

Thursday, 12th April, 2018, 7.30 – 9.30 pm

The Maxwell Room, The Oakwood Centre, Headley Road, Woodley, RG5 4JZ

Present: Mary Bather (Chair), Mike Evans (Vice-Chair), Cllr John Armstrong (Earley Town Council - ETC), Graham (member of public), Ian (resident), Kate (resident), Bill (resident), Cllr Alison Swaddle (ETC & Wokingham Borough Council - WBC), Michael (resident), Dave Provins (Friends of Woodley Park), Coling Lawley (resident), Sgt Mark Smith (Thames Valley Police - TVP), Karen Collins (TVP)

Apologies received from: Cllr Keith Baker (Woodley Town Council), Cllr Richard Dolinski (WTC), Al Lloyd (TVP), Zofia Frasiniski, Jacques Lherbier (Town Centre Manager)

1. **Welcome, outline of structure of the meeting, introductions and apologies** - Mary welcomed everyone to the AGM and asked them to sign the attendance register. She also asked everyone to complete *Have your say!* forms by ticking the three main community issues they are most concerned about and if anyone had specific concerns regarding policing issues, Sgt Mark Smith would be available to discuss them at the end of the meeting. Mary advised the minutes would be recorded and no one expressed an objection.
2. **Minutes of the previous meeting – 29.01.18 / matters arising on the agenda** – these were agreed. Matters arising not on the agenda included:
 - **Update on cycling on the pavement** – The Acer Chair & Vice Chair were not present to confirm whether they had sent any messages out regarding this issue.
 - **Community Forum Bank Account** – Mary confirmed she has contacted the Public Protection Fund regarding a grant and she is waiting for the forms to be sent through. The forum will have complied with their requirements to have a bank account, a constitution and hold an AGM by the time the forms arrive. The forum will apply for some funding for dissemination of information and leaflets, etc.
 - **Computer fraud / telephone scams** – Messages have been sent out regarding the issue in newsletters and two Burglary & Fraud Conferences have been set up in partnership with other agencies. The first conference took place on Tuesday 10th April in Earley and the second one will take place on Saturday 12th May at the Oakwood Community Centre from 10:30am-1:00pm. Mike said he and Mary had attended the conference in Earley and they felt it was very useful, productive and informative. He would recommend everyone attend the one in May.
 - **Cycling through Woodley Precinct** – Jacques sent his apology for this evening, but has been in touch with Mary via email to advise he feels there is still quite a problem. It was agreed that a count would be performed to determine the scale of the issue, but volunteers are needed to perform this. Mary will contact Jacques after the meeting and hopes that between them they can find some volunteers to perform a count over 2-3 days to see how many people are cycling and then further action can be taken. Sgt Mark Smith advised that the PCSOs have been patrolling the precinct and a couple of incidents were dealt with, but no big scale problem has been reported to the police.
 - **Burglary** – Mary advised crime prevention advice regarding burglaries was put into the newsletter and also reminders about contacting the police if evidence of drug use is found in the area. The EASI litter pickers are regularly reminded by their organiser to report evidence of drug use.
 - **Town Centre Management Initiative** – Mary has been invited to the next TCMI meeting which is on 25 April.
 - **Butts Hill Road Bridge** – Cllr Baker was going to continue to investigate safer ways to cross the railway, but was not in attendance to provide an update. It was believed that an extension to the roadworks has now been granted up to September/October. In theory, the works are expected to start this week on the 14 April.

ACTIONS:

1. Mary to Summarise the Burglary & Fraud conference in the Woodley Herald and ask ACER to put out a summary of the Earley event for members of the public who were unable to attend.
2. Mary to contact Jacques regarding sourcing volunteers.

3. Cllr Baker to provide an update on the Butts Hill Road Bridge.

- 3. Chair's Report** – Mary advised the community forum first met in June 2017 and the aim was to revive the Woodley Neighbourhood Group and at the same time bring in the Whitegates ward of Earley as the Woodley Neighbourhood Policing team now cover this area. The aim of the group is to provide a forum where neighbourhood groups can work together with the police to identify local policing priorities, discuss how these may be addressed, identify the groups who are most likely to be able to address the issues and agree some actions. The forum has met 4 times, this meeting being the 5th and the public have been invited to all the meetings. Priorities identified have included cycle theft, anti-social behaviour, unauthorised encampment, speeding, parking and computer fraud / telephone scams. The forum has helped organise a Burglary and Fraud Conference at the Oakwood Centre in response to the current priority which is increasing public awareness of the dangers of computer fraud, telephone scams and giving out too much information under the idea that prevention is better than having to report a fraud. The forum has also had some success with the prevention of unauthorised encampments as there are now more precautions in the Woodley car parks and the Bulmershe field. Once the season starts, the forum will have more idea as to how successful this has been. Cycle theft has also reduced, but this may be subject to seasonal fluctuations. Since starting, the forum has opened a bank account and now has a draft constitution so it can start applying for funding. The forum will be able to apply to Earley Town Council, Woodley Town Council and the Public Protection Fund to help the group get more information out via leaflets aimed at vulnerable groups such as the elderly living on their own. Next steps for the coming year include considering how to hold Have your Say events to engage with and get a feeling about how the public feels and the issues that are concerning them and their community. The forum also needs to think about a website and email contacts for the group, which it does not have at the moment and funding will need to be obtained for this.
- 4. Vice-Chair's Report** – Mike thanked everyone for coming and confirmed that a community bank account has been opened with the Natwest Bank who are providing the service free of bank charges. Mike deposited a small amount to open the account and Acer kindly donated a £25.00 contribution a few weeks ago. Up to now Mary and Mike have been running the forum at their own expense. Now the account is up and running, the forum can begin to apply for grants. The application for the community grant needs to be in by the end of November.
- 5. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair** – Alison Swaddle nominated Mary for Chair and Mary nominated Mike for Vice Chair. The nominations were seconded by Dave. They were both elected by unanimous agreement. Mary advised she was happy to hold the Chair position for this year, but it would be good if someone else took it on next year as she feels it is important to have some turnover.
- 6. Adoption of the constitution** – Mary advised she needs to amend the name under 2.1 Eligibility from Woodley Town Centre Management to Woodley Town Centre Management Initiative. The constitution has been based on one from a local NAG and Mary asked if anyone had any comments on it. Mary asked the group for a show of hands from everyone who was happy with the wording of the constitution. Alison suggested putting the police at the top of the list under 2.1 Eligibility. Mark advised he was quite happy for the police to be lower on the list to reflect the fact the police are no more important than anyone else on the list. It has been a little bit of a misconception that Community forums are only for police matters, they are actually intended to bring together the police, members of the public, partner agencies and community groups to work together to solve all types of issues in the community. It was suggested that the paragraph under 2.1 Eligibility be modified or extended to state that the list is in no particular order. Mary advised she would look at how to phrase this. John asked whether the name of the group should include the word NAG. Mike advised that at their first meeting, the attendees felt that the word NAG had negative connotations and community forum was a more appropriate name for the group. Mike also confirmed it would be difficult to amend the name now as the bank account has been opened as the Woodley and North Earley Community Forum. Mary advised that they have had to explain to some people that a community forum is essentially the same as a NAG. Mary advised that she did not have anyone from Woodley Town Council at the meeting and technically if they were voting to adopt the constitution, she should have a representative present. Mike

suggested that the voting rules would only apply after the constitution was voted in. Mary said that Keith and Richard had not come back to her regarding the constitution, so she has assumed they are happy with it. Alison said Keith and Richard had asked her to pass their apologies and she believed they were happy with the constitution. Mary asked the group if they were happy to vote the Constitution in. There were no objections.

ACTIONS: Mary to look at how to phrase the paragraph under 2.1 Eligibility to state that the list of representatives in is no particular order of importance.

7. Update from Neighbourhood Policing Team on recent reported criminal activity in the local area.

Changes to the team – Mark advised that PC Jon Hare is on attachment as an acting Sergeant and PC Chris Harrison from Twyford is filling in as the neighbourhood supervisor. This leaves the team one PC short and they still have 7 PCSOs across Woodley and Twyford.

Theft from Vehicles – this is currently is the main crime concern, in particular, theft of tools from transit vans and work vans. This has most likely been impacted by the number of new builds and estates in the area which has increased the number of tradesman who may be staying in local hotels. Vans are being broken into and tools taken. The team are targeting this issue and Mark has been organising an operation in response to the increase.

Burglaries - There was a recent spike in burglaries with a particular MO (modus operandi) of people getting into houses. The neighbourhood teams performed increased patrols and following intelligence lead activities arrests were made and there have been no reported burglaries of this type for the past 6 weeks.

Drug and Alcohol abuse - Another operation the team are running is about tackling drug and alcohol abuse with local youths. This operation will continue as drug use is escalating countrywide and one drug of choice which is becoming more popular is Zanex, a very strong tranquiliser. Part of the operation is ongoing test purchasing operations across the LPA and unfortunately, one premise in North Earley was one of two which failed the test purchase and sold alcohol to an underage person. They have been dealt with robustly.

8. Local policing priorities – Review of progress / agree actions with respect to:

- **Antisocial behaviour** – The ASB figures for Woodley show a decrease of 4% over the past 12 months, Earley have decreased by 5% and Twyford by 14%. In contrast, Wokingham Town, the Fields (Arborfield, Shinfield and Swallowfield) and Winnersh which border the area) have all increased. ASB generally increases as the summers months approach.
- **Speeding** - Sgt Tim Woolford has now been tasked with getting Community Speedwatch up and running. The volunteers have been interviewed and checked. Cllr Baker was due to provide an update on the acquisition of the speed monitoring equipment by Woodley Town Council. Alison advised she was under the impression that the equipment had been purchased and also indicated that there was no reason why it could not be shared across the area. Mark explained that Community Speedwatch uses speed measuring equipment, but it is not used for prosecution. Volunteers take down the registration, make, model and colour of vehicles exceeding the speed limit and forward this information to police vetted volunteers who carry out Police National Computer (PNC) checks to ascertain the registered keepers and send them a warning letter. The letter advises that their vehicle was seen speeding on a particular road on a particular date and time. If a vehicle appears multiple times, the police can take further action. Community Speedwatch monitoring can also help determine if there is a genuine speeding issue on a particular road. Alison advised she would check with WBC as to whether speed monitoring had been undertaken on Hurricane Way and Coppice Road.
Mark advised his team has put on several operations to monitor drivers using mobile phones and the wearing of seat belts.
- **Computer fraud / telephone scamming** – Mark advised there were 57 attendees at the Earley Burglary Conference, 12 of whom were councillors. The event was very well received and informative. The next event will be held on 12 May from 10:30am-1:00pm at the Oakwood Centre. Mary expressed concern that the event is currently booked in the Miles suite and will check whether a larger room can be booked for the event. John provided some feedback from the event and

advised he was disappointed there was no presentation about Thames Valley Alert or Neighbourhood Watch.

Mark suggested keeping the current priorities and adding Thames Valley Alert and asked Karen to provide some figures for the next meeting. Mary suggested promoting Thames Valley Alert in the Woodley Herald. Alison suggested putting it in the Woodley Carnival programme.

- **ACTION:**

1. Alison to check with WBC whether speed monitoring has been undertaken on Hurricane Way and Coppice Road.
2. Mary to check whether a larger room can be booked at the Oakwood Centre for the Burglary and Fraud conference in May.
3. Karen to pass feedback regarding the lack of TV Alert and Neighbourhood Watch presentations at the Burglary Conference to the neighbourhood team and to provide figures regarding TV Alert membership in the area for the next meeting.
4. Mary and Mike to investigate ways to get the message out to residents to sign up to TV Alerts.

9. AOB

- Mary advised the group needs to be prepared for the new data protection (GDPR) regulations taking effect on 26th May.
- Civil Parking Enforcement - the group discussed issues around parking in the area, including parking on verges and pavements. A lot of residents have installed stones to deter parking on their verges.

10. The meeting closed at 9:03pm. Date and venue of next meeting - 13th June at the Oakwood Centre.