

CANTERBURY CITY COUNCIL

WHITSTABLE AREA MEMBER PANEL

**Minutes of a meeting held on Monday, 20th July, 2009
at 7.00 pm in the Parish Social Centre, 15A Castle Road, Whitstable**

Present: Councillor Todd – Chairman

Councillor Fisher
Councillor Harrison
Councillor Law
Councillor Samper
Councillor Seath
Councillor Sharp
Councillor Thomas
Councillor Windsor
Councillor Wratten
County Councillor Dance

Officers: Nick Hughes - Democratic Services Officer
Jo Pannell - Community Liaison Officer
Jim McDonald - Director of Corporate Services
Chris West - Herne Bay Town Centre Co-ordinator

44 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor J Perkins and County councillor Harrison.

45 DECLARATION OF ANY INTERESTS

Councillor Mrs Harrison declared a personal interest in item 4 Any Other Business as she was related to a senior member of Kent Police.

46 VARIATION OF THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA

The Chairman altered the order of the Agenda to allow Chief Inspector Harrison to speak first.

47 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS TO BE DEALT WITH IN PUBLIC

Chief Inspector Mark Harrison had been invited to the meeting to address Members on the recent press articles on the diversion of Police resources from the coast to the city and the Isle of Thanet.

Chief Inspector Mark Harrison read a pre-prepared statement on behalf of Kent Police and made the following points:

- i) He was aware of the performance goals and finance restrictions that would affect Kent Police in the future. The East Kent Senior Management Team were looking in to the issue.

- ii) He was disappointed that a member of Kent Police had gone to the local press without authorisation and had undone a lot of hard work that had been done in the community.
- iii) A review of the numbers of Police in Herne Bay and Whitstable was an idea, but no action of any kind had been taken.
- iv) Kent Police were committed to finding ways of getting Police back on the streets rather than dealing with administration tasks.

The Chief Inspector then took questions from the Panel and made the following points:

- i) Surveys had shown that residents in the district rated the way that the Police and the local authority worked together very highly.
- ii) The Police had introduced PACTs and the anti social behaviour newsletter and confidence in the Police was high.
- iii) If the public called 999, then a response would be sent from anywhere in the County in order to get to the person in need. The response would not just be by officers based in the area.
- iv) The Coastal neighbourhood team were excellent and people were really beginning to understand the role of PCSOs.
- v) The two recent murders were isolated incidents and were the first murders in 16 years in the District.
- vi) He was looking into the possibility of a review in to Police levels in the district, however nothing had been programmed and it was currently just an idea.
- vii) He did not know why a member of his staff had decided to go to the press about the matter and he was disappointed that the person had felt that they couldn't come to him about it.
- viii) The communication between the Public Safety Unit and Council would improve still further when the Public Safety Unit moved to the Military Road offices.
- ix) He was happy to come to WAMP on a quarterly basis when needed to talk to Members further.

The Panel thanked the Chief Inspector for attending and Members made the following points:

- i) It was very irresponsible for a staff member to go to the press about something that was untrue.
- ii) It was excellent to see the mobile Police station in Tankerton.
- iii) It was great to see that speed enforcement action was being taken along Marine Parade.

- iv) The City Council has a good website and the Police were welcome to use it to help advertise where the mobile Police Station was going to be located.

48 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED -The minutes of meeting of the 1 June were agreed as a correct record.

49 **FORTHCOMING DECISION LIST**

The Panel considered the Forthcoming Decision List for the period 1 August 2009 to 30 November 2009.

RESOLVED – That the Forthcoming Decision List for the period 1 August to 30 November 2009 be noted.

50 **TRIAL TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBER ARRANGEMENTS FOR AREA MEMBER PANELS**

The Panel considered the public speaking arrangements for the Whitstable Area Member Panel.

RESOLVED – The Whitstable Area Members Panel agree to continue with the current arrangements for public participation for the year 2009/10.

51 **REPORT OF THE COASTAL TOWNS CO-ORDINATOR**

The Coastal Town Co-Ordinator outlined his report to the Whitstable Area Member Panel and made the following points:

- i) There were less empty shops in the town.
- ii) Iceland would start renovating the old Woolworths building in September and it would hopefully open at the end of October.
- iii) He had permission to put an art display in the window of the old Woolworths building, up until the refurbishment. Local groups were being sought to produce artwork for the display.
- iv) Some landlords refused to allow anything in the windows of their shops as it could detract from the resale or rental potential.
- v) The Whit card had been launched and 18,500 cards had been distributed. Over 150 businesses were now involved.
- vi) He explained that he was working closely with the Public Safety Unit regarding shoplifting in a number of shops. There had also been issues with graffiti and some of those responsible for the graffiti had been made to clear it up.
- vii) Checks were being carried out to ensure that shops used the shop watch radio.

- viii) The Park and Ride was in its infancy, but had proved very popular over the first weekend of the Oyster festival.
- ix) The team was working on the events calendar for next year. He explained that it was important that events were not scheduled at the same time as events elsewhere in the district.
- x) Trading patterns in the Harbour Street end of town were very good. However at the other end of town some activities were to be staged to help the flow of visitors and to entice shop owners to open their shops on a Sunday.
- xi) The “Taste of Whitstable” brochure would be available from next week.

The Coastal Town Co-Ordinator then answered Members questions and made the following points:

- i) The art display in the old Woolworths building would not be subject to business rates, as it would not be selling anything displayed.
- ii) The Whit card did not replace the residents’ card and could be used at many of the same places.
- iii) There was no further news on the empty cycle shop in Oxford Street or the old Indian restaurant.
- iv) The trial of the Park and Ride would tease out issues such as the end time and the capacity.
- v) Any problems that might have occurred with refurbishment of the Woolworths building had been resolved.
- vi) There had been calls enquiring about Whit cards from residents of Faversham and Sittingbourne among others. There had also been enquiries from other local authorities as far away as Scotland asking how the scheme worked.

52 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS TO BE DEALT WITH IN PUBLIC

A Member raised that Matters Arising had been removed from the Agenda; this denied Members the chance to talk about important issues that were not on the agenda.

A Member also raised that a recommendation from January 2007 had not been forwarded to the Executive regarding the loss of car parking in Whitstable. It had now been forwarded to the Executive.

53 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

There being no other business the meeting closed at 7.47 pm