

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY COUNCIL LIAISON SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, TREDOMEN ON WEDNESDAY, 19TH SEPTEMBER 2001 AT 7.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Community Councillor C.R. Roberts - Chairman
Councillor C.P. Mann - Vice-Chairman

Councillors:

Mrs. E.M. Aldworth, H.A. Andrews, D. Bolter, Mrs. M.E. Hughes, M.H. Newman, J.E. Newnham,
D.J. Potter, H. Price, Mrs. J.A. Pritchard.

Representing Community/Town Councils:

Aber Valley	-	Mr. J.S. Humphreys (Clerk)
Argoed	-	A.S. Williams
Bargoed	-	
Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen	-	
Blackwood	-	J.B. Criddle, Mr. I. Palmer (Clerk)
Caerphilly	-	Mr. M. Evans (Clerk)
Darran Valley	-	C.R. Roberts, Mrs. P. Cooper (Clerk)
Gelligaer	-	Mrs. M.R. Richards, Mrs. A. Davies (Clerk)
Llanbradach	-	
Maesycwmmmer	-	
Nelson	-	
New Tredegar	-	
Penyrheol, Trecenydd & Energlyn	-	Mrs. A. Nash, Mr. R.B. Williams (Clerk)
Rhymney	-	Mrs. M. Betts
Rudry	-	Mr. J.L. Matthews (Clerk)
Van	-	

Together with

I.G. Medlicott (Head of Legal Services), A. Jones (Crime Reduction Officer), H.C. Morgan (Senior Committee Services Officer)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Bevan and R. Woodyatt, Community Councillors J.E. Roberts, Mrs. G. Howell, Mrs. M.J. Hallam and G. Llewellyn and Mrs. H. Harris, Mr. W.G. Woodroffe, Mr. D. Cooper, Mr. A. Hoskins, Mr. W.T. Powell and Mr. J. O'Brien (Clerks of Bargoed, Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen, Maesycwmmmer, Nelson, New Tredegar and Van Community/Town Councils respectively).

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th June 2001 (a copy had been sent to each member) were received and noted.

MATTERS ARISING

A Charter for Community /Town Councils

It was noted that the proposed meeting has been scheduled for 4 p.m. on Tuesday, 2nd October 2001. The Chairman indicated that he was unable to attend at that time and it was agreed that Community Councillor J. Criddle be nominated to take his place.

With regards to consultation generally, it was noted that consultation document on maternity services had been received from the Health Authority but that due to a misunderstanding had not been circulated to Community/Town Councils for comments. The Health Authority has since forwarded the document directly to the Clerks.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Head of Legal Services attended the meeting and outlined the provisions of the Act as it relates to Community/Town Councils.

Proposals within the legislation to establish a standards committee were outlined and it was noted that the regulations provide specific rules for its composition and operation. In noting that the Committee must include at least one Community Councillor, and bearing in mind the first meeting may well be convened in October, the representatives present nominated Community Councillor J. Criddle to serve on the Committee and Community Councillor A. Williams to act as substitute if required.

Reference was also made to the Code of Conduct and to the fact that each Councillor will have to sign an undertaking to abide by the Code. In order that all Members have an understanding of its requirements, it was reported that arrangements would be made for training sessions with all Community Councillors in the near future.

CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT MARK POLIN

The Members welcomed Chief Superintendent Polin to the meeting and noted that he had received a copy of the issues that would be raised.

Specific reference was made to manning levels and the Chief Superintendent detailed the number of Officers he has, the number on long term sick and those on restrictive duties. He pointed out that the policy of sickness absence is currently under review. He referred to a feasibility study, which is underway into the proposed merger of C and E Divisions, and to the possibility of savings, which could result in the ability to provide additional officers. He mentioned also the Government Initiative (Crime Fighting Fund) and proposals to recruit additional Officers and hoped that the Division would be able to do so early next year.

The Chief Superintendent also referred to the number of Special Constables (which has increased this year) and to proposals to further increase their number over the next year. He mentioned ongoing deliberations as to whether they should be paid a bounty for their services. Discussions are also underway to establish whether Special Constables and/or volunteers from within the community can be trained to manage reception desks, thereby releasing more Police Officers into the community. He also touched on the potential for encouraging private organisations to consider funding additional Officers and discussed ensued on the practicalities of such a proposal.

It was reported that there has been an increase in the crime detection rate and a decrease in overall crime figures but it was still felt that the fear of crime is increasing. The Chief Superintendent referred to an initiative to audit each ward, in partnership with other organisations, to determine what is required in those specific areas. He also detailed various other initiatives being undertaken within the division and made specific reference to recent drug enforcement activities as a result of ongoing intelligence work, the introduction of two response vehicles and proposals to give Traffic Wardens further powers.

Discussion ensued on the hours that certain stations are opened and it was noted that in view of their custody facilities, Blackwood and Caerphilly are, at present, the only two that remain open for 24 hours. Proposals to rationalise the opening times of other stations are ongoing.

It was requested that in view of their high profile role in the community in reassuring the public, there should be more Officers on the beat. The Chief Superintendent indicated that manpower resources affects the allocation of Officers and those on the beat are not always able to respond to an incident as quickly as an Officer in the car. He referred to the response time for immediate calls and indicated that the target of 20 minutes is being met 96-97% of the time (outside of that all routine calls must be met within three hours). He reported that this issue is something that is raised on a regular basis and that he hoped to address the matter in such a way that improvements would be seen in the near future.

Speed controls and fixed penalty fines were discussed and representatives suggested that they should target areas where there have been casualties rather than dual carriageways etc. It was noted that hypothecation of those fines will be used to provide further cameras.

Proposals to enhance CCTV facilities were welcomed and it was noted that the bid for Newbridge had been successful but that the bid for Risca had not been. It was confirmed that there is a facility in the CCTV control room to relay pictures to a monitor in the Police Control Room in Cwmbran so that duty officers are able to view the details.

With regards to vandalism in parks and playgrounds, the Chief Superintendent indicated that the Police do not receive many reports from the Council but do so from local residents. It was suggested that enforcement should be taken under public order offences rather than under existing byelaws and the Chief Superintendent indicated that he would examine this suggestion.

Reference was then made to enforcement in alcohol free zones and it was noted that it is enforced by warning the offenders and requesting they refrain from consuming the alcohol. It is only an offence if they fail to do so. Mr Alun Jones indicated that certain areas are covered by byelaws but that recent changes in legislation (which came into force on 1st September 2001) enable an order to be made rather than a byelaw. He indicated that he is in the process of preparing a report for consideration by Cabinet and proposed to circulate a list of those areas originally suggested in case there are other areas which it is thought should now be included. The question of signing was also raised and the policy adopted for the siting of the signs was outlined.

With regards to licensing applications (off licences, public entertainment licences etc), the Chief Superintendent detailed the grounds on which they could object to the application (i.e. against an individual if he is not thought to be a fit and proper person to hold such a licence or against a premises if it is believed not to be suitable for the purpose for which the licence is intended). A question was raised in respect of the policy for applications for the sale of alcohol from garages. It was noted that there is no policy and that individual applications are considered and comments referred to the Magistrates Count as appropriate.

Concerns were expressed at the increase of off road biking and the Chief Superintendent indicated that he would be meeting representatives of the Council next week when this issue would be discussed in detail. He referred to the possibility of an area being designated as a permanent off road site and to ongoing discussions on this proposal and suggested locations. He pointed out that it is not only the Police who can take action but that other bodies such as the Forestry Commission also have the same powers.

Discussion then ensued on the dangerous parking of cars being advertised for sale, those on double yellow lines, on pavements, outside shops, loading and unloading and on pavements overnight. The Chief Superintendent indicated that Traffic Wardens assist in this area but that there are instances whereby they, or an Officer, may not be in the area when the offence is being carried out. There have also been occasions where officers have been called to a lay-by, area of land or road/street where a car is being advertised for sale but if it is taxed and not parked in a dangerous position there is no action that can be taken.

In closing, the Chief Superintendent requested that details of any specific problems be forwarded to him in order that they can be investigated and action taken as appropriate.

The Chairman thanked the Chief Superintendent for his attendance and for his responses to the variety of issues raised.

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

In accordance with Standing Orders, at 9 p.m. the meeting was adjourned. It was agreed that the following reports be deferred to the next meeting and in the meantime if there are any issues to be raised, they should be put in writing in accordance with the agreed liaison procedures.

- (a) Christmas Lighting;
- (b) Assessment of Traffic Calming Schemes.

The meeting stood adjourned at 9 p.m.