



FLEET & DISTRICT NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

NEWSLETTER

Volume 14 Number 4
Autumn 2008

Telephone calls to the Police:

999 - In an emergency and for crimes in progress

0800 555 111 - Crime stoppers (free & anonymous crime-related calls)

101 - For non-emergency & anti-social behaviour issues: vandalism & graffiti, noise nuisance, threatening & abusive behaviour, abandoned vehicles, dumping & fly-tipping, drunk & rowdy groups, drug related anti-social behaviour

0845 045 4545 - For routine Police matters and for crime related issues that have already occurred

Chairman's Report

Another successful Annual General Meeting was held on 18 September, with comprehensive presentations from Sgt Dave Hill of Fleet Police and Tim Vile from the Aldershot Fire & Rescue Service.

The down side was the sparse attendance of less than 50 NHW members. Considering our Neighbourhood Watch covers about 50% of Fleet which is around 6000 dwellings, this should result in a local population something approaching 18000 people. Even allowing for the elderly, infirm, children and those away on holiday or business, it is extraordinary that we can summon less than 50 attendees to the annual NHW gathering.

I know I go on about this, but our district remains a relatively crime free area because we all work at it. A greater interest in our AGM might go some way to convincing me that enough people care about what goes on and what they might do in our community.

Following comment in the last two newsletters, I am pleased to report that we now have a volunteer to take over as our Senior Co-ordinator for the Ancells Farm Estate. Our new representative should be in place by the next committee meeting in November, and I take this opportunity to thank most sincerely Harry Fraser-Mitchell who has carried out the task diligently for some considerable time despite indifferent health.

David Bunclark - Chairman

Many thanks to all those who attended our AGM which was held at the Civic Offices, Hart District Council in Fleet on 18 September. Apart from the regular agenda items, the meeting included a presentation by the Fire & Rescue Service. This edition aims to provide our readership with selected extracts from the main items on the agenda. A full record of the Minutes of the AGM is available on the website at www.fleetnhw.co.uk (computers are available at the Library for those without a PC who wish to read the Minutes or Police Reports).

Annual General Meeting - 18 September 2008

Chairman's Report

Following a welcome to those present, introduction of the guest speaker and agreement of the 2007 Minutes the Chairman advised that Fleet and our community remained a safe area and that it was the continued intent of the NHW to remain part of a team in assisting the police and local authorities to help keep Fleet a low crime area. He stated that he had attended two Police Beat Surgeries and he encouraged Senior Co-ordinators to attend at least one Police Beat Surgery as this would give them the opportunity to influence their Police Beat priorities. He continued to pay considerable attention to the refurbishment of neighbourhood watch signs which were the visible presence of the Neighbourhood Watch. He had personally refurbished 20 during the year and he encouraged all to advise him of any signs that needed refurbishment. He advised that the self-adhesive signs cost £3.00 each to replace versus £25 for a metal sign. He would continue to aim for the best value signs and added that due to the increased value of scrap metal, the metal signs were subject to theft. The Chairman concluded his report, stating that he would actively seek alternatives for the metal signs; e.g. a plastic version.

Financial Report

The Treasurer reported that generally income for the year was down due to decreased advertising revenue and a bad debt, though new membership was up and expenditure on meeting room hire had decreased. The cost of printing, which constituted the major cost of producing the newsletters was up. There had also been a marginal increase in the cost of the NHW website and £449 expenditure on replacement of NHW road signs. Credit balance at the time of the AGM was £2,923.37 with £140 outstanding as a bad debt. He advised that there was slightly less in the bank than in 2007, but this was not of concern provided that there were sufficient funds. Lastly, in response to a question asking whether there was concern over the reserves running out, the Treasurer responded that the NHW was not a profit making organisation and if reserves were depleted then increased subscriptions would need to be collected.

Annual General Meeting - Police Presentation by Sergeant David Hill

Since November 2007 I have been the Safer Neighbourhood's Team Sergeant, responsible for the officers who manage the Beats in the Fleet area. The team's responsibilities are to ensure that the communities living within the area are provided the opportunities to have their voice heard regarding any community safety issues or any other problems, and working with outside agencies and the community to provide a long term resolution.

I am particularly keen to ensure that my team delivers a service to our communities that is of a high quality and focussed on their individual needs. Increasingly it seems that this is what the police service will be measured on. The recent Green Paper on policing suggests that the future performance framework will feature only one centrally driven Government target which will be "Community Confidence". This has got to be better than the current 180 areas we are scored on. Let's hope at the end of this report I still have your confidence.

During my time here we have seen the constant ebb and flow of officers from Fleet. We have lost PC Pearce to the licensing office where he is now responsible for the pubs and clubs in Hart, Steve Reilly who has been lured to the bright and not so bright lights of London by an improved financial package, and John Nelson who is now working with the Targeted Patrol Teams (TPT) in Yateley. We have gained PC Cole who now works with Paul Franks and Dan Eaves on the Fleet Town Centre and Pondtail Beat, and Mhairi Stephens who has joined Neil Prescott and Bill Evans on the Northern Beat. PC Tim Mason has also joined us from Yateley TPT to work with Nick Greenwood on Fleet West and Courtmoor, and Karen East is now working with Caroline Webster at Church Crookham. We have also changed our Chief Inspector with Sarah Jackson taking over the reins from Norman Mellors who is now working at Rushmoor.

One thing that became apparent to me when I attended my first NHW meeting was that I was not maximising the potential of the NHW as we were giving you details of crime that, at worst, were three months out of date. This gave you no hope of taking measures to ensure your safety or to act as my eyes and ears. Consequently, Janet Parker, my Station Enquiry Officer, has now taken on a more pivotal role in relation to NHW by providing a regular update (usually weekly) of relevant crimes for your members. These bulletins are sent to your senior co-ordinators and cascaded down from there. I hope they provide you with some insight and awareness of the police actions that are being taken to prevent crime.

My Beat Officers are now engaged in regular Beat Surgeries which are advertised in the NHW newsletter, the websites and posters in the locality. I would urge you to visit a surgery and ensure that the Beat Officer is made aware of your community's concerns. With modern technology you can now e-mail me with your problems or even resort to the phone using the 101 number or the Hampshire Constabulary number. I am sure you all love the rise of technology. The Hampshire website now provides you with not only the priorities that the Beat Officer is working on but you can access our crime figures and see what is happening and where. Hart is the safest district in Hampshire to live in. You are less likely to become a victim of crime in Hart than any other district in Hampshire. But the community must take responsibility for: securing their property to reduce crime (the majority of crime is opportunistic); reporting crime, ASB and suspicious incidents to enable informed responses; getting involved with your Safer Neighbourhoods Team; and supporting initiatives for young people.

Improving community safety through active cooperation is now essential if we are to continue to reduce crime.

We continue to target those in Fleet involved in crime. Over the past year we have sent individuals to court and then to prison for offences ranging from burglary, drugs, assaults, theft, fraud and public order, but none of this would have been achieved without the community stepping forward and providing us with the information and evidence. We continue to work with the Tasking Team and Safer Streets Team targeting premises used in the supply of Class A drugs, gathering evidence of ASB so that we can use the Crack House legislation to shut these houses down for three months and, where they are owned by housing associations, the associations are given a chance to evict the individuals concerned. We currently have two premises closed: one in New Barn Close, and the most recent one in Church Grove.

(AGM - Police Presentation continued on page 3)

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NHW Webmaster: Volunteer Wanted

Our Webmaster has been running our NHW website since its inception several years ago and he is now keen to retire. We urgently need a volunteer to take over this important role.

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(AGM - Police Presentation continued from page 2)

Beat Priorities

Beat one priorities: Violent crime associated with the night time economy in and around Fleet Road and the Town Centre. Criminal damage and anti-social behavior, particularly in the areas of Fleet Road, Church Road, Clarence Road, Connaught Road, Albany Road, Albert Street and Upper Street (specifically related to the night time economy and the consumption of alcohol). Shoplifting, particularly in sections of the Town Centre, these include departments in the Hart Shopping Centre.

Beat two priorities: Anti-social behaviour and criminal damage caused by revellers returning home from the Town Centre in the evening. Anti-social behaviour in residential areas, especially The Lea Estate, Wickham Road, Wickham Place and Basingbourne Park. Drug dealing and drug use, both within The Lea Estate and Wickham Place.

Beat three priorities: Speeding traffic and vehicles driving in an anti-social manner, in particular in the areas of Zebon Copse and Aldershot Road. Juvenile nuisance in Zebon Copse and Ridgeway Parade. Parking issues and congestion on Sandy Lane.

Beat four priorities: To reduce anti-social behaviour and those nuisance incidents on Elvetham Heath and Ancells Farm. To reduce vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property. To address incidences of drive-offs and thefts from motor vehicles at Fleet Services.

These are your priorities gained as a result of questionnaires and reports from the communities we serve. If you want to influence the priorities please attend Beat Surgeries or tell your Beat Officer your problem areas.

Some examples of our current police activities: Working closely with the departments of HDC targeting ASB and those responsible. We visit the parents and the youths involved, pointing out their responsibilities and the implications of the youths' actions. Our trained PCSOs visit schools and provide instruction in cycling proficiency to help reduce the problems of cycling on pavements. The vulnerable vehicle scheme's aim is to reduce vehicle crime by making drivers more aware of the dangers of leaving valuables in their cars. Shop watch has been introduced to make the shops in Fleet less of a tempting target for visiting out-of-area criminals. Pub watch is aimed at reducing alcohol related problems by banning those involved from not just one pub but all licensed premises in Fleet.

How can you help? Members of NHW are already helping by supporting your community. But I urge you to use Crime-stoppers 0800-555-111 and increase the flow of information, look out for strangers and any suspicious behaviour, use the 101 number to report ASB, invite your Beat Officer to meetings, attend Beat Surgeries, visit Fleet Police Station and tell us what the problems are so that we can provide an informed and proportionate response. Hampshire Constabulary now has a volunteer scheme whereby anybody over 16 who has two hours a week to give can volunteer to help the police in a variety of roles at local stations. If you want to know more please contact Becky Hunt at Fleet Police Station.

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Fleet & District Neighbourhood Watch

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The deadline for inputs to
the next Newsletter is:

31 December 2008

Please send any inputs to the
Editor (contact details above)

The NHW does not accept any liability for any of the statements, actions or default on the part of any article or advertiser in this or other editions of the Newsletter.

Ancells Farm

First let me thank all those who have sent me good wishes during my illness - I much appreciated their kindness.

It is with great relief that I can tell you that a volunteer has come forward to take my place as Senior Co-ordinator for Ancells Farm. He is Derek Cox-Putker and he lives on the Estate. We will do the next distribution to Co-ordinators together, then he will take over. I have done the job for a good many years now and have enjoyed doing it and meeting some of you from time to time. I must particularly thank all the Co-ordinators who have so faithfully delivered all 900+ newsletters across the Estate. Please support Derek as well as you have supported me all these years.

Nothing much to report, except for the invasion of 'Travellers' in July. They left a considerable mess behind them, but the Council was commendably quick to clean up, although the surface of the field is still rutted.

Best wishes to you all. Stay vigilant and neighbourly! *Harry Fraser-Mitchell*
Senior Co-ordinator, Ancells Farm

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After many years in the role, Harry Fraser-Mitchell is retiring as Senior Co-ordinator for Ancells Farm. On behalf of all our members we offer Harry our gratitude and sincere thanks for all his support to the NHW and we send him and his family our best wishes for the future.

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