
KATESGROVE NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION GROUP

Date & time of meeting: 4th June 2009, 7pm.

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

Chair: Kath Langdale (KLA).

Present: David Boobier (DBO), Uda Chalk (UDA), Mark Cutler (MCU), Carolina Greer-Correa (CGR), Bishwa Gurung (BGU), Hira Gurung (HGU), Omendra Gurung (OGU), Riann Davies (RDA), Louise Keane (LKE), Peter Kennedy (PKE), Mary McManus, MMC), Jack Meek (JME), PC Richard Noone (PRN), James Schlackman (JSC), Carol Shepherd (CSH), Insp. Kevin Sinfield (IKS), Maria Soulsby (MSO), Cllr. Warren Swaine (WSW).

Apologies: Dave Aldred (DAL), Cllr. Gareth Epps (GEP), PS Pete Moody (SPM), Rachel Reed.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

1. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

KLA opened the AGM by running through the minutes of the last meeting. The NAG approved the minutes.

2. UPDATE ON RECENT DEVELOPMENT

JSC informed the group that from now on the NAG website would be the preferred method of electronic communication for the NAG. All minutes and updates will be posted there. Members encouraged to sign up for automatic email updates from the website, as no manual emails will be sent out from now on.

A Facebook page for the NAG has also been created for those using Facebook. Content from the website automatically feed into Facebook.

IKS reported that the Aveley Walk Police office is really, actually, going to be open soon; the only remaining work is for the IT network to be installed.

3. POLICE UPDATE

KLA handed over to IKS for a summary of Neighbourhood Policing activity connected to the NAG.

IKS recalled that the first NAG priority was drugs. After a few months of work on this, it was determined that the NAG as a group could not do much more than educate and improve environmental factors relating to drug crime (alleyways, lighting, etc). Drug related crime remains very much a Thames Valley Police issue, which is being tackled through prevention, intelligence, and enforcement.

The second priority for the NAG, and the recent focus, was auto crime. Crime stats show auto crime is down 450 incidents in 2 years. IKS credited this to the 'empty car campaign', use of trap cars, and the Vehicle Visual Audit carried out by the NAG. PCSO Rod Holmes has been instrumental in sending out crime prevention advice letters to registered keepers of vehicles thought to be at risk. Some prolific offenders have been prosecuted and are currently serving custodial sentences.

The next priority for the NAG is Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). IKS stressed that the term often encompasses too much, and the NAG focus needs to be narrowed down to specific issues. Possible candidates include loitering, graffiti, vehicle damage, etc. Mini motos were mentioned by members of the NAG as a possibility, as well as begging. IKS reported that one persistent beggar has recently been put on an Anti-social Behaviour Contract (ABC), and another charged with robbery.

NAG MEMBERSHIP

IKS highlighted the low membership and attendance of the NAG, as well as a general apathy in the area, using the example that of the 1200 policing surveys recently sent out, only 36 were returned completed.

UCH raised an issue to do with residents parking, which IKS agreed to pass on to PCSOs.

WSW mentioned a recent national survey which showed that the feeling of 'belonging' to the neighbourhood was comparatively low in Reading, 15% below the national average, which may lie behind the lack of involvement.

IKS reported that crime overall was down 14% on the previous year for the period March-May (most recent figures). Reported incidents of ASB in particular were down 72% for March-May, and 30% for April-June. Surmised that lower crime rate may contribute to less action from residents, but stressed that figured only include reported incidents, and that **continuing to report any and all incidents is key to police action.**

The possibility of holding a future meeting at Waterloo Meadows was discussed, in particular to try and reclaim more involvement from the Katesgrove Residents Association. IKS will also try to secure a venue at Kennett Island.

IKS suggested the possibility of occasional weekend meetings to supplement current meeting schedule.

DRINKING ISSUES

IKS that the drinking control area was having some effect, and the generally it was not displacing problem drinking into other areas. Around 100 seizures have been made in the Elgar Road area since the control order came into force.

UCH reported that persistent drinks were often congregating at the steps next to the bus stop on Whitley Street. IKS reported that TVP are aware of the problem.

PCSO Road Holmes is tasked with sending warning letters to persistent problem street drinkers.

JME queried what action was being taken to prevent poor selling behaviour from off-licences (under age selling in particular). IKS mentioned that test purchases are ongoing and continue to be reasonably effective, but that some people will simply arrange for someone of the legal age to buy on their behalf, and that this was difficult to prevent unless witnessed by officers.

Widespread public misconception of there being a 'drinking ban' was discussed. IKS reported that it has the effect of unreasonably raising the expectation of what will happen to anyone drinking on the street, and stressed that action is only taken if the drinking is a problem.

JME highlighted particular issues with drunks on and around the Kennet footpath, and that some TVP officers were not confiscating alcohol even when there was a problem. IKS cited a lack of awareness still throughout the force since the control order is new.

UPCOMING ACTIONS

IKS proposed that an additional meeting of the NAG be held in August, which is not currently scheduled to have a meeting. **An additional meeting was added to the NAG meetings schedule, on Monday 24th August.** This will be held at the school as usual.

The deadline for the recent policing survey is therefore extended until 14th August, with results to be discussed at the August meeting.

PRN outlined the new 'Street Briefings' initiative by TVP that would be coming soon to Katesgrove. Details and dates of these will be posted on the NAG website. Leaflets are distributed through doors on affected streets one week in advance of briefings, with door-knocking performed on the day immediately beforehand.

4. ELECTION OF NAG COMMITTEE

KLA is stepping down as NAG chair.

MSO was proposed by KLA and IKS as Chair and agreed to stand. The appointment was unopposed and drew no objections.

DBO was proposed as a new vice-chair, which is currently a vacant post. The appointment was unopposed and drew no objections.

JSC agreed to stand for re-election to the post of Secretary. The appointment was unopposed and drew no objections.

The new committee are therefore:

- Chair: Maria Soulsby (MSO)
- Vice-Chair: David Boobier (DBO)
- Secretary: James Schlackman (JSC)

A new Communications team was named as consisting of PCSO Rod Holmes (PRH), Jack Meek (JME), and James Schlackman (JSC).

DBO asked to be forwarded a copy of the NAG Constitution for reference. JSC agreed to supply, and mentioned that new members need to sign constitution. IKS to bring to next meeting.

5. NEXT MEETING

An additional meeting was added to the NAG meetings schedule for August.

New Christ Church School, 7pm, **Monday 24th August.**

ACTIONS FOR NEXT MEETING

1. JSC to advertise the Facebook page on various community groups online.
2. JSC to circulate NAG Constitution document for reference.
3. IKS to bring printed copy of constitution to next meeting for new members.

NOTES

** Details of some items discussed by Thames Valley Police cannot be publically minuted so as not to compromise police operations.*