

Caledonian Ward Safer Neighbourhood Panel

Minutes

7.00-8.50 pm meeting on 28.05.09 at Blessed Sacrament Parish Hall,
Copenhagen St.

Present

Chair: Cllr Paul Convery

Secretary: acting: Claire Milne for Jennifer Christie — Thornhill Square

Caledonian Ward Police:

Police Constable Mark Davis– Metropolitan Police

Police Constable Carel Le Masson – Metropolitan Police

Residents and Council members

Gloria Johnson – Perth House, Bemerton Estate

Stephan Schulte, York Central Residents Association

Sue Cartwright, Huntingdon St and Crescent St Residents Association

Bill Millett MBE (McKenzie Road resident)

Shirley Pinfold, Ice Wharf Residents Association

1. Area reports

1.1 *Bemerton Estate*

Paul Convery reported good progress with the works which are designed to make the area feel more pleasant and discourage ASB. Gloria Johnson said that residents are not all happy because some of the works are less effective than hoped and cars are being parked on green spaces.

1.2 *Bingfield Park*

There was some discussion about trouble caused by a scooter being ridden illegally in the park. This is of particular concern because, although there is no evidence of miscreants being associated with the SparkPlug project, some people think this is the case and approval of SparkPlug's planning application is at risk. It was agreed that if possible the bike's number plates should be taken down, which would help to identify who is involved and put a stop to it.

1.3 *Westbourne Estate*

Bill Millett reported vandalism to a children's playground, and bikes stolen from premises above a shop at 48-55 Roman Way. The shop has been under new management for the past 3 weeks. The new manager is suspected of under-age alcohol sales (which are common among off-licences), and is leaving rubbish out in an unsafe way. Bill will have a word with the shop manager and Paul with the rubbish collection authorities. HFI's security cameras may be helpful in identifying wrongdoers – even where the police know who is at fault, parents may need

convincing that it is their own children.

Bill also asked for the minutes of the previous meeting to be corrected. The mention of 8 foot railings should be deleted. It is the sloping approach to the garages that needs attention.

1.4 Market Road and Caledonian Road areas

The police mentioned a brothel on Caledonian Road near the tube station, and that ASBOs might be imposed on sex workers. Identity papers had been stolen from a man who had lost two children and his wife; Paul asked for details so that he could follow up and try to help this person.

There had been reports of people throwing packets of drugs into the prison over the wall from a roof in Wheelwright Street.

The newsagent on Caledonian Road between Offord Road and Huntingdon Street had been attacked by two girls. Luckily PC Masson was able to attend very promptly and the girls were arrested and have been charged with common assault, criminal damage and possession. The shop's alert box was not used.

There has been a spate of robberies focusing on lone women's handbags. Residents in Huntingdon Street had had police warning messages through their doors.

2. General issues

2.1 Stay Safe

The Stay Safe project discussed at the last meeting was for one night only, on the Caledonian Road on 27 March. A youth engagement team, working predominantly on the Caledonian ward, picked up children who appears to be in a situation in which they could be harmed and took them to a secure place. Being drunk was not enough to qualify.

2.2 Police publicity

It is Met Police policy not to put out general publicity that may alarm the public (eg about increased gang activity) although they will share specific information that may usefully alert people in a small area (eg the Huntingdon Street robberies). Personal alarms are available free from the police on request, but this is not advertised. Stephan Schulte suggested that the opportunity to apply for a personal alarm could be used to generate positive publicity for the police. He also stressed that meetings such as the current one would be much more effective if they were better attended.

2.3 Locking parks at night

Paul asked for views on whether parks should be locked at night. He explained that in Thornhill Square, for example, it was thought safer not to lock them because there are gaps in the railings which allow “unofficial” entry; if the gates were locked, somebody who had been chased in through a gap might have difficulty getting out again.

2.4 Designated Public Places (DPP)

A DPP is a place where open containers of alcohol are illegal. The London Borough of Camden is entirely a DPP, while in Islington only Elthorne Park is one. There was considerable discussion over the merits and practicality of having more DPPs in Islington. On the one hand, excessive drinking can lead to significant nuisance. On the other, the same rule would apply to ordinary social drinking and would be resisted by licensed establishments and picnickers. It was agreed to start by aiming to get the Regents Canal designated. As a first step complaints would be needed (to the police, or via a councillor) so that the police could present a case to the Council for designation.

2.5 Local gangs

There is a new gang in the area called N1 Cally Cally, consisting of teenage boys largely of Somali and Eritrean background and identified by yellow clothes and shoelaces. This gang has been involved in a growing number of robberies and also in a serious stabbing incident during Easter week outside Orkney House. A merger is planned with the Crouch Hill Boys gang. This is the main reason for the Dispersal Zone that was introduced for 3 months in late April. It can be extended for a further 3 months, but then has to be withdrawn and renewed if still justified.

Following discussion it was agreed that it was important to try to reach out to the gang members through their club (run on Monday evenings by Steve Griffiths at Blessed Sacrament Church Hall) and if possible through their parents or other older members of the same community. The housing authorities (HFI and Guinness Trust) should also be informed as ultimately offenders can lose their homes, which could be a strong lesson to others. The police and Paul Convery will do what they can.

3. Meeting dates for 2009

30 July: Jen can't do. **ACTION:** Ask for a volunteer from the panel.

24 September

26 November