



Milton Keynes Neighbourhood Watch Association



MINUTES to Members Meeting and AGM

21st November 2022 at 7pm
Woolstone Community Centre

1. Welcome and Apologies

Nick King (acting secretary) welcomed everyone and will lead on the first part of the meeting; Nikki Barrett (chair) will lead on the AGM. Nick thanked the trustees of the Community Centre for allowing use of their hall free of charge. Nick welcomed our three senior Police speakers and Paul Adkins, chair of the Thames Valley NHW Association.

A number of free NHW street-signs and stickers were given to coordinators.

A list of attendees and apologies can be found at the end of these minutes.

2. Chief Inspector Euan Livingstone, Lead Commander for Neighbourhood Policing across MK.

The keys points that Euan outlined include:

- The arrival from 3rd December at Gate 1 of the MK Football Stadium (until 7th January) of the *Knife Angel* sculpture in Milton Keynes. This is seen as a major focus for the Force and other authorities to highlight combatting knife crime, domestic abuse, bullying and hate crime, linking with the *White Ribbon* campaign. Several agencies are involved including Hazard Alley linking with local schools (circa 3,500 pupils), and Euan encourages NHW leaders and members to visit the *Knife Angel* and promote to our members. (It is expected an events schedule will be issued in the press and social media.)
- The Force has strengthened its commitment to *Citizens in Policing* and NHW now has a voice within this group via Paul Adkins.
- Performance: Euan admits that the Force may often be seen as “spread too thin” as there is unprecedented volume and demand. The decision on numbers of staff and resources can only be taken at the very top level of the Thames Valley Force. However, he underlined the value placed in using PCSOs and Community Forums: the latter providing insights for improvements.
- The MK Force has a specialist “Problem solving team”: seen as an effective way of tackling and focusing on trends such as repeat offences; repeat missing people; cohorts of ASB, youth issues and domestic abuse.
- Additional funds have been secured for a *Safer Streets* project, working with the local authority. This will be used to improve CCTV; give priority to anti-violence especially to women and girls; stop & search, target hotspots. Already the team are seeing much swifter access to the courts.
- Ring-doorbell reporting: in answer to a question, Euan underlined how important it is for the Police that they “must know what is happening” and to receive such reports and footage. Use 101 and online reporting. *[More discussion on this point to follow.]*

Chief Inspector Stewart Codling, the Lead for Professionalising Neighbourhood Policing

In this Thames Valley Police role, Stewart works to improve the base standards across all facets of Neighbourhood Policing (looking at best practice) and he reports directly to Chief Superintendent Katy Barrow-Grint.

- One key current focus is the *Thames Valley Alerts*. Stewart is aware how important this communication/engagement tool is to Neighbourhood Watch partners. From his view, the Force need to ensure “its use is as good as it can be”. There is an upgrade of the tool to happen early December and staff training is in progress. (Many attendees at the meeting receive *TV Alerts*.) Stewart recognises the tool is different to Twitter and Facebook and it has important extra qualities i. e. targeting a cul de sac.
- Nick added, that as Stewart was en route to Hull that evening, he might quiz the Police there as they use the *Alert* tool in a very effective and model way called *Humberside Talking*. Worth looking at if he gets a chance. Nick also flagged that those that sign up to *Alerts* provide rich contact data and are key influencers in their communities, often with their own networks. He has seen some improvements in the number of *Alerts* issued by the Police across MK but still asks for improvement, especially as he sees excellent messages on Facebook, sometimes with a link to the Police website, but they are NOT issued as *Alerts*. Stewart very willing to meet up with Nick to explore this further. For example, the question raised if an *Alert* member can instigate a message to the Police instead of using 101.

Some other points that were raised:

- (a) If we are unable to get through on 101 we need to let the Police know times etc. A good way is via their website using <https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/area/your-area/tvp/milton-keynes/> The email goes direct to the local Area team and often the PCSOs can problem-solve these issues. [And good idea to say you are reporting as a Neighbourhood Watch member.]
- (b) An example given of a local incident of suspicious behaviour of an individual: a detailed report was issued online (with pictures) but no feedback whatsoever! This cannot be right if we are to be encouraged to report. [Euan to follow up.]
- (c) Video door-bells: care must be taken not to invade the privacy of your neighbours.
- (d) One attendee thanked the Police for the excellent support given with regard to a burglary from a neighbour’s home. This was good to hear and appreciated.
- (e) It was said the visibility of the Police is very rare and yet we know their presence can send reassuring messages to the community and distract wrong-doing. Euan accepts this and replies that resources are tight but it is still their ambition to be visible. [Useful to discuss this further.]
- (f) Thia told us about her Stony Radio work and hosting interviews with PCSO Huckle. These have been successful so hopefully more of this to follow.
- (g) A comment how valuable *Have Your Say* events in Walton are. Stewart underlined that engagement in this way is paramount to help the Police find priorities and allow direct contact. PCSO Huckle has had much involvement with similar community engagement. Nick suggested that more knowledge of when/where events are (ideally, an advance schedule) will help NHW promote to members and encourage attendance/involvement. [One to follow up.]

-----After a short break, the Police team left the meeting-----

(3) Paul Adkins, the new chair of the Thames Valley Neighbourhood Watch Association

Paul commented that he sensed over the last few years in some ways the TV NHW had drifted away from its partnership with the Police but he underlined that this was now being addressed. One point already mentioned is NHW now has a consultative seat at the table for regular *Citizens in Policing* meetings and this gives NHW a stronger voice and good contacts. Paul has also very recently met up with CS Katy Barrow-Grint to discuss working together. TV NHW can now seek to call up experts from within the Police to guide our members on issues such as cybercrime.

TV NHW is also now contributing to the training programme of new Police recruits, through The College of Policing, to communicate the aims and values of NHW.

Thames Valley is a large area (three counties): there are district level NHW groups or associations; then TV NHW, and then the umbrella national Neighbourhood Watch Network. Paul commented that some of the NHW districts work well but others not so well. Some recent projects include *Are You OK?* and being an *Active Bystander*, linking with the Suzy Lamplugh Trust and a series of training videos.

TV NHW has access to some grant funding from the Police & Crime Commissioner which may be useful for local projects. Paul is currently looking at a pilot idea of lamp-post *Streetsafe* stickers or pavement-written messages to define and create safe areas.

-----A G M-----

The Annual General Meeting of the Association followed, lead by Nikki Barrett, the outgoing chair:

(4) Chair's report

- (a) Nikki read her Chair's report and copies had been passed to all attendees. She thanked the attendees for their valuable work on behalf of NHW and also thanked PCSO Huckle for his kind and supportive help over 6 years. *[A copy of the Chair's Report is attached to these minutes.]*
- (b) Nikki submitted the draft minutes to the last AGM (20th October 2018) which were duly approved.
- (c) Caroline Bourne (treasurer) then outlined her Treasurer's Report, which has been passed to all attendees. The report and Statement of Accounts up to 21st November 2022 was duly approved.
- (d) Nikki then dissolved the existing committee and sought nominations for the roles of:
 - Chair: Nikki nominated Nick King; seconded by Steve Lazell. Role accepted.
 - Secretary: Nikki nominated Steve Lazell; seconded by Caroline Bourne. Role accepted.
 - Treasurer: Nick nominated Linda Cato; seconded by Thia Cooper. Role accepted.
 - General committee members: by a nod, the previous committee members were available for re-election: Kevin Clay and Thia Cooper. In addition, in absentia, Michael Cato was also co-opted onto the committee, as per a nomination received earlier.
- (e) Finally, the revised constitution and four policies, all of which were made available to attendees and which appeared on the Association's website, and which had been passed by the previous committee, were duly approved.

During the meeting, thanks were shown to both Nikki and Caroline for their long-term service to MKNHW over a difficult period. Flowers were presented by CI Livingstone and CI Codling

who added their personal thanks.

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