

DEVON AND CORNWALL POLICE AUTHORITY

Notes of the **RESTORMEL POLICE LIAISON MEETING** held at the Main Hall, Penrice Community College, St Austell on Monday 17 March 2008 at 19.30 hours

Present:

Police Authority

Mr J Rowe Chairman
Mrs K Olver Administrator

Constabulary

Inspector S Gibbons (Sector Inspector St Austell Sector)
Police Constable S Miller (Neighbourhood Beat Manager Penwithick and Roche)

53 people attended the meeting of whom 47 had signed the Attendance Book.

1. Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Administrator and the Officers.

2. Matters of Interest from the Police Authority

The Chairman explained the roles of the Police and the Police Authority and outlined the make-up of the Authority. There will be a recruitment process for new members of the Authority later in the year, anyone interested in applying was asked to contact the Police Authority to register their interest. The Chairman explained that current meetings of the Police Authority were being web-cast.

3. Local Policing Summary 2007-2008

The Chairman explained that every household should have received this document via the Royal Mail post. On questioning, it transpired that 14 present had received the document, six present definitely did not receive the document and 13 present did not remember receiving the document. Five of those present had read the document, of which two felt that the document had been interesting and informative. There was no feedback on the content of the document.

4. Presentation on Neighbourhood Policing

A presentation on Neighbourhood Policing was given by Inspector Gibbons. During the presentation, Inspector Gibbons outlined the PACT process (Partners and Communities Together) and how communities could become involved in neighbourhood policing.

The Chairman thanked Inspector Gibbons for his interesting presentation.

The following matters were raised in response to the presentation:-

- It was noted that regular visits were carried out to all areas, even if there is no reported crime.
- A person present had attended the Lostwithiel PACT meeting and had not found the meeting useful. It was suggested that the local beat officers already knew the main areas of concern in the locality and that the meetings were costly to run. It was noted that the initial meetings would become part of the concern of a variety of local meetings including the local Councils and that PACT should be an agenda item rather than separate meeting in the future.
- The names of the local beat officers were available on the Authority's web-site.
- Residents had found it difficult to contact their local beat officers as they no longer carried mobile telephones. It was noted that the new radio system had not performed as anticipated which had resulted in some teething difficulties.

- Problems continued to be experienced with the 0845 number and it was felt that the PACT process could be affected by the difficulties with communication. A request was made for the local Police station number to be publicised and for the station to be staffed by local people who knew the area well as it was felt that this would improve confidence in the Police.
- Clarification of the other partners in the PACT process was requested. It was noted that the partners involved would change dependant upon the area concerned.

The Chairman commented that the PACT process was about engagement and that it may be necessary to knock on doors in order to engage those who chose not to attend meetings such as the liaison meetings. He noted that the PACT process was currently in its infancy and that it might change over time.

5. Police Report

The Police Report was presented by Inspector Gibbons who reported the following:

- There had been a reduction in crime over the previous twelve months in most areas. Some of the increased crime statistics reported related to summertime events in Newquay.
- Resources had been concentrated in St Austell at weekends when most of the reported crime occurred.
- It was noted that the highest levels of domestic assault recorded in the Devon and Cornwall force area were recorded in Restormel. A team had been set up to investigate this issue and to carry out an education programme with offenders.
- There had been a worrying robbery trend over the previous twelve months and it was felt that alcohol and drugs were contributing to these crimes.
- A focus on drug possession and handling had led to an increased number of reported crimes of this type, however, the pro-active work in this area had increased detection rates.
- Compared to national figures, the area had a very low percentage of crime.

6. General Questions

Officers and Members of the Authority responded to questions from the public of which a summary of the discussions is given below:

- One person present reported criticism of the Police Authority. He cited the increasing costs of the Police Constabulary and the Police Authority, the increased levels of staff, problems with job evaluation and lack of visible policing. Mr Rowe reported that, since his appointment to the Police Authority in 2007, he had seen the tremendous impact the new Chief Constable had made on the functioning of the Constabulary.
- Comment was made that, despite the increased numbers of Police Staff, there did not seem to be an increase in visible policing. It was noted that the role of the Police had changed over time, in response to the change in the type of crime being experienced, including terrorism. It was considered that having a Police Officer stationed in a Police Station in each town was no longer the best way to provide the service.
- The low levels of crime in the area were noted, however, to those experiencing shouting, screaming, vandalism on a regular basis, it did not feel like low level crime. There continued to be problems in Beech Road, which had not been resolved by the Police to date. Inspector Gibbons agreed to discuss this matter with the residents involved.
- The migration of Police Officers and PCSO's during the summer months to busier areas was considered to place other areas at risk. It was noted that a bid had been placed requesting additional support during the coming summer in order to ensure appropriate cover during the summer months in all areas.
- A resident had attended a previous PACT meeting where antisocial behaviour had been a key issue raised. He felt that it was time to move to a zero tolerance society in order to 'reclaim the

streets'. The PCSO's finished at 10.00pm and could not intervene in fights and it was felt that this did not increase public confidence. It was noted that there was an evolving strategy regarding antisocial behaviour, however, there were insufficient resources available to implement a zero tolerance society and the strategy made the best use of the available resources. It was confirmed that the PCSO's worked 8.00 am to 10.00 pm and were there for public reassurance and engagement, their role was not confrontational.

- A blitz on anti-social behaviour, such as that currently being aimed at speeding motorists, was requested. It was noted that there had been a force-wide initiative running since the previous October which was dealing with antisocial behaviour. The tactical aim group worked in the Newquay area during the summer months, but carried out works in other force areas during the remainder of the year.
- The Penwithick PCSO had recently left the area and had not been replaced to date. The St Austell team was noted to have been short staffed for the previous twelve months, however, additional probationary staff had been coming on line following their two-year training period.
- The role of the new custody suites in Newquay, Camborne and Launceston were outlined. It was requested that a pool of officers be kept available to cover when arresting officers were travelling to the custody suites, however, there were insufficient staff available to perform this cover duty.
- The highly visible Police presence in St Austell and Newquay in the early mornings of Saturday and Sunday each week at closing time was noted, including the practice of dispersing large groups into smaller groups in order to reduce disruption and inconvenience to local people.
- Clarification of the roles of Special Officers was requested. A recent recruitment drive had resulted in a number of applications.
- Incidents of binge drinking had been reported to the Police, however, as there had been no disorder, the Police had taken no action. Concern was raised that such incidents were being reported to the Police but that there appeared to be no record of the reports being made. It was noted that all reports made to the Police were logged. The bids made for additional resources were based on the logged reports and, therefore, all present were asked to ensure that they logged all instances of crime in order to support the bids made for additional resources.
- The high level of community involvement and excellent partnership working in St Blazey were felt to have had a positive impact on the level of reported crime in the area. Inspector Gibbons felt that this fitted in well with the PACT process, however, he felt that it would be more difficult to replicate this community involvement in a more urban setting.
- A request was made for letters to be sent to the parents of children and teenagers carrying out antisocial behaviour or underage drinking informing them of their child's actions. It was noted that this was already taking place and that a whole approach to underage possession of alcohol was required, which involved the local retailers.

7. Independent Custody Visiting Report

As no Custody Visitor was present to give a report the Chairman read aloud a summary of the duties of the Custody Visitors.

8. Neighbourhood Watch Schemes

The Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator covering the area around Pulse8 in St Austell commented on the difficulties the users of the night-club caused to local residents. A document giving helpful advice for residents was felt to be helpful in providing strategies for dealing with the on-going problems. Inspector Gibbons agreed to speak with the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator to discuss the matter further.

9. Dates and Venues of Future Meetings

Monday 20th October 2008 at the Village Hall, Fraddon at 19.30 pm.

The meeting finished at 2135 hours.