfonts Community Board minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Denham, Gerrards Cross & Chalfonts Community Board held on Thursday 27 January 2022 in Virtual meeting via MS Teams., commencing at 6.30 pm and concluding at 8.00 pm.

## **BC Councillors present**

S Chhokar (Chairman), P Bass, M Bracken, I Darby, S Rouse, J Rush and L Smith BEM

## **Town/Parish Councils and other organisations present**

Cllr J Walsh (Denham Parish Council), Pete Dale (Chalfont St Peter), J Hatton (Chalfont St Peter Parish Council), Sharon Williams (Denham Parish Council), D Bray (Chalfont St Giles) K Dickson (Chalfont St Peter Parish Council) and Tony Shinner (Chalfont St Peter Parish)

## **Others in attendance**

A Sultan, C Geen, C Gray, K Farooqi, G Vincent, M Everitt, K Walker, Steve Weston (Chair of Business Forum (Denham Chalfonts and GX Community Board)), P Ling Harper (Trading Standards), A Simone (Trading Standards), J Ellis and E Burroughs (TVP)

## Agenda Item

### **1 Welcome**

Members were welcomed to the meeting by the Chairman.

### **2 Apologies for absence**

There were apologies for absence from Cllr Timothy Butcher, Cllr Carl Jackson and Cllr Jane Chamberlain.

### **3 Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **4 Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held 21 October 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

### **5 Policing presentation and update**

Superintendent Emma Burroughs and Inspector James Ellis, Thames Valley Police

gave a presentation providing an update and overview of the local policing situation.

It was noted the Chiltern, Wycombe and South Bucks policing areas would be amalgamated in June becoming South Buckinghamshire policing area.

Inspector James Ellis introduced himself as Neighbourhood Inspector for the South Bucks area. During the presentation the following information was provided:

- The current policing landscape figures were highlighted. Burglary levels in Gerrards Cross had reduced 14% this was not reflected nationally as reported burglaries had increased. Serious violence and robbery were also on a downward trend. However, there had been a rise in reported harassment, public order and sexual offenses. This could be attributed to society becoming more insular after lockdown and reduced social contact.
- There had been a rise in drug trafficking reports which the police were pleased to receive intelligence on. The lockdowns had allowed the police to detect drug suppliers with prosecutions being reported on social media.
- The NCRS (National Crime Recording Standards) figures were presented and it was explained the police had a duty to record all incidents reported to them. Examples of recorded incidents of harassment included report of a football kicked into a garden and a public disorder incident included low level road rage. There had been a rise in reported hate crimes which reflected a greater intolerance in society. It was noted that crime was not the only aspect of policing roles, there had been an increase in non-crime incidents including mental health concerns, care within the community and fear for welfare.
- The local policing structure was highlighted with the control room taking incoming communications, the majority of incidents passed to the immediate response team for police deployed locally. The CID specialist investigators also formed part of the team who investigated crimes. The neighbourhood team looked at long term approaches and solutions for underlying local issues.
- The local team structure and job roles for Gerrards Cross and Denham were provided. Officers at a geographical level were able to support problem solving in conjunction with superintendent level policing requirements.
- The police were keen to discover what issues affected communities, one tool used was online voting polls arranged by Buckinghamshire Council and the policing issues panel.
- The Community Boards had representation on the policing issues panel which sought to discuss local concerns. The panel was independently chaired and all local concerns were collated in a document which were accessible to the public online. The policing team used this document daily and updated accordingly.
- The police were using social media regularly to inform the public of arrests and prosecutions and a quarterly update was shared to local stakeholders reporting on how community issues had been addressed. There had been an increase in joint working across communities' examples of projects included speed watch, pub watch and neighbourhood watch.

- It was highlighted there was budgetary provision for Community Boards to assist with funding resources for particular community concerns. The neighbourhood priorities were outlined including serious acquisitive crime, anti-social behaviour and speeding. The police were working closely with the Council to address fly tipping as this was linked to anti-social behaviour. On a national level policing was focused on issues including modern slavery and County lines which also fell under the Police and Crime Commissioner's remit.

The Chairman thanked the police for their attendance and presentation. It was requested that that community safety and wellbeing action group collate priorities to highlight local issues from the presentation.

A Member raised the issue of pony and trap issues, along with road safety, it was considered to be complex issue, but one which would need to be looked at further. This could be looked at by the Health and Wellbeing Action Group. It was reported that the police had some positive prosecutions in this area, but a longer term solution to the issue was being investigated.

There were concerns raised regarding 101 call waiting times. The police reported the average call wait time currently was 3 minutes which was an improvement. 101 calls had been raised at police performance meetings and potentially covid isolation rules could have affected staffing levels. The public were encouraged to also use the online reporting tool <https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime>

A Member discussed the origin of fly tipping, and the possibility of it being from out of county. According to local evidence provided, it was both local and non-local residents. Preventative measures were undertaken by the council including campaigns and cameras had been installed in some areas. The Inspector highlighted the police often led retrospective investigations into fly-tipping and the Council's enforcement powers would help prevent fly-tipping.

A Member reported the effective usage of social media in their experience, and asked if cross border crimes were problematic,. Reassurance was given that there was a system of cooperation and information sharing with other areas, particularly as this Community Board area was on the border of several councils. The police could monitor criminals entering Buckinghamshire particularly through the highway network and close access to motorways. There was a net advantage to the wider community to intercept any criminal activity.

A Member voiced their concerns regarding the police response to "trashing", ( the vandalization of local areas), which led to street furniture being removed e.g bus shelters and benches. However the Inspector reported that the isolated locations limited their ability to stop crime ; the best option was to remove certain structures to reduce crime.

The Police were thanked for their informative presentation.

## **6 Presentation from Trading Standards**

Pei Ling Harper and Aldo Simone from Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards gave a presentation on scam awareness. A copy of the presentation was on the website.

An overview of Trading Standards work included scam awareness and prevention, safeguarding vulnerable residents, supporting scam victims and working with other organisations to support fraud investigations.

The key figures are listed below:

- Credit card fraud cost £190bn a year
- Businesses lost £140bn a year
- The cost to the public sector was between £31bn and 48bn a year
- The number of victims supported during the pandemic increased 26%
- Terrorism and organised crime were funded by scams
- You are 8 times more likely to be scammed than burgled.

The latest scams Trading Standards were dealing with included doorstep scams, covid and flu vaccine payment and booking messages, WhatsApp messages, HMRC self-assessment scam emails, fake job offer texts, emails purporting to be from Amazon and fake banking apps.

Measures in place to help safeguarding included:

- TrueCall which was a free service telephone service which blocked nuisance and scam calls helping protect the vulnerable.
- Doorbell cameras were trialled for vulnerable residents, the average loss through scams at the doorstep without the doorbell camera was £18,300. The doorbell camera trial had proved successful with participants reporting a 60% increase in confidence when answering the door. In addition, the cost benefit for every £1 spent £39 was saved.
- Sticker packs were provided to residents to deter unwanted cold callers at the doorstep.

There was a request to raise awareness of Trading Standards with community groups and their social media pages were provided below: [https://twitter.com/Bucks\\_SurreyTS](https://twitter.com/Bucks_SurreyTS) and <https://www.facebook.com/BucksSurreyTS>

Members welcomed the presentation.

## **7 Verbal update on Community Safety.**

Chris Geen, Community Safety Team Leader, Buckinghamshire Council provided an update on the community safety team. The key points are highlighted below:

- The community safety team comprised of one service and two teams- community safety and anti-social behaviour. These teams help to tackle community issues and utilise joined up working with other organisations including police, education and health services.
- The key projects currently focused on by the team included: Community

engagement, crime issues and reduction in criminal activities, supporting victims of crime, modern slavery, domestic abuse, safeguarding vulnerable people and outreach work.

- The Community Board had helped fund a mentoring service for young people who had been involved in crime. 57 children had been supported through this funding. The community safety team had worked with the Community Board action groups to discuss further resourcing for initiatives.
- The team worked with Prevent, the organisation which tackled terrorism in the UK. In addition, there was a Safer Bucks partnership which sought to disrupt serious crime organisations and violence.
- There was a focus on engaging with all communities to discuss how the team could provide support. Recent initiatives included a focus on rural crime, hotel watch which helped prevent exploitation of young women and intervention services for young people.
- The team operated a one system approach and data sharing with partner organisations being key. There would be a Serious Violence Officer appointed who would help co-ordinate data sharing.

The Chairman emphasised the community safety action group would benefit from linking up with the community safety team.

A Member highlighted the importance of joined up working across organisations particularly with the police. Key work had been undertaken on county lines operations, with a range of organisations supporting young people involved. The police were disrupting the drug network and the team were able to use the Council's licensing powers to intervene with the transportation of drugs in taxis. In addition, social services, CAMs and the mentoring service were supporting young people. The Community Safety team worked to join up all these key services and identify vulnerable people.

The issue of vulnerable people placed in unsuitable HMO accommodation was raised by a Member, who encouraged further investigation of this issue. The officer advised this was being actively looked at and they were attempting to tackle this with the Adult Safeguarding and Housing Teams. The Member was invited to discuss this further with the officer.

Members welcomed the presentation.

## **8 Service Director Update**

Matt Everitt, Assistant Director Service Improvement, Buckinghamshire Council provided a verbal update on consultations and preparations for the Queen's platinum jubilee.

A recent consultation by the Local Government Boundary Commission concluded with a reduction in the number of Buckinghamshire Councillors to 98. The boundary ward consultation would close on 4<sup>th</sup> April and residents were encouraged to have their say by accessing either Your Voice Bucks or the Boundary Commission website.

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/your-council/council-and-democracy/election-and-voting/boundary-reviews/>

Residents were asked to comment on new local plan for Bucks, in particular where new developments should be placed and areas greenbelt protection was necessary. There was more information on Your Voice Bucks. <https://yourvoicebucks.citizenspace.com/planning/local-plan-2021/>

Preparations for the Queen's platinum jubilee celebrations were underway and all communities were encouraged to get together on or around the 5<sup>th</sup> June to celebrate. Residents and community groups who were planning on a street party were urged to contact the council as the road closure street fee had been waived until 6<sup>th</sup> May. Further information was available on Buckinghamshire Council website. The Queen's green canopy tree planting initiative was underway with Bucks planting their first trees in December 2021. The full tree planting guidance was on the Council's website. <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/community-and-safety/the-queens-platinum-jubilee/>

## **9 Action Group Minutes**

The action group minutes had been circulated and approved as an accurate record. The Chairman thanked action group attendees.

## **10 Budget Update**

Aniqah Sultan, Community Board Co-ordinator advised there were 6 applications recently approved. The board had spent 97% of its allocated funds, with £5,000 remaining. There was one project currently under review by public health which could use the remaining funds.

Any underspend by the boards would be taken away, the allocation of all funds by February was an ideal situation to ensure projects were started before the end of the financial year.

There had been 4 projects which had requested funding after the deadline however these had been placed on a reserve list to go forward to action groups in the next financial year.

There was a request from the Chairman for projects who had received funding to provide updates and reports which could be circulated with the board and on social media.

A member asked how this community board had compared with other boards on funding. It was advised that half of all community boards had spent their allocated funding and a few had small underspends. There had been 350 local projects funded by the boards across the county.

## **11 Topics for future discussion**

It was requested any topics for future discussion to be emailed to the community

board co-ordinator.

The Chairman highlighted action groups would have a greater scope to look at issues and themes for the community board. They could receive presentations from interested parties directly to feedback to the community group.

**12 Date of Next Meeting**

21 April 2022 6:30pm via MS Teams.

It was noted a 12-month calendar was being developed to incorporate community board and action group meetings.

A correction the 26 October 2022 meeting not 22 October.