**Woodley and North Earley Community Forum: Annual General Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, 10th April, 2019, 7.30 – 9.30 pm**

**The Maxwell Room, The Oakwood Centre, Headley Road, Woodley, RG5 4JZ**

1. **Present:** Mary Bather (in the chair), Mike Evans (Vice-chair), PC Tracey Mills (TVP), Cllr K Baker (WBC, WTC), Mary Holmes (Chair – TCMI), Cllr S Rahmouni (WTC mayor), Cllr S Matthews (ETC), Cllr D Bragg (WTC), Residents: B Graham, R Heather, A Loyes, B Cutler, C Lawley, A Hine, A Scott, Mr & Mrs Haggerty, R Maslin, J Layhe, K Read, C Lander, P Farrington, I Hills,

**Apologies from:** Cllr A Swaddle, Cllr C Doran, Cllr M Firmager, Cllr S Younis, J Lissaman, S Boyt, Cllr L Blumenthal, D Provins, M Shaw

1. **Minutes of the previous meeting – 06.02.19 / matters arising not on the agenda**

* **Public safety leaflets:** These have been completed and have been printed. The chair has a delivery plan and delivery to vulnerable residents, GP surgeries and other organisations will take place over the next 2 months.

**ACTION: MB to oversee delivery of leaflets**

* **TVP events – information cafes:** PC Mills reported that these had been postponed until next year.
* **Neighbourhood Watch:** Chair had contacted Julie Susel at TVP about the possibility of obtaining some NW leaflets for the area. J Susel had replied to say that NW has been taken over by Thames Valley Alert (TVA). Discussion followed on how effective the new system was in providing residents less able to access the internet with relevant information. PC Mills replied that local police were aware of vulnerable groups and were working with these. It would be interesting to know the proportion of local residents were signed up to TVA.

**ACTION: MB to contact Karen Collins at TVP to find out.**

1. **Chair’s Report** – See attached.

Ian Hills thanked the retiring chair (Mary Bather) for her input to the forum over the last 2 years.

1. **Vice-chair’s Report (finance):** Forum had £45 in the bank (from donations) in spring 2018. It had since received a grant of £240 from WTC for the printing of leaflets. Currently £217 had been spent on printing leaving a balance of £67. A further grant of £40 from ETC would be paid into the account in May. The chair and vice-chair thanked ETC and WTC for the grants.
2. **Election of chair and vice-chair for 2019/20** 
   * **Elections: Chair:** there were no nominations or volunteers for chair. **Vice-chair:** Mary Bather nominated Mike Evans as vice-chair, seconded by Cedric Lander.
   * **Volunteers for committee:** There was some discussion regarding the need for a committee of about 5 members to help run the meetings, deal with minutes and publicity and keep the website up-to-date. M Bather, C Lander and D Provins were interested in being members of the committee. Ian Hills volunteered to help with specific projects.

Further discussion on the future of the forum was held over until the end of the meeting.

1. **Update from Neighbourhood Policing Team on recent reported criminal activity in the local area**

**Burglaries:** There have been a number of distraction burglaries in the Woodley area recently. Local police have an operation running to tackle these, 3 arrests have already been made and target areas have been leafleted. Messages regarding home security and how to avoid distraction burglaries have gone out on TV Alert.

**Theft from motor vehicles** has increased lately mainly because vehicles are not secure. However, owners of cars with remote vehicle opener are reminded to keep the key in a strong metal box to avoid it being hacked. Advice has gone out on TV Alert and local police will run an operation on theft from motor vehicles from 18 – 24 April.

**Ring doorbell CCTV –** residents are reminded not to post CCTV footage from this on social media but to send details to the local police.

**Local beggar** (Woodley Town Centre) has been charged a number of times already. He has a CBO and residents should call the police if they are approached for money. PC Mills advised that the best way to help the homeless was to give to a charity which deals with this rather than giving money or food to an individual who will often throw the food away.

**‘Knockers’ selling door to door:** PC Mills was asked if these were allowed to ask for a donation if residents were not interested in buying. She advised that the organisation they worked for would have a policy on this and it would be best to ask who they were working with and contact them.

**Contacting the police:** 999 is for emergencies (a crime currently happening / someone in danger). If the caller is unable to speak for any reason there are a number of ways in which they can confirm that it is a real call. Dialling 55 is one of these, but callers should follow the instructions given at the time. 101 is for non-emergencies but at present response is slow due to staffing issues. Residents can also email the local police on [woodleynhpt@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk](mailto:woodleynhpt@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk) if they have information / intelligence (e.g. regarding drugs)

**Antisocial parking:** There was a discussion regarding cars parked for lengthy periods (weeks) without moving on the roads as there had currently been instances the Whitegates area (The Drive, London Rd). PC Mills replied that if they were not taxed there should be reported to the DVLA – residents could check tax on the DVLA website. If they are taxed there is nothing the police can do about it. In cases where there appears to be a car dealing business operating and cars being traded are parked on the road residents should contact Planning Enforcement at WBC. The same applies to grass verges unless the car is causing an obstruction. If a car is parked on a road or verge or pavement with double yellow lines then it is a matter for Civil parking enforcement at WBC.

**Stop and Search:** This has not yet filtered down to the local area. Individuals cannot be stopped and searched if the police do not have information to support their doing so.

**Police covering Woodley:** There are currently 1.5 PCs and 4 PCSOs

1. **Local policing priorities - Review of progress / agree actions with respect to:**
   * **Antisocial behaviour (ASB)**: Local police have an operation running at the moment to tackle this as it is likely to increase during the school holidays. Police are out and about in plain clothes and in cars to keep a watch in the areas most likely to be affected.
   * **Speeding:** Woodley independent speed-watch is up and running. Details of anyone caught go onto a police database and if caught again they are likely to get a fine. The information is also used by the police to determine which roads to target with speed checks etc. In the long term if the local and police measures did not work WBC would have to consider traffic calming measures. Butts Hill Rd, Colemansmoor Rd and Reading Rd have been monitored. There are currently 20 volunteers. It is understood that the police community speed-watch is also up and running. WTC were setting up a small committee for their speed watch and would like someone from the TVP community speed-watch to be on it to avoid duplication.

**ACTION: MB to find out more about this possibility from the NAG Chairs meeting**

**PRIORITIES for the next 3 months to be ASB, Speeding and Burglary**

1. **Future of the forum** was discussed. The following points were made:

* Possibility of joining with another group e.g. TCMI, another NAG. It was thought that the forum and the TCMI had different objectives (forum was public safety, TCMI was making Woodley a successful town centre). Joining with another NAG would make the group too big and marginalise specific areas (e.g. Whitegates)
* Having a specific theme for each meeting so that the forum could concentrate on problem solving.
* The police only coming for part of the meeting – with possibly more frequent meetings.

It was agreed that it was important to publicise the forum to as wide a group of residents as possible but acknowledged that having numbers much above the mid-20s at the meetings would limit the possibilities of meaningful discussions.

PC Mills stressed the importance of the forum to the local police as a means of finding out what residents considered to be local problems. The meeting was in agreement that the forum should continue but recognised the difficulty of doing this in the absence of a chair to oversee the organisation.

Cllr Bragg suggested that those present went away and considered what they would like the forum to achieve and how they could help and then come back to the meeting on 17th July to make some final decisions, including elect a committee and appoint a chair.

**ACTION:** Future of the forum, election of committee and appointment of chair to be included on agenda for meeting on 17th July.

1. **Any Other Business**

* **Cycling in the precinct:** C Lander mentioned a recent near miss with a cyclist. It was explained that there is a TRO making cycling in the precinct an offence. The council has no authority to stop cyclists. The police were the only body who could enforce it. In practice the police do not have the manpower to patrol the precinct all the time but it was agreed after the forum’s survey last summer that they would work to tackle the problem through education in schools (for younger children), work on ASB (older children), regular patrols with words of advice (for adults). TCMI has had no recent complaints regarding cycling.
* **Signs on lampposts / railings / trees (e.g. for steam fair):** It was agreed that these could be dangerous. They are illegal and the council should monitor and ask the traders to take them down. In practice they did not have the manpower to do so.
* **Precinct public toilets:** Opening date still unknown – waiting for services to be connected.
* **Town Centre Manager:** Jacques was stepping down at the end of this month and a replacement had been appointed. Forum thanked Jacques for his support.

1. **Date and venue of next meeting**

**Provisionally – Wednesday, 17 July, 7.30pm Maxwell Hall, Oakwood Centre**