



GREAT DENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting to discuss crime in Great Denham - 5.30pm on 23rd October 2014 in Great Denham Primary School, Greenkeepers Road, Great Denham, MK40 4GG

Present: Parish Councillors

Jim Weir (JW) - Chair;
Tony Harrison (TH).

PCSO's

James Loi (JL)
Paul Jones (PJ)

Parish Clerk

Roz Buchanan (RB)

Action

Purpose of meeting

JW thanked everyone for coming and said the Parish Council (PC) wished to discuss the apparent increase in car crime and burglary's in Great Denham (GD) and to see what action might be open to the PC and residents to tackle this.

1. **a) Confirmation of figures**

JW asked if the crime figures he proposed to present at the public meeting on 3rd November were accurate. The figures showed crime in Bedford as 58/1000 whilst GD was 53.2/1000. JL said this was correct and GD is slightly below the average in the area.
- b) What are the police doing about this?**

JL said there had been a big jump in car crime everywhere, not just in GD. The increase in GD was very significant with three car crimes reported in 2013 and 18 in 2014 to date. The shift pattern for PCSOs has changed and they must go off duty at 10pm, after which time the community must rely on response officers from Police HQ. He said the Tasking Team does not provide PCSOs with feedback but they are aware the Tasking Officers are patrolling covertly.

JL said after a crime has occurred they do house to house calls and leaflet drops, but these are limited to approximately 5 houses either side and houses opposite the house which has been affected. JL said their experience was that many vehicles were targeted because the owners left valuable items in view in their cars. Car thieves look for a quick opportunity and an easy target and if people protected themselves first and foremost then crime would reduce.
- c) Would CCTV help & where should cameras be placed?**

The PC is considering installing CCTV cameras in addition to those which will be in the District Centre and they need to establish the hotspots and best sight lines. JL said this would help greatly and that private CCTV was also immensely useful as the cameras provided even more coverage. Whilst JL said some communities share CCTV images on Facebook, TH thought this could be alarmist. The PC could get some advice on siting CCTV cameras from the Borough and should speak to Simon Habermehl.
- d) What clear advice should the PC give to residents?**

JL suggested the PC highlight crime prevention with a list of what to check and to encourage installation of private CCTV. He said clarification was needed on the figures for violence as the majority of this is domestic rather than street violence. JL said GD was not a high crime area despite the recent spike. It is a growing community and thieves were probably also taking advantage of the fact it is quiet at night.

JL and PJ can send the PC information and leaflets to disseminate in the community and the website and newsletter could be used to give advice. Seasonal campaigns were also useful e.g. to use timer switches on lights, particularly on dark winter evenings.

2. **What arrangements are in place to have some police visibility in GD?**

a) **What happens currently?**

JL said PCSOs are not available after 10pm and most vehicle crime takes place in the early hours. Residents should report all suspicious behaviour by phoning 101 or, if they think a crime is about to happen, 999. They should not worry about wasting police time because if someone is available they will attend and if they are not the report will be logged and where hotspots are identified they will be targeted.

JL also stressed residents should protect themselves by making it difficult for criminals to access their cars and property.

b) **More PCSOs and Police officers are being recruited – does this mean an opportunity for more visibility in GD?**

JL confirmed 120 police officers were being trained and there may be more PCSOs.

PJ suggested the Residents Association could become both a Residents Association and Neighbourhood Watch group. This would be a real opportunity to help raise awareness.

3. **Dangerous parking – what action can the PC take?**

JW said there is a lot of dangerous and inconsiderate parking and asked what is illegal and what the PC could do. PJ said the police could only act where there is total obstruction i.e. a pushchair or wheelchair could not get past. The best advice would be to email photographs, with number plates if possible, of any such incidents to JL who could then visit the offender.

TH asked if the PC could install bollards on the pavements and PJ confirmed they could.

It was likely the best that could be done where an obstruction was not total is to post a letter from the PC on offending vehicles.

JW confirmed with JL that he and Sergeant Geary would be attending the public meeting on 3rd November and said they should be prepared for a large number of residents with questions. He thanked everyone and the meeting ended at 6.20pm.