



Reports from outside bodies

June 2016

Police Liaison Meeting

Held at Yateley Police Station 23 May 2016

Present:

PC Paul Knaggs

PCSO Rory Newstead

Jeff Smith (B&HTC)

Alison Blanchard (YTC)

Tony Spencer (YTC)

Issues raised

Police availability

Jeff Smith raised the issue of no Police presence at a public EU Referendum meeting held recently at Frogmore. A police presence was requested in plenty of time prior to the meeting but no-one was available. There was an incident at the start of the meeting concerning an MEP who turned up unannounced and was vociferous in his insistence to appear on the platform, which was already booked with a balance of speakers for the debate. At one point the situation looked like it could get out of hand, but fortunately one of the young stewards present was able to persuade the gentleman to leave peacefully.

Paul said they because of leave and the shift patterns around the planned time of the meeting, there was no-one who could be spared to attend, but would obviously respond to any incident.

Police relatively quiet

Paul gave brief details of a planned police action which sent up to 12 police cars (some unmarked) into the area in recent weeks, to clamp down on known or suspected criminal activity. Paul and Natalie took part in an unmarked car as "spotters", directing marked police cars to anything suspicious, as they patrolled areas of supposed activity. Several of the cars were equipped with both forward and back facing vehicle registration identification cameras. A successful operation that has, for the time being at least, removed some criminal activity in our two local beats.

Empty house

"Chestnuts", Darby Green, became empty recently and has been subject to some vandalism, cracked rather than broken windows. Apparently new owners are aware and have boarded vulnerable windows. Police keeping an eye on it.

Litter and intimidation

A fisherman reported a large family gathering of possibly Nepalese origin at Swan Lake fishing banks, where they spent most of the day holding an al fresco celebration/ceremony with food and drink. There was some rubbish dropped during their stay, including some incidents of defecation in the bushes. One member of the family did collect rubbish in a bag, but once filled, threw the bag in the lake! Apparently, there were so many of them in the party that the fisherman felt intimidated to approach them about their behaviour.

Next meeting to be arranged.

Hart Housing Forum

Held at Hart Council Chamber on 19 May 2016

Cllr Stephen Gorys opened the forum with a brief introduction about the scope of the meeting, to look at the background and future strategy for housing in Hart, in partnerships with various bodies, Sentinel being the largest. In the second half of the morning, we would be required to take part in workshops, and finally discuss key points from those exercises, which will eventually be incorporated in a report to follow.

Phil Turner, Head of Community Services gave the background and update to Hart Housing Services. The problem is the Housing and Planning Bill is still running through Parliament and being heavily amended by the Lords for consideration by the Commons, so the final Act is expected sometime in the summer. The Act will encourage housing authorities to promote starter homes and support self-build. Starter homes outside London have a ceiling of £250k after 20% discount, which is a property priced at £312k, while the average price of a family size semi-detached in Fleet is £358k (average house price varies from £381 in Church Crookham to £502k in Hartley Wintney). Other measures are pursuing banning orders for rogue landlords (which Hart already does), Right to Buy extended to housing association tenants, the discounts funded by local authorities (i.e. council tax payers), with receipts paid to The Treasury, who will pass it on to the housing associations; local authorities will have to sell off housing stock (Hart does not hold any housing stock); rent rates introduced for higher income earners (over £31k); reduction in regulations for social housing; phasing out secure tenancies for life for social housing tenants; changes to planning affecting neighbourhood and local plans; and encourage use of brownfield sites (including automatic planning permission in principle).

In the further national context, homelessness was discussed. Wales have introduced legislation requiring local authorities to provide housing for someone homeless after 56 days, but nothing yet applies in England. Rent to Buy (RtB) should be made available so tenants pay only 80% of rent for first 5 years in order to save a deposit to buy. Also mentioned was the 25k Syrian refugees (SVPRP) being housed during this parliament.

Among the questions after Mr Turner's comprehensive rundown, were concerns about selling off social housing, whether the housing stock lost would be replaced on a like for like basis. London were said to have a policy of 2 for 1, but as far as the current Bill is concerned there is no clarity yet, with the situation changing every week.

In rural or isolated communities, can we not allow allocation of housing to local people? Hart decided only the limited Rural Exception Schemes (RES) would be ring fenced. Otherwise, to maintain fairness across the district, they are not allowed give preferential rights to locals.

There were a number of interesting charts. Hart Housing Register contains 1232 households, with 65% in work. A recent survey of households who require large family sized housing, indicated there were 70% working, earning between £18k to £43k/year and 59% suffered from overcrowding (lacking 1 bedroom). Homelessness in Hart varied from 5 to 16 at any one time in the past two years, while those in temporary accommodation varied from 15 to 21 households

Further talks were given by Katie Bailey on the Neighbourhood Plan process, in particular with 4 local neighbourhood plans; Kevin Thurlow from East Hants DC updated where the Hart Local Plan was going and the schedule; and Jackie Sutherland from the Department of Works and Pensions, updated us on the introduction of Universal Credit in Hampshire, starting in Southampton in 2017.

Workshops

The briefing on the workshops was from Nicola Harpham, and we were split up into four random groups where we discussed the Strengths and Weaknesses of each subject, as well as the opportunities each presented and the possible threats to the housing supply.

I attended the workshop looking at Affordability. The other workshops covered were: Universal Credit, The Future of Affordable Houses and Joint Working in Hart.

There will, in due course, be notes circulated deriving from the forum and workshops.

There were about 50 in attendance, including representatives from nearby boroughs in Hampshire, Berkshire and Surrey, housing associations (both Hart partners and others), Department of Work and Pensions, local parish councils, Fire Service, Hart CAB and developers specialising in affordable and shared ownership homes

Yateley Village Hall Management Committee Meeting

Held at Village Hall on 10 June 2016

Cllrs Tony Spencer attended. Cllr Barnes and Mrs Pynn sent their apologies.

The Village Hall appears to be in safe hands, by a committee who care as much about this historic building as we do and want to maintain it as a vibrant asset to the community.

Mrs Pynn left a report in her absence, showing that there were a large number of bookings by users, several requiring the bar. Mrs Bradley reported verbally the healthy state of the finances and would supply the latest accounts by email. Advertising for cleaners has not received much response, so Mrs Pynn and Mrs Bennett were doing that for the moment, with Mr Millsom using the polisher.

On buildings maintenance, Mrs Bennett is dealing with the decorator over painting the fascias and barge boards, ADT are installing CCTV, and the electrician has replaced some of the outside lights, some internal exit lights, and most of the lights in the bar area. Some potholes in the car park have been temped filled but a permanent repair for some of the larger ones will be needed, Mr Bradley will deal with this. The area around the Village Hall is now being regularly litter picked and looks the better for it.

Under AOB. An abandoned car has been removed from the car park. A petrol lawnmower has been purchased to keep the grassed areas under control. A bare patch on the war, caused when the Air Cadets took their noticeboard to the new building, may be replaced by another noticeboard or the wall painted. Rubbish in the garden area will be removed ready for users expecting to use the garden soon. A rateable value form for the HMRC is due for submission, but will wait for Mr Whittaker's return as he has more experience with this form.