

Wednesday, 21st June, 2017 (7.30 – 9.00 pm)

Venue: Woodley Hill House, Eastcourt Avenue, Earley (by kind permission of Reading Network Vineyard Church)

Present: Mary Bather (independent chair), Mike Evans (vice-chair), Inspector Al Lloyd (Thames Valley Police), Councillor John Armstrong (ETC/ Earley NAG Rep), Councillor Keith Baker (WBC, WTC), Councillor Richard Dolinski (WBC, WTC), Councillor Sheena Matthews (ETC), Councillor Alison Swaddle (WBC, ETC), Jenny Lissaman (ACER), Sion Williams (ACER), Jon Hare (Thames Valley Police), Nick Bather (resident), Noreen Calnan (resident), Tom & Barbara Cronin (resident), Coral Dolinski (resident), Brenda Cutler (resident), Christine Deane (resident), Les Eggleton (resident), Janet Howes (resident), Mr Revett (resident), Nicholas Roberts (resident),

Apologies: Councillor (ETC) Munir Ahmed, Councillor (WBC) Andy Croy, Councillor Jackie Rance (Vice Chair Earley NAG), Jacques Lherbier (Woodley Town Centre Manager), Shelagh Flowers (Woodley Adopt a Street Project), James Chapman (Manager M&S Shepherds Hill)

Note: WBC – Wokingham Borough Council; WTC - Woodley Town Council; ETC - Earley Town Council; ACER – The Whitegates residents’ association.

1. **Vision for the Woodley and N Earley Community Forum / NAG:** Inspector Al Lloyd explained how he hoped the forum would work to achieve its aim - to collect residents’ views on local issues, agree neighbourhood policing priorities for Woodley and North Earley and work with other agencies to find solutions where possible.

There was much discussion regarding the name, the format of the meetings, who should be invited, how the meetings should be advertised and what were the chances of success. Some councillors were concerned that as the original Woodley NAG had eventually been wound up this new one had little chance of success. Al Lloyd however hoped that if the forum (with an independent chair and vice chair) worked closely with all other agencies, including the councillors, to share information and solve problems and used a variety of ways of engaging with residents it would be successful.

It was noted that Woodley Town Council already do an annual residents’ survey and would be willing to add additional questions regarding policing priorities.

It was eventually agreed that:

- The name should be the **Woodley and North Earley Community Forum**
- The area covered should include Woodley and that part of Earley north of the Wokingham Road
- There should be an open meeting every two months, followed by a closed meeting with relevant agencies where necessary. Initially meetings would be at the Oakwood Centre but longer term it was hoped to use a range of venues and formats (e.g. drop-ins in pubs, schools etc). Councillor Baker also offered an open session at the beginning of a WTC full council meeting.
- Information (including details of open meetings) to be disseminated to residents through the Town Council notice boards, the Woodley Herald, ACER, Thames Valley Police Alert.

2. Identification of policing priorities

There was a full discussion of policing priorities, with the following local issues raised:

- Bike theft (which has increased in the last year). The police hope to work with other agencies to promote bike marking and work with the local council to consider safe bike storage in Woodley Town Centre. They are talking to schools about bike marking (using the national bike register which gives the bike a unique number) and WBC are organising a bike marking session in Woodley Town Centre in July.

- Anti-social behaviour (particularly in Woodley Town Centre) which is likely to increase with the long summer evenings and the school holidays. It is hoped to work with Woodley Town Council (and JAC) and Earley Town Council to consider the provision of further activities for young people in the local area. Councillor Dolinski is involved in the Woodley Youth Community Partnership Group which is working on youth provision at Loddon Mead. Councillor Matthews offered to share the findings of a survey (on what local youth want) in which she has been involved.
- Illegal encampment (in light of the recent encampment on the Woodley carpark) and which is more prevalent in the summer months.
- Speeding – an issue throughout the area. The police are setting up a Community Speed Watch which enables residents (once trained) to monitor the speed in their own street.
- Parking issues – illegal (on double yellow line and blocking pavements) and inconsiderate (making it difficult for residents to access their own drives or park immediately outside their own houses) is a concern throughout the area and of particular concern to residents near the A4 in Earley. Residents are encouraged to call 101 if the footway is blocked and it is hoped that the change to Civil Parking Enforcement in the Autumn will improve action regarding illegal parking. Inconsiderate parking is obviously not illegal and therefore not a policing matter. However, it is an issue that can be discussed amongst residents' groups.
- Concern was also expressed regarding drug and alcohol use at night in some locations in Woodley and North Earley.

It was decided that for the next 2 months the three policing priorities should be:

- I. Illegal encampment;
- II. Anti-social behaviour;
- III. Bike theft.

Those residents concerned about speeding were to be given the Thames Valley Police contact details for the Community Speed Watch. Parking concerns in Earley would be discussed with local councillors and at the next ACER meeting.

3. Agreed Actions

- Al Lloyd to organise a meeting with the chair and vice chair to discuss the three priorities in more detail and decide how to work with the relevant agencies to make progress in these areas. Progress will be reported at the next open meeting (September)
- The chair, vice chair and Al Lloyd to consider other ways of assessing residents' views, including making use of the Woodley Town Council survey, Town Council meetings, drop-ins etc.
- Mary Bather (Chair) to organise dates for two further open meetings (September and November in the Oakwood Centre) with the WTC Clerk and circulate details to organisations, including Earley Town Council, Woodley Town Council, Wokingham Borough Council, Thames Valley Police and ACER.
- Meetings to be advertised as follows:
 - Woodley Town Council – on notice boards and in the Woodley Herald
 - Earley Town Council – on notice boards
 - Thames Valley Police – via Thames Valley Alert
 - ACER – in newsletter