



Annual General Meeting

held on 12th September 2020

Minutes

1. Apologies for Absence

The Chairman welcomed and thanked those present for attending.

Apologies were received from Philippa Gorm, John Glanville, Robin Chandler and Tracy Ansell.

2. Approval of 2019 AGM Minutes

The draft 2019 Annual General Meeting minutes were approved on a show of hands.

There were no matters arising.

3. Chairman's Report

This year has been an interesting time for all of us. There were so many things that I planned to do but didn't get the chance to do them unfortunately, but that's the way it goes sometimes. The big thing about this year has been the fact that so many people have found that there are other people in their neighbourhood that they like, and I think if there is one thing COVID-19 has done for us, it's proved to everybody that actually we can talk to our neighbours, and they're actually quite nice people, and that's made a big difference in our communities. We now have a situation where we are beginning to see genuine community cooperation from everyone which is wonderful.

What we need to do is to look carefully and thoroughly at the way Neighbourhood Watch has functioned over the last year and look at some of the lessons we have learned. One of the biggest lessons that I've learned from this is that we have a lot of members who are very dedicated, but they don't know what to do, and this has led to a number of areas just wallowing around wondering where their sense of direction is. I think one of the worst things you can have is an organization without a clear sense of purpose and in many areas, that is what we have.

What I would like us to do in the coming year is to address that. The original plan for last year was to have a big training event in March, but that was cancelled by the police having to deal with urgent duties and, obviously, Covid-19. Now that we have the Magic of Zoom, we can probably do a lot more than we've ever done before, and as most of us understand the technology now, and have got a decent enough internet connection to connect, what I am proposing we will do over the next year is to look at some of the things that we found are not working well from this year and start improving them and putting them right.

We have a very good structure now. We have worked very hard in the executive together we have now got very clear delineation of all our districts which is shown on the local group section of the national Our Watch site. That means we have a much better and clearer structure. We have got district MSA's who can look after the districts, we have got more policies than we ever had before, and we have a good strong constitution.

Now we've got to turn that into practice and what we've got coming up is the essential ingredient for us, this is to look at the two main things that we're responsible for, preventing crimes in our communities and looking at the wellbeing of communities. It would appear that we are just about on the cusp of going into the next wave of Covid-19. What we will have in our communities are large number of people who thought the worst was over and they are now going to find out that perhaps it wasn't. We are in the most appropriate position to identify people who might be sinking, going downhill physically and mentally and we are also in the best position to encourage people and give the right help and support to them. A lot of communities will need that. We are already seeing the crime coming up, and that will be an aspect of desperation and no doubt the fact that there are more people out and about and unusual and unexpected events are not as noticeable. We've have coming up quite a challenging time.

The good news is there is much better support from Neighbourhood Watch HQ. We have more materials to draw on than we've ever had. We also have the strengths that we each bring into the organisation. I'm hoping next year that we can run a series of Zoom training meetings for people to share information and support the coordinators who've been, in some areas, forgotten about. I think that's lamentable, and we need to put that right. We also need to make sure that we communicate with the members better and Zoom could give us the opportunity to do that. We now have a Zoom account for the Neighbourhood Watch Association, and I know Peterborough already have their own. We need to use Zoom and use other technology to embrace everybody, not just the odd people who can turn up to meetings like this one. Hopefully looking ahead there are a lot of positives. I would very much like people to look at things like Street Wisdom, which is totally free which is a way of using an urban environment to use mindfulness and improve wellbeing. It is very straightforward it is something I will share with the executive at the earliest opportunity because I think it has some strength in helping to reduce community stress.

One thing I will mention is that for many years now, Vic Kerlin has been a police contact for us. Vic has carried out a great deal of work behind the scenes to help Neighbourhood Watch. As with so many people who work behind the scenes, perhaps it is not fully appreciated how much has contributed to our work. He is moving on to other duties now. I want to publicly say thank you to Vic for everything he has done. There is also our other Vic who's changing his role a little bit on the executive, he is continuing to be the Webmaster still, so thanks for that Vic, it's an invidious job controlling computers, but it makes sense for Vic to continue to use his skills in that role as a co-opted member of the Executive. It is only fair that if I mention one Vic I should also mention the other.

We now have a new police contact, Inspector Ricky Passam who officially started work on 7th September and has been kind enough to attend our meeting today. Looking forwards, we have a lot to do. We have a strong executive that I am very pleased to be working with. We have some new things to learn about but remember that in every situation the most powerful things you can have are knowledge and a sense of purpose.

If you have knowledge and purpose everyone has the strength within them to tackle the challenges, we face. It is our task to make sure our communities have got the knowledge and support they need for both promoting improved wellbeing and for helping to prevent crime.

Robin Sutton, Chairman

4. Treasurer's Report

A short written report was circulated in advance of the meeting.

The year commenced with a healthy cash bank balance and a large stock of signs. We also held deposit funds for St. Ives and Trumpington and this year added £383.33 to the deposit from March and District, which now total £751.91.

Sales of signs has been slower this year, not surprising since the advent of COVID and lockdowns. Trustee expenses have reduced as meetings have curtailed. Donations' principally from 'Patlock', have also reduced. There has been one grant to East Cambs. Association. In total there has been 13 transactions only.

In summary, we carry forward a net cash balance of just under £5000 and sign stock totalling 46 and valued at £524.78 in sales income.

Key figures

	2020	2019
Available cash at 30 th June	5163.41	4281.18
Deposits held for St. Ives, Trumpington and March	751.91	369.00
Value of Street Signs - stock	524.78	1243.92
Value of Street Signs sold	788.00	2500
Number of Signs Sold	62	203
Donations Received	72.00	179.00
Trustees Expenses/Website/Printing	171.50	621
Grants	189.60	0.00

John Fuller, Treasurer

5. Message from Cambridgeshire Police

Mike Brooks read the following statements from the Police:

"I would like to pass on my sincere gratitude to all Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators and volunteers. Your support is paramount to keeping our communities safe. During these difficult times so many have stood up and gone above and beyond to protect and support those who have needed assistance – from helping with grocery deliveries to popping in for a chat to check on people's welfare – for that I would like to thank you all."

Ray Bisby, Police & Crime Commissioner

As the superintendent and strategic head for citizens in policing, I wanted to personally thank you for your hard work during 2019/20 and especially through the Covid-19 pandemic.

The last four months have been like no other that I can remember in my policing career that now spans a quarter of a century. Not only have we been called upon to maintain our normal policing functions whilst having to adapt rapidly to new ways of working, but we have done it in the knowledge that we may be putting ourselves and our families at risk of catching the virus.

Your contribution has not only allowed us as a constabulary to continue to reassure our communities when they have needed it most, but allowed us to cope with the extra unanticipated demands. The voluntary work that you do makes our communities so much more safer. Your self-motivation and drive never ceases to amaze me. When I speak to regular officers they often comment on how invaluable you are to them.

I appreciate that this is not the end of the pandemic, and Covid-19 may be with us for some time to come. However, I just wanted to take this opportunity at your AGM to let you know that your time and effort is greatly appreciated by the Chief Officer Team; our officers, our staff and myself. Please accept my sincere thanks.

I also wanted to let you know that there have recently been some personnel changes within the Partnership & Operational Support Team – we have welcomed Inspector Ricky Passam and Sgt Maria Allgood; Vic Kerlin, Head of Citizens in Policing, will be leaving us on 30th September to move into a new role within the Constabulary, and we thank him for his commitment to supporting the department and especially the aims and objectives of Neighbourhood Watch during his time with us.

I know you will join me in welcoming Ricky and Maria, and we all look forward to working with you in the next 12 months,

Superintendent Robin Sissons

Alan Paul raised a question in relation to police liaison and the lack of crime alerts being received by Neighbourhood Watch groups. This led to frustration in not having up to date information to act upon in communities. There was further discussion about the “postcode lottery” of information that is circulated across the county. Robin stated that he is working with the Chief Constable on information sharing and analysing long-term crime patterns. All agreed that this would be a future agenda item at a meeting of the Executive group.

6. Elections of Members to the Executive Group

No nominations were received in advance of the AGM. The Chairman had circulated the current members in advance of the meeting that were prepared to stand for re-election.

Alan Paul – Peterborough	Patrick Kadewere (Huntingdon)
John Glanville – Peterborough	Carol Leonard (Cambridge City)
David Godsmark – East Cambs	Phil Ingamells – East Cambs
Nik Collett (Peterborough)	Kirsty Carter – South Cambs (Cambourne)
David Harrowing – Fenland (Wisbech)	John Fuller – South Cambs (Histon)
Frederick Roy Gerstner – Fenland (Whittlesey)	Geoff Varley – South Cambs (Sawston/Linton)
Robin Sutton – Fenland	Mike Brooks (Police representative)
Alan Wilcher (Huntingdon)	Ricky Passam (Police representative)
	Vic Nickson – Coopted (Website Coordinator)

Three spaces are available and we may co-opt if need expertise. If you wish to be co-opted, then please get in touch. We have coverage in most areas though Cambridge & Huntingdon are a little light.

Their re-election was proposed by Robin Sutton and seconded by David Godsmark. All were elected unanimously. The current Chair, Secretary and Treasurer are happy to remain.

7. Matters raised by Members

- John Fuller – Raised issue of the Police not getting information from communities to enable them to priorities areas. Highlighted Willingham as an example where concerns and incidents had been growing for some time but got out of control as the Police were not are of them. We must take on board that we need to feed information back, even if we sometimes feel that we are not getting information from the Police. Please utilise the tools available – 101, online reporting and chat to report all incidents.
- Graham Carver – Raised issue of lack of response to Neighbourhood Watch events when he held them pre-pandemic. Need villages to take an interest.
- Alan Wilcher – Highlighted drugs bust in his area and impressiveness of the operation.
- Ricky Passam – Stated that areas know their long-term issues and need to communicate these to the Police. He recognised that information gathering takes time and response may not be immediate.
- Alan Paul, Kirsty Carter, Susanna C, Carol Leonard – all advocated the use of online reporting and chat facilities for reporting crime. Use of Social Media needs development and Robin reported that HQ are looking at ways of validating Facebook groups/pages as members.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 11.15 and special thanks to police staff, Ricky Passam and Mike Brooks for their help and support.