

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SAFETY SUB-COMMITTEE
MONDAY 12 APRIL 2021 AT 1930 HOURS

Present : Councillors A Dodwell
 R Berry
 T Morris (Chair)
 V Harvey
 J Silverstone
 F Kharawala
 A Gray

Also in attendance: M Saccoccio, (Town Clerk)
 S Sandiford, (Deputy Town Clerk)
 M Jahn, (Committee Officer)
 Inspector C Gurr (Bedfordshire Police)
 Sergeant A Ison (Bedfordshire Police)
 S Swain, Groundwork
 Mr P Deeley (Streetwatch)
 Cllr G Perham

Members of the Public: 1

A one-minute silence was observed out of respect following the death of HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh on Friday 9 April, 2021.

64/CS APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R Goodchild.

65/CS DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Dodwell declared an interest as a member of the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel.

No disclosable pecuniary interests were declared and no dispensations were requested.

66/CS QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

A member of the public spoke regarding the positioning of the new digital CCTV cameras in Linslade Recreation Ground in respect of vandalism at the Community Garden. At present clear views of the garden were obstructed by the trees and consideration should be given to moving the pole with the camera on further into the park to solve this. Vandalism and drug taking had occurred in this area in the past and it was hoped the new CCTV would deter these actions and assist the police with clearer images.

The Chair of the Sub-Committee confirmed this feedback would be passed on to the relevant officers at Central Bedfordshire Council.

67/CS MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

(a) The Sub-Committee received the draft minutes of the Community Safety Sub-Committee meeting held on 11 January 2021.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Community Safety Sub-Committee meeting held on 11 January 2021 be approved as a correct record, to be signed at a later date when safe to do so.

(b) No updates were needed on the minutes of the previous meeting.

68/CS YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES

By invitation, Stephen Swain of Groundwork gave an update on young people's activities which had been supported by Town Council funding. The Fusion Youth Group were working to capacity under the present COVID restrictions, with up to 12 young people and 3 staff attending each session. The group would run with two sessions per month, continuing into August 2021 so the full 12 sessions could be provided. It was hoped to utilise both inside and outside areas of the Youth Club, offering sport activities outside which enabled an increase in attendance to 20-25 participants. Several young people who had been causing anti-social behaviour in and around the town had been targeted by Groundwork to attend the Youth Club and it was hoped they would continue to do so.

A question was raised as to how the COVID lockdown had affected young people. It was felt young people had felt frustrated by not being able to socialise with friends which sometimes resulted in youth workers being subject to the backlash from these emotions. The issues suffered included isolation which caused mental health problems and food poverty.

Members thanked Stephen Swain for his report and looked forward to further updates at future meetings.

RESOLVED to note the information.

69/CS CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN

The Sub-Committee received and considered correspondence received from Central Bedfordshire Council regarding the creation of a Community Safety Plan and discussed nominations for one or two councillors to participate in the process. Three Councillors showed an interest in participating in the creation of this plan with Central Bedfordshire Council and it was agreed to put forward all three names.

RESOLVED that Councillors Harvey, Goodchild and Morris volunteered to liaise with Central Bedfordshire Council to participate in the creation of a Community Safety Plan.

70/CS CCTV

The Sub-Committee received reports of recorded CCTV incidents in Leighton

Buzzard during December 2020, January and February 2021. These reports were publicly available and published monthly on the Central Bedfordshire Council website.

A question was asked whether the Police had seen these reports to add on their comments in the final column showing arrests made as a consequence of the information provided by the CCTV operators.

RESOLVED to note the reports.

71/CS OPERATION DODFORD

(a) The Sub-Committee had received a written report regarding crime and anti-social behaviour in advance of the meeting and a verbal summary was given regarding activity undertaken in respect of Operation Dodford and incidents of note from January to March 2021. The number of anti-social behaviour reports had increased but it was confirmed any COVID related reports would be included in this category.

A question was raised regarding the increase in use of electric scooters and quad bikes where the law was not being adhered to. Inspector Gurr confirmed that the police were aware of this problem and more dedicated patrols would be organised.

Another question was asked regarding the increase in stalking and harassment and violence without injury. It was confirmed the increase in stalking and harassment tended to be over social media and Facebook during the pandemic and the violence without injury was the increase in domestic abuse during lockdown. A lot of the increase in youth crimes resulted from boredom and frustration during lockdown and parents were informed of persistent anti-social behaviour to encourage them to be accountable for their children's behaviour.

RESOLVED to note the information.

(b) The Sub-Committee received the draft Operation Dodford agreement for the year commencing 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. from Bedfordshire Police.

It was confirmed the Operation Dodford budget had not been fully spent over the past years but the underspend had been used to provide other schemes in respect of community safety and antisocial behaviour, such as the purchase of child-friendly parking signs for schools and activities for young people including boxercise and activities provided by Groundwork and TACTIC. Any underspend from 2020-21 had been agreed by Policy & Finance Committee at its meeting held 29 March 2021 to be used towards the CCTV digital upgrade programme.

It was suggested the Chief Constable of Bedfordshire Police be invited to attend a meeting to discuss Operation Dodford and how the Town Council could benefit as police numbers were increasing.

RECOMMENDED to Council approval of the Operation Dodford framework agreement for the year commencing 1 April 2021.

72/CS WATCH SCHEMES UPDATES

Phil Deeley, Street Watch, informed members that the group had been back working on the streets for the past 4 months and patrols had extended into some of the outlying estates. The one problem encountered was a shortage of volunteers especially as some were shielding. A Street Watch Community Day could be organised to try and recruit volunteers and the Town Council could promote the Street Watch Schemes on their website and social media.

A Facebook page had been set up to keep residents updated and provide information from the Community Team. It was confirmed the public and market stall holders found it reassuring when patrols were in the High Street and surrounding areas.

RESOLVED to note the information.

73/CS EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

There was no requirement to exclude the public.

The meeting closed at 20.29 hours.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 APRIL 2021.

Chair

12 JULY 2021