

Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> November, 7.30 – 9.00 pm

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

Chair: Mary Bather

### MINUTES

1. **Present:** Mary Bather (Chair), PC Harrison (TV Police), PS Smith (TV Police), Jenny Lissaman (ACER), Michelle Stone (ACER), Sion Williams (ACER), Cllr Andy Croy WBC), Cllr Keith Baker (WTC/WBC), Cllr Richard Dolinski (WTC/WBC), Cllr John Armstrong (ETC), Jacques L'Herbier (WTCMI), Rvd Philip Hobday (St Peters Church), Tony Lomax (Woodley and Earley Lions), David Provins (Friends of Woodford Park), J Layhe (resident), R Heather (resident), M Millard (resident), Z Frasiniski, Brenda Cutler (resident), J Greenaway (resident), Coling Lawley (resident), S Mortfew (resident), I Hills (resident)

**Apologies:** Inspector Al Lloyd, Mike Evans, Tom Barker, Sheena Matthews, Shelagh Flowers

2. **Minutes of the previous meeting – 11.09.17** – matters arising not on the agenda.
  - J Greenaway asked for more details of the 'obstruction' referred to in Culver Lane. It was agreed that this was the parking of cars on the road and the road / pavement which make the road very narrow for larger vehicles / buses. There was some discussion regarding WBC introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement in October 2017 and whether or not CPE could be used to prevent parking on the pavement. The general view amongst those present was that CPE could only be used when there were double yellow lines in place but it was agreed that more clarity was needed in this area. PS Smith did suggest that the forum make representation to the council with regard to specific parking problems for them to act under CPE as this was more likely to carry weight than individual representations. J Greenaway expressed concern that the extension of double yellow lines outside the shop on Culver Lane could reduce the number of customers using the shop and thus have a negative impact on business. PS Smith emphasised the need for as many residents as possible to report instances of dangerous / obstructive parking at a specific site so that it would receive priority treatment from the police. Residents to use the TVP website or the local neighbourhood policing email address.
  - Cllr Baker asked for Insp Lloyd to provide information on the regulations regarding cycling on the pavement and

**ACTION: Clarity on cycling on pavement needed – Chair to pursue with WBC. Chair to contact Insp Lloyd re Cllr Bakers' questions.**

3. **Update from Neighbourhood Policing Team on recent reported criminal activity in the local area.** The main area of concern was theft from motor vehicles in the Woodley and Twyford area. These vehicles were parked outside residents' houses and in 90% of cases had probably been left unlocked. There had also been some theft of tools etc from tradesman's vans.

PS Smith also made a plea for residents to sign up to Thames Valley Alert.

**ACTION: Residents groups (including ACER) to put notice in the next newsletter reminding people to lock their cars, and check that they are locked, even when in the drive. ACER also to remind residents to sign up to Thames Valley Alert and to remind them of the local police contact details.**

4. **Local policing priorities (45 mins) – Review of progress / agreement of actions with respect to:**
  - **Antisocial behaviour** – The police reported an increase in ASB over the autumn half-term period, particularly in Woodley Town Centre, Loddon Vale Centre and to a lesser extent the parks, causing a general nuisance (e.g. cycling in front of cars) and there had been some criminal damage. The offenders were mainly local (although there were a few from Reading) in either the 13/15 age group

or the 16/18 age group. Generally, the parents of those offending do not know where they are when phoned by the police. It is important that parents are made to take responsibility. The police changed working arrangements to undertake more late shifts and it was felt that this had been effective as the weekend of 18/19 November had been calmer. Police can take a range of measures ranging from phoning the parents and asking them to come to take them home, threatening tenancy for those in social housing, working with the schools and issuing dispersal order, although the latter is difficult if they live nearby. A breach of a dispersal order will result in an arrest. There was much discussion around the longer-term solutions. Provision of youth facilities in Woodley have dropped off over recent years although Cllr Dolinski updated the meeting on the council's Youth Partnership Group which is currently investigating setting up facilities (Parkour site) at Loddon Mead which would provide an outdoor space, with shelter, for young people looking for something less formal. WTC is also working with JAC (Just around the corner) which manages to reach young people others can't and has even provided training on welding. Residents of Coppice Rd did express some concern regarding the safety of a site near the Loddon and a busy road. WTC are holding a conference for the well-being of local youth at Easter. It was agreed that the forum should invite some young people to a future meeting to talk about youth provision. Cllr Armstrong (ETC) stated that there were at least 2 sites in Earley offering youth provision south of the A329. There was some discussion on the lack of youth provision in Earley north of the A329. Michelle Stone felt it was a shame that more use (as a community facility) could not be made of the pavilion at Sol Joel.

- **Illegal encampment** – TVP has now introduced a force wide protocol regarding dealing with illegal encampment so that local councils should be clear as to who can take action and when. High barriers have been put across the Lytham Rd carpark in Woodley and WBC are investigating the feasibility of installing barriers in all their car parks. Bollards have been replaced on the edge of Bulmershe playing fields but there are still some unsightly / dangerous concrete blocks and pieces of concrete in the newer bunds. Prevention is better than reactive measures. Concern was expressed regarding the tendency of some developers to leave some sites unprotected, particularly once all the properties had been sold. WBC provide permanent sites for travellers at Twyford Orchards and Arborfield. It was agreed that illegal encampment should be taken off the priority list for now.
- **Bicycle theft** – PS Smith reported that the police operations had been successful in making a number of arrests (one connected with drugs) and recovering more than 20 bikes. Cycle marking had taken place in Woodley Town centre and in some of the schools. It was stressed that it is imperative that owners make a note of the frame number. Police work regarding cycle theft ongoing. Police explained that they did not deal with dumped bikes unless they were obviously stolen.
- **Speeding** – There was much discussion on speeding in the area. Residents of Coppice Rd complained of locals regularly speeding in the road and now Loddon Bridge Road also. There were concerns that there had been no follow up from the police when this had been reported. Police explained that residents reporting speeding needed to supply a vehicle registration and description. It was also agreed that the more reports there were the more likely the location would become a priority for police action. PS Smith explained that the police need evidence that speeding has actually taken place and is not just perception. To get this evidence they use a SID or rubber tubes in the road. Once there is evidence that speeding has taken place the council can use a VAS sign (flashes 30 as a reminder) or the police use mobile police vehicles to check speed. The yellow fixed camera boxes are owned by the council but the police own the cameras. It is generally agreed that people know where the yellow boxes are so will slow down. The VAS can be useful as a deterrent but do not stop the boy racers. However, it was agreed that police action is generally governed by accident statistics.

The community speed watch programme (in which residents are trained to operate speed detectors) was discussed. TVP have had a number (14) of applications from volunteers and are now waiting to

start the training. Woodley Town Council would like to duplicate the Finchampsted model and were waiting to hear from TVP regarding the possibility of buying their own equipment or sharing.

#### **New Priority List:**

1. ASB
2. Bicycle theft
3. Theft from motor vehicles
4. Speeding

#### **5. Administration**

- **Structure:** **AGM:** It was agreed that the Community Forum need to hold an AGM – probably in March / April 2018 – at which chair, vice chair and any other officers could be elected.

**Constitution:** If the Community Forum is to be eligible to apply for funding it will need a constitution. It was agreed that the chair would draft a constitution (based on examples from existing community forums) and bring to the next meeting.

**ACTION: Chair to book Oakwood Centre for an AGM in March / April 2018, draft constitution and bring to the meeting in January 2018.**

- **Minute secretary:** The forum currently has a chair and vice-chair but could do with a minute secretary to take notes of the meetings as it is difficult to chair the meeting and take accurate notes at the same time.
- **Bids for funding:** The chair had obtained details of the Public Protection Fund to which community groups such as the forum could apply for funding for specific projects. It was agreed that it would be worth applying for funding to produce leaflets containing safety and other relevant information for elderly and less mobile residents of Woodley and N Earley who do not have easy access to the internet. Cllr Baker said that WTC could deliver the leaflets with the Woodley Herald and that the community forum could include an article in the Herald. The current funding round ends at the beginning of December. To be eligible for funding the forum must have a constitution and a community bank account and so will have to wait 6 months for the next round of applications.

**ACTION: Chair and vice chair to open community bank account for the forum and to draft and application for the round of applications. Chair to contact WTC Clerk re timing of articles etc for Herald.**

#### **6. AOB**

- **Cyber-crime** – Coling Lawley reported an instance of an attempting scam phone call (purporting to come from Microsoft). When he contacted the police with a phone number and other details he was informed that as a result of the current law the police were unable to do anything. Those affected should use the internet fraud action line to report but it can be 5 – 6 weeks before you get a response. He felt that the law should be changed as internet scamming was a huge issue in Woodley and Earley.

**ACTION: ACER to write something about scamming in the next newsletter**

- **Parking** – football match parking on Woodlands Avenue was becoming an issue – why couldn't the school carparks be used at the weekends? Cllr Baker reported that Addington School had allowed the car park to be used but there had been some damage. Perhaps the rebuild of the leisure centre will be a chance to remedy this problem?
- **Cycling on the pavements and in Woodley Precinct** – Inconsiderate cycling (mainly Bulmershe school children) on the pavement along Church road had been reported at the last meeting and was still a problem. It was suggested that the police talk about cycling on the pavement (and the need to stop when there are pedestrians coming the other way) when they go into schools to mark the bikes.

**Cycling through Woodley precinct was also an issue** -despite clear signage. Offenders were not just children and some of them could be quite aggressive if stopped and asked to dismount. One

suggestion was that the police should have session stopping and fining. Another that a group of volunteer residents should give information to cyclists in the precinct. However, they would need to be careful and possibly have some training as they could be putting themselves at risk. The problem was not helped by the fact that the cycle racks were in the middle of the precinct – so people tended to cycle to them – and that there was no longer any CCTV in the precinct which could act as a deterrent to both cyclists and others likely to be involved in ASB / other crimes. The quality of the photographs in the original CCTV cameras was not good enough to be used as evidence and replacement would be incredibly expensive. Some shops do have their own CCTV and some make use of the shop radio system. Replacement of the CCTV system is a long-term aspiration of the WTCMI.

**ACTION: Chair, ACER and councillors to talk to police as to whether residents could be involved in some form of campaign to stop cycling in the town centre.**

**7. Date of next meeting – Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2018, 7.30 pm at the Oakwood Centre.**