

Armley Forum

Minutes of meeting
Tuesday 16th July, Armley Library

Chair: Cllr Janet Harper

Present: Keith Harrison, J Ramell, E Bowes, M Pugh, G Hunter, K Anderson, B Mason, S Moss, M Quirke, S Richmond, F Skyth, J Lynskey, D Peck, B Draper, S Friend, L Cheney, H Shields, D&H Boutle, D&M Stead, T Maynard, P Wilson, X Chevillard, A Gibbons, A Willis, L Durkin, M Sinclair, D Gregory, M Parker, S Shpherd, R Donnelly, A Malik, T Kempster, J&J Newsome, C Clarkson, Cllr Lowe, Cllr McKenna

Apologies: D Newsome, E&B Rayworth, Hon Ald Nelson, Mrs Lemm

1 **Welcome & Introductions**

1.1 Cllr Harper welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 **Minutes of last meeting and matters arising**

2.1 Highways issues from May meeting – no update received, K Sibson to chase. KS
Vandalism at cemeteries – Cllr McKenna is meeting the head of cemeteries to discuss.
New Wortley Cemetery Gates – now on order

3 **Police & Crime Commissioner**

3.1 Mark Burns Williamson, the directly elected Police and Crime Commissioner for West Yorkshire attended the meeting alongside the new Neighbourhood Policing Inspector Steve Williamson.

3.2 The Commissioner was elected in November 2012 to a new post created by government to replace the old Police Authority. Mr Burns Williamson was a councillor for 30 years and was a member of the Police Authority before becoming its chair from 2003-12.

3.3 The Commissioner outlined some of his key responsibilities:

Appointing a Chief Constable and holding them to account for policing
Setting a budget (due to be cut by £140 million over the next six years)
Publishing the Police & Crime Plan highlighting the force's priorities

- Reducing Crime & Re-offending
- Domestic Violence
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Reducing Anti-social behaviour
- Supporting victims and witnesses

3.4 Joined up working with other services will be the key to minimising the budget pressures. The Commissioner visited the Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team where officers from the police, housing and council share an office and work together on cases. He has also met with magistrates and is looking at how improving court processes could cut down the time police officers spend waiting to deliver their witness statement.

3.5 The Commissioner recently launched a campaign called 'Give Us All The Money Back' to ask Government to let police forces keep all the money seized from criminals to help fight crime. Currently half of what is recovered goes straight to the treasury. To support the campaign sign the petition at www.westyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk.

- 3.6 Recent crime trends include:
Increase in shoplifting, particularly food, could indicate people are finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet.
Increase in reporting of sexual offences, some are historic following the publicity around the Jimmy Saville case.
Burglary remains a priority for the police. Rates have been falling, but are still higher than comparative cities.
On a positive note, there were no recorded homicides in West Yorkshire during May.
- 3.7 Steve Willilamson introduced himself as the new Neighbourhood Policing Team inspector following Inspector Franklin's move to a new force. He has been a police officer for 10 years in the North West Division, most recently as a sergeant in Pudsey.
- 3.8 Anti-social behaviour is a priority for Armley, and can include drug taking / dealing, nuisance bikes and groups of intimidating youths. The NPT is ensuring procedures are in place to deal effectively with complaints including flagging up repeat victims and visiting them immediately.
- 3.9 Current crime data 19th June – 15th July:
Burglary down 56% from 25 to 11
Theft from motor vehicle down 18% from 22 to 18
Theft of motor vehicle down 80% from 10 to 2
Robbery is no change at 3
Criminal damage 8% down from 47 to 41
- 3.10 The Commissioner and Inspector welcomed questions from the floor:
Question from Cllr McKenna – This is the third inspector in a year and a half, Armley is a priority area and needs some continuity.
MBW: The Chief Constable is responsible for police appointments but residents do want stability. I would like to see a two year commitment from officers to NPTs.
- 3.11 Q: Why is Pudsey walk in police desk closing?
MBW: In the light of the cuts, we've had to look at ways of saving money. Following an operational review of police helpdesks based on the number of visitors, opening hours and staff costs, some desks have been earmarked for closure. The priority is keeping officers and PCSOs on the streets, and whilst residents' concerns are understandable, there were low numbers using the helpdesks, and there are many ways of contacting the police nowadays including the 101 non emergency number, local surgeries, email and through the website.
- 3.12 Q: Why is nothing being done about anti-social drinking on Mistress Lane, it's getting worse.
SW: There is an issue with street drinking on Town Street and Mistress Lane. Officers can't be there all the time, but we do deal with groups when we see them, reminding them of the DPPO – no consumption of alcohol in public open spaces. We also have advisory postcards written in a range of Eastern European languages. Residents are asked to keep calling the 101 number to report any instances, as more calls will move it up as an operational priority.
- 3.13 Q: Cllr Lowe recently carried spoke to Ley Lane residents door to door. Drug dealing is rife in the neighbourhood with open dealing on fields, stealing bikes and setting fire to bins. There is a perception nothing is being done.
SW: The police are aware of the issues here and we are working with partners to deal with it. There have recently been three drugs warrants issued in Armley and two cannabis farms detected. An action day was held to identify some of the issues already mentioned and youth service providers are working with the young people to encourage them into training and employment.
- 3.14 Q: It costs a lot to charge someone with a crime and it's frustrating when they get let off with community service.

MBW: This is often raised. The CPS and courts are independent and the Police & Crime Commissioner can't influence policy although I can express concern about a sentence given or provide a community impact statement on behalf of victims.

3.15 Q: There has been a spate of stolen car number plates, why are they only stealing one though?

SW: Don't know why only stealing one, the PCSOs are running operations in hotspots to attach screws that can't be removed without snapping the plate.

3.16 Q: I asked for information on volunteering but didn't hear back.

MBW: There is a drive to recruit more volunteers to the police, not just special constables as help with administration can keep more officers on the beat. We are also looking at apprenticeships.

3.17 Q: Three weeks ago reported dangerous parking at Pudsey police helpdesk, didn't receive a response.

SW: This is unacceptable, will follow up and report back.

3.18 Q: Have witnessed abuse towards PCSOs. Anti-social behaviour is getting more serious, have seen needles left on streets to be picked up by a three year old. Can take two hours for police to turn up, suspect they know the PCSO shift pattern and patrols.

SW: The NPT has successfully closed down nine properties for anti-social behaviour. The way Leeds tackles anti-social behaviour is seen as a forerunner by other forces. Gathering evidence can take time but the NPT is having some success in dealing with ASB.

3.19 Q: Armley Grange Neighbourhood Watch hasn't been kept up to date by the police in recent months.

MBW / SW: There will be a consistent approach to communicating with Neighbourhood Watch groups throughout West Yorkshire. In Inner West, a PCSO will be allocated to each Neighbourhood Watch to ensure they have a consistent point of contact.

3.20 Q: What is the police doing to tackle racism in the area?

SW: There is a hate crime co-ordinator who covers the inner west area. They take an overview of every hate crime incident, and attends the multi-agency hate crime scrutiny panel with the local inspector where every incident is looked at to ensure the appropriate response is being taken. Police visit the victims of hate crime daily for four weeks and offenders are dealt with quickly. Hate crime is under-reported and it is important that every victim feels confident about coming forward.

4 Healthy Living Network Town Street Hub

4.1 Carole Clarkson attended the forum to announce the opening of the Healthy Living Network Hub on Chapel Lane, next door to the One Stop Centre. It will provide Armley town centre with a new community space for groups to use alongside a greengrocer providing affordable fruit and vegetable, art and craft activities and a pop up café.

4.2 HLN really want Armley residents to get involved and let them know what they would like to see provided at the Hub. At the moment it's open on Wednesday and Thursday from 9.30-4pm. Future activities include 'Eat the Streets' a community gardening project to grow fruit and veg in the town.

4.3 Get in touch with Carole on 2948040, www.townstreethub.org.uk or twitter @townstreethub.

4.4 Questions from the floor:

Q: The name is misleading, it's on Mistress Lane / Chapel Lane not Town Street

A: People associate Armley with Town Street so we wanted to make sure people knew it's right in the town centre. The original project came out of a Mary Portas High Street bid which was to support Town Street and the name stuck from that.

4.5 Cllr McKenna commented that the Armley Ward Members provided £10,000 Well-being funding to support the project. Councillors also have new funding to put towards activities for children and young people aged 8-17 and would like to hear proposals from the Hub.

4.6 Cllr Harper asked whether there would be any health promotion at the Hub as Armley has a life expectancy rate twelve years lower than Farsley / Calverley.

A: We will provide nutrition and health advice at the centre.

5 **Recycling**

5.1 Rachel Charlton returned to the forum to go through the results of the green bin recycling questionnaire handed out at the last meeting.

5.2 This questionnaire has been completed at forums across the city. Unfortunately Armley had some of the lowest scores so far. This is useful to know as the Communication Team needs to do more to educate the population on how to recycle.

5.3 Most respondents said they would put textiles in the black bin. There are clothing bins in car parks across the city, or charity shops are happy to take rags if the clothing isn't suitable for resale.

5.4 86% said they would put yoghurt pots in the green bin. Unfortunately they can't be recycled and are classed as contamination. The general rule for plastics is if it holds a liquid it's OK to go in, e.g. shampoo bottles, drinks bottle etc. Look for the triangle 1, 2 or 4 on the packaging, or the Leeds City Council website has a lot more information on what we accept.

5.5 Other results from the Armley forum survey:
24% plastic bags are going to landfill when they can be recycled.
10% aren't recycling envelopes, even those with windows can go in the green bin.
20% respondents would put an aerosol in the black bin, these actually make money when recycled, so please do.
98% said they recycle paper and cardboard which is great.

5.6 The Armley respondents had one of the highest proportions of people putting glass in the black bin. The weight of glass makes it expensive to go in landfill, see the website for your local glass recycling bin.

6 **Any Other Business**

6.1 Something about a derelict building on Thornhill Road being demolished. Cllr Harper reported no planning application been put to Plans Panel.

7 **Date and time of next meeting**

7.1 No meeting in August. Next meeting is Tuesday 17th September 7pm Armley Library
Please send agenda items to Kate Sibson