

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SAFETY SUB-COMMITTEE
MONDAY 11 JULY 2021 AT 1930 HOURS

Present: Councillors D Bowater
V Harvey
J Silverstone
R Goodchild
R Berry
A Dodwell
S Owen (substituting for A Gray)
C Palmer (substituting for R Yates)
P Carberry
T Morris

Also in attendance: M Saccoccio (Town Clerk)
M Jahn, (Committee Officer)
Inspector G Twyford (Beds Police)
PCSO E Weedon (Beds Police)
PC 5747 Danielle Taylor (Beds Police)
Stephen Swain, Groundworks (remotely)

Members of the Public: 3

107/CS APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor A Gray substituted by Councillor S Owen and Councillor R Yates substituted by Councillor C Palmer.

108/CS APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR 2022-2023

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor J Silverstone be appointed Chair of the Sub-Committee for 2022-2023. There were no further nominations.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor J Silverstone, Chair of the Community Safety Sub-Committee, for the municipal year 2022-2023.

109/CS APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR 2022-2023

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor D Bowater be appointed Vice Chair of the Sub-Committee for 2022-2023. There were no further nominations.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor D Bowater, Vice Chair of the Community Safety Sub-Committee, for the municipal year 2022-2023.

110/CS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests, including the nature of those interests, which they had in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

Councillor C Palmer declared a personal interest as a member of Leighton Linlade in Bloom and Councillor Carberry, as a serving firefighter, shared his working environment with Bedfordshire Police.

111/CS QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Two members of the public spoke to raise concerns regarding the increased antisocial behaviour and vandalism in the town especially over the last few weeks and the difficulty when trying to report this to the police on 101.

The first member of the public faced daily abuse, harassment and damage to property as a volunteer in a charity shop and the second member of the public, also a volunteer, spoke of the damage caused to the garden in Linlade Recreation Ground where plants were trampled, and equipment broken on numerous occasions. A request for an adjustment to the already installed CCTV cameras was made so the garden could be monitored as this was not covered at present.

The Town Clerk suggested an audit could be carried out of all community gardens to offer up recommendations/options for a solution.

The members of the public were thanked for attending the meeting and speaking about the problems they encountered, and it was hoped solutions could be found.

112/CS MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

(a) The Sub-Committee received the draft minutes of the Community Safety Sub-Committee meeting held on 6 April 2022.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Community Safety Sub-Committee meeting held on 6 April 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed accordingly.

(b) Updates from the previous minutes were given.

Agenda item 102/CS Operation Dodford it was confirmed there were no plans to give PCSOs additional powers at the present time.

Concerns were raised regarding the increase in antisocial behaviour issues in the town and the Sub-Committee requested that more proactive actions were taken to improve this and Councillors kept informed of the outcomes.

RESOLVED

- (a) That this Sub-Committee views the current level of vandalism, antisocial behaviour, threats and intimidation in Leighton Buzzard as unacceptable.
- (b) That the Sub-Committee instructs the Town Clerk to request the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner urgently to
- (i) Effect an immediate strengthened Police presence in the town
 - (ii) Provide local Police Commanders with an increase in uniformed Police Officers, up to the previously promised level of ten permanently assigned officers
 - (iii) Pursue a strategy of proper public accountability for juvenile offenders, to reassure the public and local businesses that Leighton Buzzard is adequately policed.

Agenda item 103/CS Community Safety Budget – Stephen Swain from Groundworks spoke to update members on the Youth Club and to discuss whether the club which ran 2 evenings a month from the Vandyke Road site could be amended with one night at that site and another in the town centre or Linslade area. Members agreed the option of using another site or building in Linslade would need more exploration but thought it was an idea which could be considered. Stephen Swain and officers could liaise with the police regarding location, what evenings would be available and how this would work.

Stephen Swain had encountered problems at the youth club from a few young people who caused criminal damage to his car and assault to him personally which resulted in the closure of the club whilst the investigation was happening.

The Sub-Committee were concerned that this behaviour would escalate and cause serious injury as this seemed to be a growing problem and effective action was needed involving children's social care, the parents/carers and the police.

Following further discussion, members agreed a recommendation should be made to the Cultural & Economic Committee for a Summit Call between the relevant organisations to find ways of working together to clamp down on this behaviour.

RECOMMENDATION to Cultural & Economic Services Committee that a Summit Call between Social Services, Bedfordshire Police, TACTIC and Groundworks be scheduled to explore ways to curtail this behaviour.

Agenda item 105/CS "Watch" Scheme Updates – it was confirmed that the Facebook Shop Watch Group was still current and it was hoped the group would be able to restart soon.

113/CS OPERATION DODFORD

The Sub-Committee received a report on Operation Dodford activity, reported crimes and antisocial behaviour during the period April – June 2022.

Concerns were voiced regarding the increase in antisocial behaviour in the town and questioned whether police numbers were sufficient to provide adequate coverage for the town. Inspector Twyford confirmed a recruitment campaign was underway to address this situation, but the difficulties faced by Beds Police in arresting and detaining juveniles in custody remained challenging. The effectiveness of the non-emergency number 101 was also questioned as the wait times when using this number were unrealistic. The very high demand on this number was causing increased problems and frustration when trying to report incidents. Inspector Twyford confirmed he would take back all comments and frustrations discussed to Andrew Selous, the Chief Constable and Police Crime Commissioner.

RESOLVED to note the report.

114/CS CCTV & DEPLOYABLE CAMERAS

The Sub-Committee received reports of recorded CCTV incidents in Leighton Buzzard for March – May 2022. These reports were publicly available and published monthly on the Central Bedfordshire Council website.

The Sub-Committee agreed the new CCTV cameras would provide good quality images but concerns were raised on where they were positioned. It was felt that recent vandalism in the parks could be addressed if cameras were sited to overlook the areas which had been targeted. It was suggested that once the cameras had been upgraded by Central Bedfordshire Council the feasibility of the Town Council investing in some alternative back-up redeployable cameras could be considered.

RESOLVED to note the CCTV reports and that the Town Clerk proactively engage with the relevant team to explore potential of alternative back-up cameras in appropriate locations.

115/CS “WATCH” SCHEMES UPDATE

Street Watch patrols regularly take place on a Tuesday and Saturday and Speed Watch two or three times a month. Pub Watch runs a Facebook Group at present, but it was hoped it would reform shortly.

116/CS EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

There were no matters requiring exclusion of the public.

The meeting closed at 2151 hours.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 JULY 2022.

Chair

17 OCTOBER 2022