

Minutes of Semilong Community Forum meeting

February 13th 2008

Present: Michelle Aveyard (PCT), Daphne, Ann Timson, Caroline Humphries, Robert Briggs, Will Brown, Matthew Bushell, Ruth Pott-Negrine (Chron), Tess Scott (Cllr), Stephen Welyczko, Catherine Nestles, Sam Benfield, Wendy Howes, Brian Crutchly, Zoe Martin, Tony Clarke (Cllr), Tina Harvey, Robert Chadwick, Ally Dunn,

Apologies: Alastair Melton, Jen Kenny, Peter, Andy Langton, Caroline Humphries, Jack and Pam Thompson, Peter Slack

Abbreviations Used:

SCF - Semilong Community Forum

NBC - Northampton Borough Council

NCC - Northampton County Council

AGYCC - Alliston gardens Youth and Community Centre

MUGA - Multi Use Games Area

WNDC - West Northamptonshire Development Corporation

PCSO - Police Community Support Officer

FOR - Friends of the Racecourse

NHW - Neighbourhood Warden

JAG - Joint Action Group

HMO - Houses of Multi Occupation

The meeting opened at 7:35pm and was chaired by Zoe Martin

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

Matters arising from the last meeting

Actions

RC reported that he had decided to not contact the electric company regarding the litter in the substation as it wasn't too bad at the moment and he didn't want to call them out until it was really necessary.

Regarding the illuminated sign on Upper Hester Street, planning permission had been obtained before the sign was erected

Guest Speakers from SWAN (Sex Workers Around Northampton) Samantha Benfield

The speakers outlined the work of SWAN, explaining that SWAN supports women out of prostitution and helps reduce the impact of prostitution on the community.

They provide support in the form of, health advice and drugs withdrawal, housing/benefits/ legal advice.

they have a 60% to 40% of Street to Off Street clients. They do outreach twice a week on Quorn way.

they have funding for another year.

The number of sex workers has reduced dramatically over the past few years. the focus is now on stopping new girls from becoming regular sex workers.

SWAN asked people to report any prostitution type activities to them or the police.

RB noted that there had been a few incidents on Harding Terrace. Would these have

been caught on CCTV?

SWAN are working towards no prostitution in Northampton and part of their main focus is to get sex workers off drugs which force them to keep working as prostitutes. 100% of prostitutes that SWAN currently work with, have a drug addiction.

There are no Off Street parlours that they are aware of in the Semilong area.

In the past year they have worked with 57 street workers - 20 of which are regular workers. There has been a 77% reduction in street workers since operation Uncanny began.

Women are mainly 25 years plus. There has only been one case involving a migrant worker. SWAN only works with female sex workers although there are some male workers in the town but they are more hidden.

ZM gave thanks to the visitors

Neighbourhood Warden

ZM read notes on behalf of AL

AL has been trying to find out who is the owner of the school site at the bottom on Semilong road to ask them to clean up the site. SW suggested that if the site was deemed un-secure, then the owners would have to clear it or the council could go in to clear it.

BC suggested trying a land search via the land registry.

Section 46 notices had been served and 4 prosecutions had resulted.

It was reported that the top of Hester street was subject to a lot of fly tipped furniture 6 untaxed vehicles had been removed.

TC said there were budget issues over employing more NHW in other areas and we were lucky to have AL.

AGYCC

Steven was away on holiday.

MA noted that the photocopier was going ahead as far as she knew.

NBC were giving a lease to the centre to help in its bid to have charity status and more security

Finance

No change in the account
balance £513.73

Urban

Plans were circulated regarding the Leicester Trc Health Centre development of the old Duke of Northumberland pub. They included a new Co-op pharmacy and an overhead link bridge. RC and ZM are to respond to the plans on behalf of the Forum There is a JAG project regarding proposed legal and controlled tipping areas. RC asked for the Forum's opinions on the idea. Mrs Timson noted that there is no caretaker on the Semilong social housing area which contributed to the problems regarding fly tipping.

HMO (Houses of Multi Occupation). An article in The Chron had produced a lot of responses from people all over the town. The survey is to measure the density of residents and to help make the houses safe for the inhabitants and to help when calculating planning issues and other council related matters such as school crossings, sewerage, parking etc.

It will be a large task involving using the electoral role, visual checks, number of

letter boxes, council tax records, amount of bin bags. It would be turned into a street by street report compiled with the help of local residents, volunteers and a funded post part funded by the Community Chest funds. We could expect a 90% precision in the report.

ZM asked for a definition of a HMO as tis seemed to change depending on the local authority and also noted that it was a large project for just the Forum to take on.

TS gave an update on the St George's Trc school problems. - There had been another meeting at which the councillor responsible had still not attended or sent apologies for not attending. Raised bollards were still a possibility. The proposed 67 houses with 53 car parking spaces would increase the problem. The traffic island can't be made wider but it could be made longer. It might not be possible to change the crossing from a Pelican to a Puffin crossing. It might also be possible to synchronise both sides so that people could cross without having to wait in the middle. Still no official letter from the Council. Setting a precedent is worrying the council. the CC also say that no parking restrictions could be put in Quorn way and no patrol cold be put in place on Barrack Rd. Some large school sign posts could be put in place on Barrack Rd.

Environment Green

BC Miller's meadow was to benefit from additional lighting.

ZM had attended the FRC Racecourse master Plan meeting. The Forum agreed to the proposed plans as they stood.

Health

MA - There is to be a Breath Easy group starting for residents ho found difficulty in breathing. Wednesday was to be a health provision day with checks available for hypertension, diabetes and cardiac disease in AGYCC

On 16th April the is to be a health Awareness day for residents and members of the Irish support group. Nurses would be doing checks on residents. there would also be smoking ceasation advice and support and smoothie making.

A well being event is to take place on the Racecourse on 27th April, 10am - 3pm. The Sports development team at the council were also involved and would be laying on sports events as well as a health walk. People were encouraged to bring a pic-nic.

4 health notice boards had been requested.

MA has managed to link in with a sexual health worker.

There was also an "Am I Bovered" event launch to encourage people to check on their neighbours especially elderly neighbours.

Crime

No SCT representative

There had been a JAG presentation of ongoing work in regards to criminal damage (including graffiti) in Castle ward and how to reduce it including education, enforcement and engagement.

AOB

Post Office in Regent square was facing closure despite letters from the local community to keep it open. This would lead to an increase in use of the Semilong post office. it may result in an increase in antisocial behaviour as many people who are excluded from the town centre by various orders, would have to use this post

office instead. these people tended to be the homeless people with drink and drugs problems who need to post office to access their benefits. Many off the homeless people currently used Regent Square because of its proximity to the homeless shelter. Semilong post office might not be able to the increase in numbers.

Date of Next Meeting

12th March

Meeting closed at 9:15pm