

## **TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **PARISH PARTNERSHIP PANEL**

**Thursday, 17th November, 2016**

**Present:** Cllr N J Heslop (Chairman), Cllr M A Coffin (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Mrs J A Anderson, Cllr T I B Cannon, Cllr R W Dalton, Cllr S M Hammond, Cllr D Lettington, Cllr B J Luker, Cllr R V Roud, and Cllr T B Shaw.

Together with Birling, Borough Green, Burham, Hadlow, Platt, Plaxtol, Trottiscliffe, West Malling, Wouldham, Wrotham Parish Councils and County Councillor Mrs S Hohler

Councillors O C Baldock and H S Rogers were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs S M Barker, R P Betts, Hildenborough and Kings Hill Parish Council and County Councillor Mr M Balfour

### **PART 1 - PUBLIC**

#### **PPP 16/27 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Chairman referred to the death of Honorary Alderman Anne Moloney who had sadly passed away on 11 October 2016. A minute's silence had been observed in her memory at the recent meeting of Full Council.

Miss Moloney was a former borough councillor, who had represented the ward of Snodland for 8 years; as well as a former Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Town Council and an active and passionate member of the Parish Partnership Panel. The title of Honorary Alderman had been conferred in February 2016 in recognition of her commitment and contribution to local government and her constituents.

A memorial service in her honour would be held at 1130 am on Tuesday 22 November 2016 at All Saints Church, Snodland.

The Chairman concluded by saying that Anne would be greatly missed.

#### **PPP 16/28 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**PPP 16/29 UPDATE ON ACTION IDENTIFIED IN THE LAST MINUTES****PPP 16/21 - Local Sewer System**

An invitation had been extended to Southern Water to attend the Parish Partnership Panel to address concerns regarding the sewer system. Attendance had been provisionally confirmed for the meeting on 16 February 2016.

Borough Green Parish Council thanked the Chairman for making the necessary arrangements and welcomed the discussion with Southern Water.

**PPP 16/30 SPEEDWATCH SCHEME**

The Speedwatch Manager (Alan Watson) provided a presentation which set out details of the speedwatch initiative and how it operated within communities. The aim of the initiative was to increase awareness, through education, of excessive vehicle speeds on local roads, help residents make a significant contribution to local road safety and help generate valuable data for the community to inform highway measures.

Schemes were 'owned', funded and operated by local community groups, such as the parish council, acting as volunteers with support based in the Central Process Unit at Kent Police Force Headquarters in Maidstone.

Kent Police supported Community Speedwatch by delivering appropriate training, providing site risk assessments, sending advice letters and insuring volunteers against public liability risk and personal injury whilst on the roadside.

Operating at the roadside in 20, 30, and 40 miles per hour (mph) limits, Speedwatch practitioners monitored the speeds of passing vehicles using portable speed indication devices. They recorded and reported the speed and identified details of vehicles travelling at or above nationally-specified speed thresholds (25, 35, and 46mph respectively).

The registered keepers of vehicles seen repeatedly or excessively speeding anywhere in Kent in the previous 12 months were then sent a warning letter and advice by Kent Police.

Within Tonbridge and Malling there were currently sites being assessed in Addington, Coldharbour, East Malling, Hadlow, Kings Hill, Larkfield, Offham, Shipbourne, Wateringbury and West Malling. It was noted that Tonbridge and Malling was the second most productive Community Speedwatch in Kent. Wateringbury was the highest recorder in the Borough with a high number of excessive speeders noted. However, there had been a steady decline in activity in the Borough and the reason for this was not yet understood.

Mr Watson indicated that he would be happy to speak to any inactive groups to regenerate local interest.

Reference was made to the 50% subsidy being offered by Kent Highways towards equipment for new start up groups, or for groups where the equipment was faulty or shared. Further details were available by contacting the Speedwatch Co-ordinator on [CSW@kent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:CSW@kent.pnn.police.uk)

Finally, it was reported that Community Speedwatch would be going on-line shortly to offer a centralised and enhanced system. This included links to social media where it would be possible to name and shame individuals.

The Chairman referred to comments made by Waterringbury Parish Council at the last meeting of the Parish Partnership Panel regarding the lack of support and follow up by Kent Police, which they believed had led to the decline in activity, as volunteers no longer felt it was worthwhile without effective enforcement.

Mr Watson was confident that this was an improving position and better support could now be provided as more resources became available.

In response to a question about the speeding thresholds, the Panel was advised that these were decided by Kent Police and they allowed a level of 'tolerance for different manufacturers'. It was also commented that there were insufficient officers to offer earlier enforcement.

In addition, Members were advised that the speed detection equipment used was not Home Office approved so could not be used as evidence to support enforcement. However, Community Speedwatch was a valuable and effective tool in educating and raising awareness.

With regard to training of volunteers a target of end of December had been set to enrol all those interested and any outstanding requests would be followed up as soon as possible.

West Malling Parish Council indicated that the online training was very good as it was simple and easy to use and provided flexibility about how and when it was done.

The Chairman thanked Mr Watson for his informative presentation and hoped that more volunteers could come forward. It was also hoped that parishes were reassured that support was now available.

### **PPP 16/31 KENT POLICE SERVICES UPDATE**

Inspector Mark Ginsberg provided a verbal update on the achievements made in performance and the neighbourhood policing agenda.

It was reported that the position in the Borough remained good despite a 9.2% increase in crime. Tonbridge and Malling had the second lowest crime levels in Kent and remained one of the safest places in the County. Increased reporting of incidents, more accurate recording of crime and fewer resources were believed to have contributed to the percentage increase over the year. In addition, violent crime included harassment and social media contributed significantly to these figures.

Particular reference was made to resourcing levels with officer numbers remaining relatively stable and Kent Police continued to actively recruit. The number of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) was reducing and a new recruitment campaign would start shortly.

ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) had been installed throughout the Borough and was a useful and effective tool in providing security, as well as an excellent resource in tackling crime.

Recent police initiatives included:

- Op Lily: dealt with nuisance vehicles at a number of locations across the Borough. 4 warnings had been given to drivers with one vehicle removed as unsafe.
- Op Argonaut: tackling anti-social behaviour at various locations. Several dispersal orders had been granted and had proved successful in moving people to more suitable locations.

### **PPP 16/32 COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE**

The report of the Director of Central Services provided an update on the work of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), which was reviewed and noted by the Panel.

The Licensing and Community Safety Manager (A Garnett) reminded Members that the Community Safety Unit (CSU) worked closely with Kent Police and were co-located at the Council offices at Kings Hill. There were weekly meetings with other organisations, such as housing providers and the Probation Service, to discuss issues and formulate actions.

Particular reference was made to the measures being taken to tackle anti-social behaviour in West Malling. As well as trying to identify those causing the issues Kent Police had put in place some Dispersal Orders, which had been very effective. Residents were appreciative of the action taken and the CSU were grateful to Kent Police for executing these measures.

It was anticipated that the vacant post of Anti-social Behaviour Officer would be filled by December.

Operation Valetta, which had taken place on 20 July, was a joint initiative between Kent Police and Kent Fire and Rescue Services targeting drivers committing offences. During this operation a total of 75 cars were stopped in Cannon Lane, Tonbridge and London Road, Hildenborough. As well as enforcement action, where appropriate, restorative justice was offered.

Finally, Members were advised that an Independent Police Advisory Group (IPAG) had been established for Tonbridge and Malling. The Group were looking for members to represent sections of the community to attend. Further information was available from [ipag.sevenoaksdistrict@gmail.com](mailto:ipag.sevenoaksdistrict@gmail.com)

Kent Police and the Licensing and Community Safety Manager both participated in a brief question and answer session.

In response to a question from Burham Parish Council, it was confirmed that S59 granted powers under the Police Reform Act and applied to both driver and vehicles. This meant that vehicles being used anti-socially or driven without due care and attention and where there was a repeat occurrence within 12 months could be seized.

Members commented that Operation Valetta appeared to be an excellent initiative and should be continued or repeated on a regular basis. Inspector Ginsberg recognised the Operation's success and hoped that it could be repeated at different locations throughout the Borough but it was subject to having sufficient resource available. It was noted that PCSOs could monitor speed and pass on information to police.

Borough Green Parish Council referred to significant speeding problems on the A25 and the difficulties they had with Kent Police and/or other agencies taking any sensible actions. Inspector Ginsberg advised that PCSOs regularly monitored the situation and offered to clarify the latest position out of meeting.

Another member of Borough Green Parish Council referred to the two CCTV cameras purchased in a joint venture with Kent Police and asked about the location of one that had been moved. This would be progressed out of meeting.

In response to a question regarding the use of cannabis, it was confirmed that this remained illegal but it was difficult to get a magistrates warrant without proper corroboration of the offence. Corroboration included intelligence gathering and reporting by more than one person.

Finally, surprise was expressed at the low number of drivers stopped for using a mobile phone during Operation Valetta given the high profile it received in the media. Reference was also made to the recent use of

social media to obtain drugs. This information would be shared with Kent Police out of meeting.

The Chairman thanked both Kent Police and the Licensing and Community Safety Manager for their contribution and advised that in future both of these items would be combined on the agenda.

### **PPP 16/33 KENT COUNTY COUNCIL SERVICES UPDATE**

The Kent County Council Community Liaison Officer (Anne Charman) reported on a number of County initiatives and consultations. Further detail was set out in the Kent County Council Services update report attached to the agenda.

Particular reference was made to the closure of Snodland library for refurbishment work. It was expected to re-open on Wednesday 21 December 2016.

Current consultations included the A26 Cycle Route; KCC Draft Budget Proposals 2017/18 and comments were encouraged. All Kent County Council consultations could be viewed online at: <http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti>

Applications for primary school places were now open and these should be submitted by 16 January 2017.

The Volunteer Support Warden Scheme had just completed a successful pilot and the intention was to offer all town and parish councils in Kent the opportunity to participate. Details would be shared in due course.

The Chairman referred to the recent refurbishment of Snodland Station ticket office, which was a joint venture with Network Rail and the County Council. This together with the work at Snodland Library demonstrated the commitment to economic regeneration in the town.

### **PPP 16/34 TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL SERVICES UPDATE**

The Chairman provided an update on key points relevant to Tonbridge and Malling. The headline messages included:

#### **Christmas Waste Collection:**

This year there would be no suspension of the green lidded bin service over the Christmas holiday period. In weeks commencing 26 December and 2 January all refuse and recycling collections would take place just one day later than normal. These collection arrangements, together with handy hints on recycling at Christmas, would be communicated via bin

hangers which would be delivered to residents over a two week period starting 5 December, as well as on the website: [www.tmbc.gov.uk/waste](http://www.tmbc.gov.uk/waste)

### **Council Tax setting:**

The Director of Finance and Transformation had written to all parish councils on 2 November 2016 following the meeting of Full Council advising them of the decisions regarding s136 and Council Tax Reduction grants and the introduction of Special Expenses. In summary, the recommendations outlined at the last meeting of the Parish Partnership Panel, and set out in those Minutes, had been agreed.

Parish precept forms had also been enclosed and should be returned by 27 January 2017.

The tax base for 2017/18 would be prepared in early December and parish councils would be advised of details for their own parished areas as soon as possible thereafter. The Chairman assured Members that this information would be shared at the earliest opportunity as the Borough Council was mindful that parish councils had to set their own precepts.

Finally, further detail relating to the Special Expenses (Fairer Charging) consultation and decision was available on the website at:

<https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/consultations/public-consultation-fairer-charging-in-tonbridge-and-malling>

### **Council Tax Reduction Scheme:**

An update to the Borough Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18 had also been agreed at Full Council on 1 November 2016, details of which were available on the website at:

<https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/services/advice-and-benefits/council-tax/council-tax-reduction-scheme/council-tax-reduction-scheme-20172018>

### **Business Rates – 2017 Revaluation:**

The Valuation Office Agency had now released the new valuations for non-domestic properties which would come into effect from April 2017. If parish councils wanted to check their own valuations, as there had been some changes, details were available on the Gov.uk website: <https://www.tax.service.gov.uk/view-my-valuation/search>

If there were any queries these should be directed to the Valuation Office.

**Local Plan – Update and Consultation:**

The Local Plan consultation ended at 1700 hours on Friday 25 November 2016.

**Retail Centres outside Tonbridge:**

Most of these were now completed with the most recent being in Wateringbury, where a defibrillator was installed, and Plaxtol, where improvements were made to the access to the car parking area. Work continued to progress projects for West Malling and Snodland and both the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and the Economic Regeneration Officer were working closely with both teams.

The Borough Council was also working with Action with Communities in Rural Kent to roll out a new business support programme for village/rural stores. The offer would specifically include one to one guidance and support from a specialist retail advisor on business planning, store layout, product sourcing, networking with other retailers and diversification.

Around 20 stores had been identified for support but general marketing would also be considered to promote the scheme. Further information was available from the Economic Regeneration Officer (Jeremy Whittaker).

**Community Lottery:**

There continued to be a good response to the launch of the Borough Council's online lottery, operating under the name of Hive, with 28 good causes now approved as members. These included a number of sporting clubs, schools and organisations providing mental health, disability and homelessness support services.

The next meeting of the Parish Partnership Panel was scheduled for Thursday 16 February 2017 and would focus on discussions with Southern Water.

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm