



Chesham & Villages Community Board minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Chesham & Villages Community Board held on Thursday 3 December 2020 in Via Video Conference (Teams), commencing at 7.00 pm and concluding at 8.31 pm.

Members present

A Bacon, P Birchley, N Brown, E Culverhouse, P Hudson, P Jones, J MacBean, F Wilson and G Williams

Others in attendance

L Hornby and K Wager

Agenda Item

19 Welcome and Introduction by Chairman

The chairman welcomed everyone to the third meeting of Chesham and Villages Community Board.

The Chairman explained that the Community Board was a link between the Council and the Community to ensure the community had a stronger voice, decide how services were delivered, pursue priorities and work together for the benefit of the local residents. The Board would back up and support local ideas and projects with funding.

It was noted that a number of funding bids had been received, which had been carefully evaluated by the cross-party Funding committee. These recommendations had been included with the agenda.

The Chairman invited PC Roy Evans to give an update from Thames Valley Police.

Roy Evans introduced Richard Vine who was attending also.

High-Visibility patrols were being carried out in an attempt to prevent and detect burglary. Statistics historically showed that certain areas of Chesham would be more likely the targets of burglary. Increased patrols were conducted in and around these areas with "Burglary prevention" letters posted (attached to the minutes). With recent offences reported, he said that the TVP were concentrating on these areas which included central Chesham and the rural locations.

Continued support to the emergency response teams was given by responding to

suspicious incidents resulting in arrests of offenders. Recent examples included a time where PCSO's spotted suspicious males and when challenged the males ran away leaving stolen items behind. Other neighbourhood officers and PCSO's intercepted and arrests were made.

It was reported that PCSO Les Roche responded to a burglary in progress and knowing the area well, she patrolled the likely escape route and found the suspect. An early guilty plea and remand in custody was granted.

TVP took part in operations in the Chilterns. These operations had not only been local police area operations but also cross border with other forces. Operation Groundhog and Operation Pandilla.

In relation to speeding, Roy Evans reported that speed enforcement in Chesham had been conducted, concentrating on roads that had been highlighted as a concerns. Roads included Botley Road, Lye Green Road, Broad Street, Berkhamstead Road, Bellingdon Road, St Marys Way and Chartridge Lane.

Enforcement had been conducted by officers and community support officers with handheld devices. Concern was raised that most of the persons stopped for speeding, were local residents and some even lived on the roads where the enforcement was taking place.

Although speeding was a concern, many complaints had been received about parking and vehicles having no Tax. The DVLA attended Chesham again and with support, many vehicles were seized, clamped and or fined on the spot. The feedback from social media did show that the public were happy with this annual event and it did free up a lot of car park spaces in the process.

Roy Evans reported in respect of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) it was found there was an increase in people reporting neighbours for Covid breaches, noise, persons loitering and arguments. This then caused further demand on the police as the neighbours no longer got on and the team were then having to manage new neighbour disputes. The team spent a lot of time intervening with problem solving methods such as liaising with housing landlords, partner agencies such as environmental health and mediation charities. A recent example was that two neighbours shouted at each other regarding a dog barking. What may seem low level has developed to public order offences, criminal damages and is now a long running dispute with police intervention. This type of behaviour is one of many cases we have to manage.

During October and November, Operation Ghostbuster ran targeting Halloween and firework night. This particular year was very different to the past as most were at home. It was noted that there was a small portion of Chesham residents who went out and set off fireworks in the street. Officers were dispatched to the area and attempted to locate the offenders but they always seemed "one step ahead". What was frustrating was complaints on social media added fuel to the offender's fire. The offenders were clearly reading comments, knew exactly where the police were and where to cause the most anti-social behaviour even going back to areas where

residents were making their opinions known.

As of this day, 3 December, a closure order was gained from Milton Keynes Magistrates court in relation to a property on Alexander Street, Chesham. This property was subject to numerous complaints of drugs, disorder and anti-social behaviour. It was put in place to safeguard the occupant and prevent disorder / crime. It allowed only the occupant and their immediate family to enter the premise.

Roy Evans provided statistics which ran from the date of the previous meeting, 30 September 2020 to the present, as follows:

Residential Burglary	+21%
Commercial Burglary	-60%
Sheds/Garages Burglary	0%
Violence against the person (Total)	+44%
Injury	+4%
Serious Injury	-100%
Drug Offenses	-4% (700% increase detection rate – Some still in investigation process)
Possession Weapons	No change
Theft from Vehicle	-71%

The Chairman thanked Roy Evans and Richard Vine for attending the meeting and giving a very informative update.

It was agreed that if there were any questions arising from the update, these would be forwarded, via email, to Roy Evans for a response. It was also agreed that the burglary prevention letter would be attached to these minutes for information.

20 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from:

Mike Smith (Ashley Green Parish Council)
David Alder
Rachel Winfield (Paradigm Housing)

21 Declarations of Interest

Councillor P Jones declared an interest in the Franklin Field funding application. However, this item was not discussed at this meeting.

Mr C Brown declared an interest in Hawridge & Cholesbury Cricket Club and withdrew from the conversation.

22 Minutes from the Last Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2020 were agreed as a true record.

23 Public Questions

This item was for members of the public to raise questions or matters for the

board's consideration. It was noted that questions should be submitted in advance of the meeting so that responses could be provided at the meeting and gave an opportunity to invite the appropriate people to the meeting, if required.

The Chairman stated that three questions had been received from Vicky Mistry and due to her being unable to attend the meeting, the Chairman read out the questions and provided the following responses:

Question 1:

"Following on from targets set by both Bucks and Chesham councils, how can this Community Board develop carbon reduction initiatives, incorporate carbon reduction in their work, and include local people and organisations ideas/contributions for this?"

Response:

- The Chesham and Villages Community Board took green issues and carbon reduction initiatives very seriously, not just because of the environmental impact but also because they had a direct impact on the health and wellbeing of residents.
- The Board aimed to support initiatives that were not only in line with Buckinghamshire Council's climate strategy but also the reasonable environmental aspirations of its residents. Schemes that encouraged local engagement and behavioural change were welcomed. The aim was to work in partnership with local people and organisations to support the delivery of carbon reduction initiatives and would utilise the Board as a vehicle to promote green campaigns and groups in the local area.
- We would also encourage local environmental groups to connect with Bucks Climate Change Alliance to build a cohesive countywide strategic approach. Several of the Board members were Chesham Town Councillors who had already completed a far-reaching eco audit, pledged comprehensive support for the urban Communi-Tree planting scheme and for the cycling initiatives brought forward by the Zone 9 Cycle Group.
- Chesham was viewed as an exemplar of environmental policy and project work at local level and our Members will continue to build on that reputation. There were Members of the Board who represented the rural community that was already very active in preserving our local Green Belt and AONB in a wide variety of ways working with partner groups such as the Rights Of Way team, the Chiltern Society and the Chilterns Conservation Board.

Question 2:

"The website is clear that the Community Boards are community led, however all members of the board appear to be councillors. How does the Community lead this initiative? I know councillors are also community, but they as named councillors on the Board I assume they represent the council in this forum."

Response:

- Community Boards were the local face of Buckinghamshire Council and Members were the democratically elected representatives of the

- community.
- Opportunities were provided for local people to raise issues and discuss local priorities and solutions and also provide funds to help address them.
 - The meetings were chaired by a local Buckinghamshire Councillor and all local Buckinghamshire Councillors were formal voting members. There was a keenness for the Boards to be inclusive of key partners, local stakeholders and residents.
 - There was often a focus on formal Community Board meetings as they provided an opportunity for Buckinghamshire Councillors and partners to set the direction and priorities of the board and discuss key decisions including funding. However, most of the work and activities of the board took place outside of those meetings through work streams, sub-groups and ad hoc projects. These work streams and sub-groups would largely drive the agenda of the meetings and whilst requests for additional items would be considered it was ultimately up to the Chairman to set the agenda for formal meetings.
 - Members of the public may attend meetings and submit questions in advance, and the meetings were recorded and available on the Council's website and YouTube channel for members of the public to watch.

Question 3:

“How can a member of the public attend the next meeting, be part of the agenda setting and have a voice during the meeting?”

Response:

The Community Board meetings were a public channel to promote key activities and decisions. The core work would take place outside of the main meetings and provide opportunities for residents to attend engagement activities, themed working groups and offer feedback via surveys. This would also help to inform the focus and direction of the Community Board so creative solutions could be sought.

24 Winter Support Planning
a) Lockdown Recovery

The Chairman was pleased to welcome such a large range of local groups and organisations to the meeting as they had been part of the impressive community support in the area throughout the response to the pandemic. Many of the issues that faced the communities prior to the pandemic had been exacerbated and other issues had also emerged. The way that communities had come together, adapted and responded had been very inspiring.

As the country had come out of lockdown and, locally, had moved into Tier 2 restrictions, views were invited on the following:

- The support offered to local communities over the lockdown period.
- The key longer term issues faced by communities within Chesham and Villages over the coming months. To explore ideas and solutions to

address those issues.

- Any gaps in support provision and funding requirements

Areas raised from the discussion would help inform the board's priorities over the winter months and into spring and provide areas of focus for the local Covid recovery plan.

The Chairman welcomed Michael Rowan from Chesham Help for Coronavirus who was attending to provide an update.

Michael Rowan reported that numbers using their service had been low over the past month during the second lockdown. A meeting had recently taken place to discuss how to continue the service particularly as there could be a spike in mid-January following Christmas. Following the first lockdown, residents who had used the service were assisted in sourcing grocery deliveries as well as prescription pick-ups/deliveries. It was noted that the organisation had a healthy number of volunteers, although it was recognised that if volunteers were not called upon that some could be lost through non-use. To that end, volunteers were receiving a weekly update.

The Cabinet member for Communities and Public Health commented that the council had liaised and worked with Chesham Help for Coronavirus during the first lockdown and complimented them on setting up the infrastructure so quickly including putting safeguarding in place.

b) Winter Support

The Chairman welcomed Mr Mark Rosales who would update the Board on the 4x4 response team.

Mark Rosales reported that he was a resident in Chesham and had been asked to support the 4x4 support team. He explained that he had a military background and was used to dealing with natural disasters. He also explained that his role would be to co-ordinate residents and that discussions with community teams and other groups were to take place shortly at which point a stronger update would be provided.

The idea of the 4x4 response was to identify residents with 4x4 vehicles who could respond in an emergency should they be needed during wintry weather.

The Chairman then welcomed Mr David Ouvry of Chilterns Dial-A-Ride to provide the Board with an update.

David Ouvry reported that Chilterns Dial-A-Ride had a fleet of nine vehicles which were driven by both volunteers and paid staff who were all trained to the highest standard and who work from 09:00 to 17:00 every working day. Their main objective was to transport people from their homes to hospital

appointments, shopping etc. safely and they were of enormous value to the community as they had offered a free of charge service during the pandemic. This had cost the service in the region of £17,000 over the last few months although fundraising had continued.

David Ouvry explained Dial-A-Ride was there to step up in times of crisis which he believed they had done this year as help could be guaranteed for those who needed it. It was also believed that any return to something like normal would happen, possibly, in the spring of 2021. David Ouvry also explained that Dial-A-Ride was not an emergency service which differentiated it from emergency services organisations. He also reported that contact had been made with the British Red Cross and discussions were to take place as to how the two organisations could help each other going forward.

The Chairman thanked both Mark Rosales and David Ouvry and stated that:

- Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service (NEPTS) provided non-emergency transport across Buckinghamshire.
- For eligible patients who were unable to use public or other transport due to their medical condition.
- Thames Valley patients' first NEPTS journey must be booked by a healthcare professional or by calling the Patient Eligibility Line, as follows:
 - Patient Eligibility Line 0300 100 0015 (available 07:00-19:00)
 - Health Care Professionals Line 0300 123 3235 (available 27/7, 365 days a year)
- PTS Cancellation Line 0300 790 0143 and was available 24/7, 265 days a year.
- For other routes to community transport, Community Impact Bucks transport line could recommend local transport options for appointments. Contact 01844 348834, 09:00-12:30 or email transport@communityimpactbucks.org.uk

c) Christmas Preparations and support for vulnerable residents during Christmas time

The Chairman welcomed all the groups involved in the Christmas plans and support and looked forward to hearing what plans were in place to support the most vulnerable residents. The Chairman welcomed Andy Garnett who would provide an update on what plans and support was available.

Mr Andy Garnett reported that the Christmas Sleigh would be visiting around 9,000 households in the area and that a schedule had been published informing residents when the Sleigh would be in their particular area. There was a published route in the town centre and some villages had requested the Sleigh visit them too.

Councillor MacBean reported that those people who had been supported by the Big Community Takeaway would continue to support elderly, self-isolating and families on low income across the Christmas period. It was noted that the Big Community Takeaway was working with other charitable foundations with the aim to take the project, which was started in March 2020, to a much larger scheme. Councillor MacBean wished to thank the Rotary Club for acting as 'banker' for the Big Community Takeaway.

Councillor MacBean also reported that the Toy Bank had undertaken some incredible work over the past few months and would start to deliver toys out to in-need residents.

It was also noted, on a positive note, that the pantomime would take place this year due to everyone who was involved isolating in bubbles to ensure that it would happen. It was noted that the pantomime was one of only a handful taking place in the UK this year.

The Chairman thanked all Michael Rowan, Mark Rosales, David Ouvry and Andy Garnett for their updates and noted that there was a wonderful community spirit within the Chesham and villages area.

25 Sub-Groups Updates

1. Village Forum

Councillor Birchley referred to the report within the agenda pack and reported that a subject which had been specifically discussed was fly-tipping and that it was reported the fly-tipping team had been busy at certain points within the area. It was also noted that the council had a good record on stopping fly-tipping. Councillor Birchley urged members to report any fly-tipping they saw via the Fix My Street page on the Council's website.

2. Town Team

Councillor MacBean reported that the update report in the papers was from the Principal Economic Development Officer, Donna Wilkinson, who offered support to the group. Recent efforts had been around supporting local businesses and sharing information about the new support grants available. It was good that

lockdown had ended and the High Street and other independent traders could re-open their doors. Chesham Connect were doing some great work around promoting the Stay Safe Shop Local campaign and alternatives were being investigated to the unattractive TfB barriers in Market Square. Councillor MacBean reported that there would be a small group of live entertainers in Market Square at 11am this Saturday (5 December) and on Saturday the 12 December to entertain visitors as everybody finished off their Christmas shopping.

3. Update on position regarding Parking Matters

A positive and extensive dialogue with residents had been undertaken in the town over the last five years having undertaken Phases 1 and 2 of the Chesham Parking review. In light of the time and budget already focussed on parking and the new concerns brought forward during the Covid pandemic, the Board believed it should now focus on other important issues.

4. Community Speedwatch issues

Councillor MacBean reported that there was an active group in Ley Hill and Latimer and that there were new volunteers in Chartridge and Chesham. Unfortunately, as the area was a Tier 2 Covid area, information had been received of confirmation from Thames Valley Police that all Community Speed Watch activity was currently suspended. The situation would be reviewed if there was a change to the level assigned to Buckinghamshire and at that point updates in respect of local groups on new arrangements would be explored of the likelihood of training dates.

26 Funding Applications Updates and Recommendations

The Chairman reported that the group met on 19 November to review the funding applications that had been received and had made their recommendations which could be found within the summary document within the agenda. The group may have further funding applications it would like to bring forward to discuss at the next meeting to be held on 16 December.

Councillor Culverhouse, Chairman of the Funding Working Group, introduced the applications for consideration.

Voices and Choices: the group went back to the organisation with some questions that had since been answered satisfactorily. The recommendation was to award £3,000.

Agreed

Chiltern Voice: Cllr Culverhouse reported that she had declared an interest in this application due to her assistance in forming the application and was involved in the organisation. Following a short discussion the recommendation was to award £5,200.

Agreed

Restore Hope: the recommendation was to award £2,000.

Agreed

Oasis Education: two bids had been received. However the recommendation was to award the first application in full and not the second application. The recommendation was to award £9,000.

Agreed

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB): it was confirmed that the CAB had reached out to the Oasis organisation and discussions would take place. The recommendation was to award £5,128.

Agreed

Ashley Green Parish Council: the recommendation was to award £1,300.

Agreed

Cricket Club: the recommendation was to award £7,500.

Agreed

It was noted that the Franklin Field and Theatre Shed applications would be discussed at a later meeting.

It was also noted that grants that had been approved would be paid up-front and then followed up for evidence from the organisation that the funds had been used in accordance with their application.

27 Current Live Consultations (to note)

The Board members noted the update which had been included in the agenda. The Chairman reported that the Climate Change Consultation which was listed within the summary, had now been postponed and that an updated version would be provided with these minutes. (Attached)

28 Date of Next Meeting and Proposed Agenda Items

The next meeting would be held on Thursday 11 March 2021 at 7.00pm.

It was hoped to theme meetings in future. A suggested theme for the next meeting was Public Health and a suggestion of Meeting Local People had been received. The Chairman asked for any suggestions members may have to be sent to her.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting and commented that it was an important way of fostering community cohesion.

The Chairman wished all attendees a Happy Christmas.