



Distribution: NHW Forum members, Area Co-ordinators, Superintendent Andrew Mundy, C/I Shaun Kenneally, T/I Phil Gray, Beat Sgts. Paul McWhinnie & Mark Harper, NBMs, PCSOs & CPO Donna Woolway.

Torrington District Neighbourhood Watch

Notes of the Neighbourhood Watch Meeting held on

Tuesday 17th November 2015 at 7.15pm

At the Westward Ho! Baptist Church Hall, Westward Ho!

Forum present: Tom Carrick (Chair), David Braziel (Vice Chair), Mike Jackson (Secretary), Helena Schiller (Treasurer), Roger Copp, John Bowers, Bob Line, Angela Lovering, Luke Brennan, David Butler, Phillip Smith, Clive Mitchell

Co-ordinators: Pat Downing, Louis Bach, Graham Shackson, Barry Jenkins, Moira Hall, John Bromhead, Paul Cooper

Police: PC Sally Ferris, PCSO John McGovern

Visitors: Eric Lovering, B. Griffith, Graham & Margaret

1. Welcome by Tom who opened the Meeting and explained the intended informality of the evening and outlined the evening's agenda. He also pointed out that we were using our PA system for the first time. This having been purchased with the assistance of a Council Locality Grant through Councillor Robin Julian, because we have had occasions in the past when audience members have not been able to hear clearly. He then introduced Bob Line the local Area Co-ordinator and recent member of the Forum. Bob thanked everybody for coming to Westward Ho! on a windswept evening, especially the visitors who had come along. He explained that he was the area co-ordinator for Westward Ho! and was also covering Abbotsham until a replacement can be found to take over. He said that the main area of concern from residents were "boy racers" who make a nuisance of themselves in their cars from time to time. Other types of criminal activity have thankfully been very low recently.

Apologies: T/I Phil Gray, PC Nina Domachowska, PCSOs Sandra Brown & Melissa Baker, Colin Burton (Clawton), John Wickett & John McDougall (Pyworthy), Peter Fry & Jackie Beccles (Holsworthy Beacon), Anne Balcomb & Ron Fletcher (Winkleigh), Liz Moore, Elizabeth Bowden (Linwood Park), Adrian Blight (Alwington),

2. Tom informed the meeting that Sally had taken over from PC Dick Rowlands and she is now the Beat Manager for Bideford West. She has also taken on the role of Police / NHW Liaison Officer and has been a great help with the setting up of the new format for the weekly Crime Report. He also mentioned that he and David had a meeting with T/I Phil Gray which was in response to a letter that NHW had sent to the Chief Constable expressing concern at what additional duties would be expected from NHW members. We have been assured that nothing would be happening without prior consultation and agreement. As far as the police changes are concerned, Tom understands that announcements will be made in late December although Sally and John may have other detail when they talk to us.

3. Talk on Local Policing Matters by Sally Ferris and John McGovern: John started by giving an overview of what they have been doing in the Bideford area since the beginning of the year:

- The **THINK JESSICA** campaign was promoted heavily early in the year and is still ongoing. This is to help to protect elderly and vulnerable people from scams which come through the postal system and through telephone contact. This is still a big problem and includes lottery scams, bank scams, police scams, computer 'help desk' scams and many more. Trading Standards take the lead in overseeing this type of crime and they have recovered 'suckers lists' which are passed around the criminal gangs and which confirm the vast scale of these operations. It is estimated

that in the region of £750,000 was lost in the South West last year. A handout is available with full details and contacts.

- **ITV 4** produced a programme earlier in the year called '**Scammers**' which was very informative and is still available to watch on their catch-up service. Again, the police have a handout available which covers this subject.
- The Police have held 27 Action Days, many in conjunction with their partner agencies throughout the year and also attended 67 Parish Meetings. Fitting all these in and around the shift patterns takes a great deal of effort and with the uncertainty of change coming up makes it impossible to make any long term plans for next year.
- **Boat Watch** was relaunched in the Spring and they cover the whole of the North Devon Coastal area including Bideford, Instow, Appledore, and Fremington. 63 people have signed up and it is growing all the time.
- **Farm Watch** was launched in the summer and they have 74 signed up against a target of 100 which they set for themselves. What they have found is that many of the new Farm Watch members were already signed up to NHW but the messaging which they were receiving was not relevant to the farming scene.
- **Traffic** in the Northam Burrows has been targeted to highlight poor driving standards and the 'boy racer' culprits who have not always been of a young age. 2 formal warnings have been issued and 7 warning letters have been issued.

4. Open Forum and Question & Answer Session:

Q. The general population is increasing without taking into account the summertime influx of visitors to the South West. Is this going to be recognised in the forthcoming Police changes?

A. It is not known at the moment how policing will be changing. There will be an announcement in December which is hoped will give an indication of what is to come.

Q. What is going to be happening about the PCSOs?

A. Again, although there have been various rumours floating around, details are not known. A 25% cut in the Police Budget equates to the loss of approximately 40 officers for the Local Police Authority.

Q. How many scammers actually get caught?

A. This is difficult to quantify because many trails lead to outside the country. Trading Standards normally lead and co-ordinate cases with the police being called in when there is a raid or similar operation involved. It is from these raids that 'suckers lists' and stolen IDs are recovered which give an indication of the scale and professionalism of the criminal activities.

Q. Westward Ho! already has its own social media page with about 750 followers. Is this seen as a model for other areas to use?

A. The Police also make good use of their own Face Book page and it can be a very useful tool but care must be taken when posting items, so that they remain factual and we don't encourage people to become vigilantes.

- Scam emails can be forwarded to ActionFraud or reported to the police on 0300 123 2040.
- Many people are too proud to admit that they have been scammed which is masking the true scale of the problem.
- 80% of crimes are committed by just 5% of the population and many of them are already known to the police.

Sally completed the Police presentation by explaining that she joined the Beat Team earlier this year and covers the Bideford West and also Bideford Rural areas. As it is the PCSOs who know the communities and have good working relationships with them, she sees her position as being to support them rather than the other way round. She is also a Response Officer when

the need arises, if there is no dedicated Response Officer available. In acknowledging the excellent job which the PCSOs do she felt that it would be a sad day if the PCSO role was to be disbanded.

Tom thanked John and Sally for their excellent presentation and for supporting us at tonight's meeting.

5. Junior Section Update: Tom gave a brief overview of the background to having a Junior Section and that the idea was now moving forward. Luke Brennan who is a Bideford co-ordinator and Forum Member is to be the inaugural Junior Chairman and he was introduced to the Meeting. As NHW has always struggled to engage with younger people Tom felt that this was an excellent way to overcome the problem, and it has the support of the Forum. Tom set out the guidelines which the section will be working to, which are as follows:

- Work with the Senior Forum and receive guidance from them
- Assist the Police in Crime Reduction
- To cut crime and the opportunities for crime
- To help and reassure those in fear
- Encourage community awareness
- Form a group with other young people to share ideas and initiatives
- To give youth a chance to voice their opinions and ideas
- To work with the Police but not be run by them, but accept guidance
- Not to act as a vigilante group and put themselves in danger
- Show the public we are committed and keen to be involved

Tom explained that their Meetings would have a couple a senior Forum members in attendance and also, hopefully, a PCSO. These would be to give guidance and support only, with the Meeting run by the Junior Section members. This matter is not being rushed because it needs to be set up properly, with good foundations, and has already been discussed at several senior Forum meetings.

6. Tom thanked Angela and Luke for providing the refreshments and everybody for coming on such a stormy evening. The meeting closed at 8.50 pm. and everybody was wished a safe journey home.

7. Date for the Next Neighbourhood Watch Meeting:

Our next meeting will be the **Forum AGM** which will be held on **Tuesday 16 February 2016**, with the venue still to be announced. At this AGM, all the official posts and Forum positions are up for re-election. All the existing officers have indicated their willingness to continue for another term but if anybody else wishes to be considered they should contact the secretary to obtain a nomination form. The requirement for eligibility is that interested persons need to be already serving Co-ordinators, and they will need to have two nominees.

All meetings start at 7.15 and aim to close by 9 pm