
KATESGROVE NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION GROUP

Date & time of meeting: 21st July 2008, 7pm.

Location: New Christ Church Primary School, Milman Road, Reading, RG2 0AY

Apologies: Chris Bailey (CBA), Midge Dwyer (MDW), Peter Kennedy (PKE), Heather Plummer (HPL), Carole Porter (CPO), James Sankar (JSA), Carole Shepherd (CSH).

Chair: Kath Langdale (KLA).

Present: Cllr. Gareth Epps (GEP), Omendra Gurung (OGU), Mary McManus (MMC), Peter McManus (PMC), Rob Oldham (ROL), Sgt. Nikki Pocock (SNP), Richard Nante (RNA), James Schlackman (JSC), Insp. Kevin Sinfield (IKS), Maria Soulsbury (MSO), Cllr. Warren Swaine (WSW).

Guest: Emma Jones, Safer Reading Campaign

MINUTES

1. REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

KLA solicited feedback on the previous minutes. It was pointed out that the date was incorrectly stated as being in May. JSC promised to correct. JSC also noted that he had mis-quoted the Reading Streetcare phone number and would correct this also.

No other issues arose and the minutes were approved.

KLA reviewed actions from last meeting.

- Press did not attend for NAG member photo, despite assurances from both the Reading Evening Post and Reading Chronicle that they would attend.
- MDW and PCSO Kate Gillan visited businesses on Whitley Street. Many expressed an interest in joining a BusinessWatch scheme.
- PCSO Katie Gillan and PSCO Rod Holmes toured Whitley Street in an attempt to find a location for the NAG noticeboard. They noted that there is almost no wall space between shops (most have full glass fronts) for a noticeboard to be mounted. Suggested it could be mounted in a window, such as in the Post Office.

WSW offered to approach the HSBC, who do have some wall space, and also the owners of the Preimere store.

RNA offered to place one of the two noticeboards available on his premises, the Hook & Tackle public house on Katesgrove Lane. This was accepted with thanks by the NAG members.

- MSO had no progress to report on the Communications draft flyer. KLA to send text to MSO for next meeting.

Text from the PCSOs was prepared by PCSO Katie Gillan, and passed to WSW. WSW will pass this on to MSO.

- WSW solicited feedback from the group regarding the style of the future NAG website. The choice is between a 'catalogue' style site, with largely static information pages, or towards a 'blog' style site with constantly updated news posts and no static information. Various members agreed that there does need to be some static information, but items such as meeting minutes do need to be constantly updated. This leans towards the 'catalogue' style site, with some dynamic elements.

The address for the new site was discussed. WSW informed the group that if they wished to use it, www.katesgrovenag.co.uk was available for use. No objections were raised and this name was agreed.

- IKS contacted Cllr. Richard Stainthorpe regarding involvement with the NAG, but did not receive a response. Will try again for next meeting.
- JSA in on leave and not able to make the meeting. Emma Jones offered to source the map from a colleague who frequently produces similar maps.
- IKS apologies for not being able to source a drug activity hotspot map for this meeting due to internal issues within TVP. Will try again for next meeting.
- MDW toured house-to-house with PCSO Katie Gillan on Elgar Road and Francis Street, soliciting priorities feedback from local residents. This showed that in this locality, there was not a perceived problem with drugs, but with more obvious issues such as parking and bins.

KLA toured Alpine Street and Edgehill Street and had a similar response.

- IKS has requested that a notice is sent to NHW co-ordinators regarding residents' consultations but that it may take time to be sent out.

2. MATTERS ARISING

JSC noted that the NAG constitution obliges the NAG to put the meeting minutes in the public domain, and asked the NAG whether, given the sensitive nature of some matters discussed, a second 'sanitised' version of the minutes should be produced. It was agreed by the members that this should not be done, and that therefore sensitive matters should be left un-minuted.

3. SAFER READING PARTNERSHIP

The NAG welcomed Emma Jones of the Safer Reading Partnership (SRP) to talk about the work of the SRP and how it could assist the NAG.

The SRP is part of the wider Crime and Disorder Reduction partnership (with other partners such as RBC, TVP, RBFERS, etc)

SRP produces annual and 3-yearly crime reduction plans. Current targets are on:

- Violent crime
- Youth Offending
- Strengthening Neighbourhoods

Achieving these is worked on through the Safer Reading Forums. Emma's role is to co-ordinate these forums for the SE area of Reading, alongside Jo Richardson, who co-ordinates for NW Reading.

There are 7 forums across Reading. These meet quarterly, and have a broader brief than the three NAG priorities, as reflected by the targets.

Annual budget for the 7 forums is £120,000, This is typically used to pay for capital expenses such as:

- Improvements to street lighting

- Youth provision (such as gym equipment)
- CCTV
- Alleygating & anti-cycle barriers

Funding agreements have to balance the cost of the provision against the estimated cost reduction due to the reduction in crime they aim to achieve, which is not always easy to prove. Much of the estimated reduction is often qualitative, such as reductions in 'fear of crime'.

Some options are not universally popular, such as alleygating, or lights down alleyways (which can be seen to encourage unwanted use).

No ongoing funds are available to support schemes on a continuing basis.

Requests for funding are ultimately signed off by the RBC Lead Councillor for Environment & Sustainability (currently Cllr. Paul Gittings) and the Chief Inspector of TVP for Reading Borough (Ch. Insp. Steve Thwaites).

A typical forum meeting might include:

- An update from TVP
- Report from youth services
- Feedback from Anti-social Behaviour Action Groups (ASBAGs)
- Capital project updates

In addition to the 7 forums, a 'central' forum is held at the Civic Centre every quarter.

Meetings are open to the public, but anyone who wishes to attend is encouraged to get in contact with SRC coordinators in advance to discuss any issue they wish to raise. SRC is generally interested in hearing from community representatives who can work with the SRC to problem-solve, rather than individuals with complaints they simply want addressed.

Contact details:

Emma Jones

Safer Communities Neighbourhood Project Officer

Email: emma.jones@reading.gov.uk

(0118) 9390900 x 4257

The 'best practice' for securing funding is detailed in the SRC Capital Bids Guidelines and Bid form (to be distributed with minutes). Emphasis on:

- Background to the problem
- Crime statistics relating to it (if available)
- Results of consultations with local residents

The next forum meeting is on 3rd September, at South Reading Youth & Community centre, 7pm.

4. FEEDBACK

JSC agreed to send a contact sheet of NAG members to other NAG members.

IKS requested that a 'hit counter' was added to the upcoming NAG website to gauge level of use.

Regarding communications, an electronic copy of the Redlands NAG newsletter was requested by GEP. TVP to supply this.

JSC offered to forward the contact directory compiled by Stephen Cox of the Redlands NHW as an example of contacts to supply via the Katesgrove NAG communications.

EVA

ROL reported that the most recent EVA was held with no major issues to report, though a lack of attendance was noted. JSC apologised for not being able to attend despite living in a street covered due to ongoing work commitments on Tuesdays.

ROL is to forward results to JSC for distribution to NAG members.

Next EVA is on 9th August at 10.30am, likely led by Carl Cox. Meet at Waterloo Meadows Community Centre, and will cover Alpine Street, Edgehill Street, Waterloo Road, etc.

JSC is to forward the full schedule to members.

ASBAGS

KLA reported that Katesgrove area is mentioned regularly in Anti-Social Behaviour Action Groups, specifically the Elizabeth Walk and Spring Terrace areas. However, Katesgrove is no longer considered to have specific problems with ASB by the ASBAGs. Suggested that this could be down to a lack of reporting, and that if specific problems are seen, they must be reported so to flagged up.

IKS mentioned that drink restriction proposals have been put forward, though there is no specific evidence of drinking problems in the Katesgrove area. GEP enquired about these proposals, and KLA is to forward details.

IKS stressed that he was well aware that ASB was happening in the area, but needs specific reporting in order for it to be followed up.

5. CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

PCSOS

Little to report: 1 needle found in flowerbed near the Elgar Road bollards.

Elizabeth Walk area is a 'work in progress'.

SNP reported that TVP have a vehicle crime campaign ongoing due to large amounts of thefts in business area of Katesgrove, along with an operation centred on burglaries ongoing at present.

RESIDENTS

MSO requested that PCSOs speak to children at the school. SNP to task this.

Local residents passed on details of suspected drug dealing in area – TVP to investigate.

GEP passed on concerns of motorcycles using Elgar Road bollards as through road. ROL stated that signage is a concern. IKS and SNP raised concerns over problems with enforcement of this. Residents also reported that ASB around the bollards area is an issue. GEP will forward on details of progress on signage to ROL.

Residents reported that a group of travellers were briefly on an industrial estate off Elgar Road South, but moved off quickly following TVP intervention.

KLA discussed further her findings from door-knocking in Edgehill Street and Alpine Street. Main priorities in those areas were around bins (a WIP for Streetcare), parking (SNP reported that PCSOs are ticketing inconsiderate parking), and flytipping, for example in Edgehill Street, on the junction with Alpine Street.

IKS stressed that if further feedback from resident consultation indicates different priorities from those currently being auctioned by the NAG, the NAG should consider whether to change them. IKS also suggested the consultation results be posted on the NAG website when available.

GEP briefly discussed a pilot scheme tackling bins left on streets that had shown good success so far (approx. 4 bins left on one street, down from approx. 50 previously).

JSC discussed feedback passed on from NHW members over misuse of New Christchurch School fields, suggested signage as there is currently no notice stating it is private property.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Date of next meeting: Thursday 21st August. Meeting to be held at the new TVP office in Aveley Walk.

ACTIONS FOR NEXT MEETING

1. Communication team to continue working on draft newsletter –WSW to forward text from PCSOs to MSO.
2. IKS to contact Cllr. Stainthorp to encourage his involvement with the NAG.
3. KLA to liaise with Emma Jones regarding her offer to source map of Katesgrove area.
4. IKS to supply drug activity hotspots for map.
5. JSC to pass on contact sheet for NAG members.
6. Emma Jones to forward SRC newsletter to NAG email address, JSC will pass on to GEP
7. JSC to forward Sentinel contact directory to GEP.
8. JSC to forward details of EVA schedule.
9. KLA to email map of Proposed Drink Restriction Zone Extension to GEP.
10. SNP to arrange with MSO for PCSOs to speak at New Christ Church School in September.
11. GEP to forward details to ROL of progress requesting signage for bollards restrictions in Elgar Road.