

RATTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PANEL MEETING
RATTON SCHOOL, PARK AVENUE, EASTBOURNE

3.45 PM 8 JULY 2008

MINUTES

PRESENT:

David Tomlinson – Chairman
C.Councillor Michael Tunwell
Councillor Barbara Goodall
Councillor Colin Belsey
Chief Inspector Dick Coates – Sussex Police
Sgt Keith Wells – Sussex Police
David Linsell – Head Teacher Ratton School
Jan Newens – Vice-Chairman Eastbourne Neighbourhood Watch
Alf Pulfer – Ratton Neighbourhood Watch
Charlotte Schram – Sunrise Senior Living
David Lee – Rodmill Residents
George Williams – Little Ratton Residents' Association
Josh Spriggs - Ratton School
Dan Hester – Ratton School
Chris Da Silva – Ratton School
Charlotte Durbidge – Ratton School
Jill Tomlinson – Minutes

OBSERVERS:

Ian Weeks – Sovereign Harbour – Neighbourhood Panel
Jan Weeks – Sovereign Harbour – Neighbourhood Panel

CHAIRMAN – WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chairman welcomed new members of the Panel, Charlotte Schram on behalf of Sunrise Senior Living, David Lee, Rodmill residents, students from Ratton School, Ian and Jan Weeks, as observers from Sovereign Harbour Neighbourhood Panel. Chief Inspector Dick Coates, Eastbourne Police Commander, guest speaker.

APOLOGIES

Councillor Sandie Howlett
Sandy Boyce-Sharpe – Friends of Hampden Park
John Harmer – DGH
David Selby – Sussex Police
Austin Milson – Sussex Police
Tony McWall – Neighbourhood Watch
Norman Russell – Rodmill Post Office
Harry Stanley – Rodmill Residents

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes circulated and accepted.

MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ISSUES

C.Cllr Tunwell provided a detailed outline on behalf of C.Cllr Lock in response to traffic issues raised at the last meeting. Injury accident records for the past three years may support a case for further traffic calming measures in Park Avenue in 2009 but it was emphasised that this would be unlikely to happen if the affect was to divert problems to adjoining roads.

Further discussion on the need for a footpath in Park Lane and a bus lay-by outside Ratton School in Park Avenue took place but funding will be a key issue before either project could progress. At the request of David Linsell, it was agreed that the proposal for a footpath in Park Lane and a bus lay-by in Park Avenue should remain as standing items with the bus lay-by as the first priority. Sgt Wells suggested that Sussex Police might consider a temporary trial on traffic flow for Park Lane. David Linsell to discuss further with Sussex Police.

C.Cllr.Tunwell advised the meeting that recent speed checks in Willingdon Road did not support a case for reducing the current speed limit of 40mph to 30mph and confirmed that he would be undertaking a site visit to the area in company with C.Cllr.Lock.

The Chairman invited views on safety from student representatives who confirmed that at busy times the roads could be dangerous and difficult to cross but help was usually on hand from parents and staff. It was suggested that the school south playground might serve as a drop-off parking area for parents. David Linsell expressed concern that this could increase traffic flow in Park Lane but would give the idea further consideration.

CRIME TRENDS

Sgt. Wells presented latest crime figures for Ratton and confirmed that criminal activity in Ratton is one of the lowest in Eastbourne. He advised that although incidents of criminal damage had shown a slight increase, this was in keeping with seasonal trends.

Chief Inspector Coates addressed the meeting on his Policing strategy for Eastbourne reinforcing the point that Eastbourne is an extremely safe place to live. He confirmed that Police activity had resulted in a very significant reduction in offences of burglary over the last two years. He emphasised the importance of establishing Neighbourhood Panels in each Ward and the value of communities and Police working together on crime prevention initiatives aimed at reducing crime. He went on to say that he saw the Ratton Neighbourhood Panel model as one that should be adopted elsewhere in Eastbourne.

He invited the views of Panel members, and in particular, younger members present, to say if they felt safe when out in the town. They advised that for the most part they felt safe but it was important to take sensible precautions when out alone at vulnerable times.

ALL DAY ON-STREET PARKING

The Chairman outlined concerns expressed at previous meetings on the problem of 'all day on-street parking' in the areas adjacent to Kings Drive, most notably Framfield Way and Selmeston Road. Cllr Belsey confirmed that some discussion had taken place with Council Officers but in order to address the problem in the long term, it may be necessary to consider

the introduction of additional Traffic Orders. C.Cllr Tunwell outlined the current position on potential Traffic Orders and proposals for enforcement throughout the town in order to control parking problems of this nature.

It was acknowledged that the position had moved from lawful all-day parking to a situation where a significant number of vehicles were parking in such a manner as to cause an unnecessary and at times even dangerous obstruction. Examples were presented where public transport vehicles were unable to use their normal route and the potential difficulty for emergency vehicles gaining access was highlighted. Sgt Wells confirmed that he would consider an initiative aimed at dealing with any immediate short term problems.

On behalf of Rodmill residents, David Lee presented an outline of unreasonable parking incidents that had been identified over many months, raising real concerns for residents and retailers in the area. He produced a letter sent to him by Roger Hyde on behalf of East Sussex County Council in October 2007 advising that he expected to have parking restrictions in the area by the early part of 2008. In the absence of any evidence of action to date, Cllr Belsey agreed to take up the issue directly with Roger Hyde. He will also request that a bus stop sign that has been missing for the last six months outside No.65 Westfield Road, be replaced at the earliest opportunity.

UPDATE REPORTS

The Chairman confirmed that there had been a significant improvement in reducing the amount of litter in Park Avenue following the installation of two additional litter bins. On behalf of the Panel, he complimented David Linsell and Cllr. Barbara Goodall for the action they had taken to address the problem of litter in the area.

Cllr. Belsey outlined details of a submission he had made to East Sussex County Council seeking Village Green Status for the area of Westlords and briefed the meeting on what gaining Village Green Status would mean for residents.

C.Cllr.Tunwell provided details of problems arising from theft of road grates, drain covers and other street furniture which was being stolen for scrap metal. Members were asked to pass on the message that any reports of missing grates etc, or suspicious activity should be reported immediately to Police and/or Council Officers. The Police confirmed that action was already under way to identify offenders.

Alf Pulfer and Jan Newrens requested Panel members to join them in considering how to increase the profile of Neighbourhood Watch and invited ideas on how additional members could become involved in the concept of Neighbourhood Watch.

PROPOSED RATTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PANEL NEWSLETTER

The Chairman confirmed that he had received a number of suggestions that the Panel should consider circulating a newsletter to Ratton residents on a quarterly basis. Examples of a possible format were circulated for consideration and a number of options discussed. It may be possible to attract funds from Sussex Police and/or the Crime Reduction Partnership to support publication of a newsletter. Both Sgt Wells and David Linsell advised that they may be able to assist with printing a suitable format. It was agreed that the Chairman would approach appropriate sources and circulate drafts for consideration by Panel members.

CRIME PREVENTION FUNDING OPTIONS

The Chairman outlined details of a recent Eastbourne Borough Council proposal for a Devolved Ward Budget Pilot Scheme for 2008/09, the effect of which will be to allocate a sum of £10,000 for each Ward to be used in a 'one off spend' on projects that enhance community facilities amongst other things. It was suggested that the Panel may wish to consider making a bid to Ratton Borough Councillors who will be responsible for deciding on what projects should go forward to the Borough Council. It was agreed that the criteria 'for spend' would be circulated with the Minutes for further consideration and any ideas to the Chairman. Cllr.Belsey confirmed that one option was now under active consideration but he and his fellow Borough Councillors would consider any options suggested by Panel members.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Sgt Wells invited comment on a proposal for street representatives to become part of a Neighbourhood Panel. The majority view of the Panel was that the format currently existing was probably about right and any extension of membership would be likely to create an opportunity for individual complaint and talk rather than action. Other options would be considered to address the point raised by Sgt Wells including an Open Meeting with residents.

Jan Newens asked if the work of the Panel was sufficiently widely known across Ratton. The Chairman confirmed that at this stage, knowledge was patchy but it was hoped to improve on the position with the publication of a newsletter.

Chief Inspector Coates outlined to the Panel, his role with a Borough Action Group and reinforced the importance of taking any issues to the Action Group for feedback in due course. He also provided details of a significant crime prevention initiative entitled 'Smartwater' which will be rolled out across schools shortly, in co-operation with Head Teachers.

The meeting closed at 5.25 pm.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9 SEPTEMBER 2008

**3.45 PM – RATTON SCHOOL,
PARK AVENUE ENTRANCE**