Present: David Wilkins (Chairman), Lisa Cousins (Sussex Police), Austin Milson (Sussex Police), David Lee (Rodmill Neighbourhood Watch), Jeannie Sowerby (Ratton Neighbourhood Watch), Alf Pulfer (Neighbourhood Watch Co ordinator), Colin Murdoch (Councillor), Colin Belsey (Councillor), David Linsell (Headteacher Ratton School), Janice Vango (Minutes secretary).

Chairman and Panel wished to welcome Austin back after his leave.

1. Apologies: Fiona Munro, Sandy Boyce-Sharpe, Sandie Howlett, Janice Evans.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting: Agreed.

3. Matters arising:

1. Verge Parking. Ongoing problem. Without yellow lines, Council is powerless to act, unless there is proof of damage. Austin has a busy schedule and several schools to cover, but is aware of the issue. Photographs can be taken and sent to ESCC or Operation Crackdown. On ESCC website under “grass verges”.

Colin B explained there are traffic orders and double yellow lines pending for various areas including Kings Drive and Rodmill. One blue car on Kings Drive still a problem, even when the driveway is clear.

Several Panels around Eastbourne are also concerned, and may get together to raise the issue with Highways and ESCC, to try to lobby for a bye-law to deal with the problem. Will also be discussed at JAG. Licence needed to enforce parking regulations. Alf has the Panel’s support to take forward to the Neighbourhood Panels initiative. Also to publicise in NW newsletter.

?? Trial period in Lewes to address the problem – Colin B to enquire.

Lisa reported that the Meads Panel successfully stopped parking on a traffic island by planting shrubbery.

2. Implementation of parking review.

Colin B explained yellow lines are coming. There is a final consultation with a deadline of 21.10.12. Hopefully implementation in the New Year. The panel wished to thank Colin B for his work over the past 18 months towards achieving this.

3. Appointment of new waste bin contractor.

Colin M has been pursuing, and has received an e-mail promising a bin at the top of Tovey
Close, and at the bus stop in Willingdon Road. Chairman requested one also for the bus stop at the junction of Park Avenue and Kings drive.

4. Second 30 mph “flasher” sign in Willingdon Road.

JAG are looking into this. Highways have no funds for it. ?? Possibly the Police have some road safety funds for it.

The white van that was a problem at this site has now gone, to be replaced by a Morrisons builders’ vehicle, which is parked daily. Police will speak to the driver as this is obstructing the speed sign and the bus layby.

5. Sam and Helen Smith student and parent initiative.

Ongoing. Sam is collecting signatures for the petition, focusing on 20 mph limit outside school. Sam and Helen will liaise with Colin B, who has offered to take them to the next full County Council Meeting at County Hall, to formally present the petition.

6. Wish Hill substation.

Now sorted. Properly fenced off.


David L is still trying to get the bus stop at Saxon Place replaced. Writes letters, phones etc. Will keep trying. Chairman wondered whether there was a regulator of buses, similar to Offwat?

**4. RATTON SCHOOL – Any issues:**

David Linsell wished to thank Alf and Neighbourhood Watch for dealing with a problem of the dumping of a considerable amount of garden waste over garden walls onto the Ratton sports field. This was of concern re:

1. The large quantity of material.
2. Weight and dampness could damage wall.
3. Persons could walk up the pile and over into gardens.
4. Vermin.

A garden contractor was instructed to dump this material by clients unwilling to pay for appropriate disposal. Alf showed photographs of the site. A letter was sent from the school, and the situation has now been sorted.

**5. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH UPDATE**

There are still 115 schemes covering 2703 homes. Recruitment has slowed due to 11 coordinators lost recently, but no schemes lost. Alf now has an assistant to help. One new
scheme in Upper Wish Hill, as a result of police encouragement during a Street Meeting.

Current issues:

1 St Clements Court, Framfield Way, recently at 12.30 midnight, a man tried to enter the windows of a ground floor flat of a 93 year old lady. She pressed her alarm button, but the intruder disappeared. A few minutes later Shirley Dukar who works at the Rodmill pub saw a man still on the premises. When challenged he staggered off, ? drunk. Described as all in black, 30-40, short fair hair.

2 Bicycle attached to a lamp post for 5 weeks. Dealt with by Austin.

3 Cold Calling Zones. Very long process to achieve. Alf hopes Westwood Avenue will be added soon. Colin B stated possibly next year. Old Ratton has just got their No Cold Calling Zone status, but apparently no signs yet. Colin B to chase.

4 Unfortunately a resident of Beverington Close had a cold caller (known as RC Gardening) who made a terrible job of installing a patio, and although promised a refund, nothing has been forthcoming. Has been reported to Trading Standards.

6. POLICE REPORT AND CRIME FIGURES.

Sheet of figures provided. In general comparatively few, with the exception of the hospital. 223 calls to the hospital in August.

Discussion followed about calls from the hospital to the Police. Austin explained many come from the psychiatric wards, damage to parked cars etc. The police attend regular meetings, but it is difficult to reduce the calls. There is only one security guard on duty at a time. There is a security response vehicle, but this has to cover the Conquest, the Irvine Unit (Bexhill) and the DGH.

7. STREET MEETINGS UPDATE.

Several have had to be cancelled recently due to short staffing, and the recent murder at the Hydney. Austin will sort out a new list soon. He has 20 streets left to do.

Discussion followed about whether Street Meetings are a good idea. Austin explained turnout varies (Alf’s road had 86 people). Panel agreed that they are valuable opportunities for the public to talk, express concerns, and make contact.

David Linsell reported that there is a Neighbourhood Schools Officer, (Lee Wilshire) allocated to Ratton School, and this system works very well. Austin is kept informed of any issues.

8. REPORT FROM DISTRICT PANEL MEETING.

Chairman explained that the concept has been revived. These meetings to continue on a quarterly basis, and the minutes to be forwarded to the Panel members. Demographics vary within each Panel in the town, giving rise to differing problems throughout the Borough.
9. RATTON ISSUES.

Jeanie was approached regarding a bus shelter. This was passed to the Hampden Park Conservatives, and is now in situ. Jeanie has been thanked.

Requests for No Cold Calling Zones. Jeanie informs people it does take time to get these sorted. She also passes on details of Neighbourhood Watch to residents.

10 RODMILL ISSUES.

Real Time Bus Information Screens discussed. Haven’t been working for months. ESCC originally installed these with parking revenue, and they are going to pump more money into it. David Lee has been informed that the problem is a chip in the system. Colin B felt it could be that Stagecoach software is not compatible with Eastbourne software. Colin B will e-mail Highways again.

David Lee has had lots of complaints about overhanging vegetation and rubbish, at the vacant plot between 18-34 Rangemore Drive, and in the twitten near Coppice Court. David L has written letters about this.

Cold Calling is still occurring in Westfield/Selmeston roads, notably on 10.9.12 with a group of men, (one white, several of varying ethnic background). David L has informed Trading Standards. Discussion followed. The callers always claim not to know about the Cold Calling Zone, or take no notice of the signs. They state they will still call unless the property has a “No Cold Callers” sign in the window. Colin M will send an example of a window notice to Alf, who will get something printed in the NW newsletter and publicise this.

David L wondered if the NW newsletter could be 3 times a year not 4? This might help with funding issues, and workload. Alf will discuss the idea with his colleagues at the next committee meeting.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

- Colin M received a letter from a resident in Upper Kings Drive regarding speeding, traffic, and parking issues. Parking is taking place on both sides of the road, and there have been 2 near accidents. The resident feels there is an accident waiting to happen here. Lisa advised that they make use of Operation Crackdown. Austin and Lisa will try to show a presence at the worst times. Austin has already requested permission for a speed check at this site.

- Colin M reported that the Councillors/JAG have purchased a speed camera which is available. This can be used by “responsible bodies” once they have been trained. Although tickets can’t be issued, registration numbers can be taken and reported to Operation Crackdown. It can be a deterrent, and helps support the
Police. Colin B, Colin M, and Alf to seek training. David Linsell also keen to pursue, it could be a valuable tool for the school and the students.

- Colin M discovered a Rave took place at Butts Brow on Saturday 15.9.12. Colin rang Sussex Police and was told police were aware and they had no concerns. However when Colin M rang the Borough Council to find out who had authorised this event, it appeared the council were not informed. The local farmer was not informed of the event, and was concerned regarding fire risks, and danger to livestock. Crowds of people, and bonfires still in progress at 9-10 am on 16.9.12. Rubbish and health hazards (no toilet facilities) still on site on 17.9.12.

It is possible the police were only aware because of calls from the public, rather than being pre-warned of the event. The police and council will be investigating this incident, and hopefully any future events can be communicated to all parties. (The council looks after this land on behalf of the South Downs National Park).

1 Colin B stated there was a traffic survey in progress at the Rodmill Drive junction at the top of Rodmill hill. He was not informed of this, and is a bit concerned as the lighting sequence is organised to allow pedestrians to cross safely.

2 There is an issue of a neglected bungalow with overgrown garden in old Ratton Village. The owner is thought to be in a nursing home and the property empty. There is a son who is responsible for upkeep who needs to be contacted.

3 Chairman wondered if the Community Payback Team could be tasked with tidying up the front of the hospital. Thought to be worth a try, especially the neglected flower bed at the pedestrian entrance near the bus stop, which regularly fills with litter. Chair will write a letter to the Hospital Chief Executive, Darren Grayson. It was suggested he also mention the smoking and cigarette ends in the grounds.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING** THURSDAY 22ND NOVEMBER 4PM.