

COMMUNITY LIAISON COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting held on 21st November, 2006.

Present: Councillor E.T. Williams (Chairman); Councillors G. John, G.C. Kemp, Mrs. A.J. Preston and K.R. Stockdale.

Representing Town and Community Councils:

Councillor S. Hodges (Barry Town Council); Mr. D. Wolfe (Barry Town Council); Councillor T. Stenstrom (Barry Town Council); Councillor D. Graham Woollard (Colwinston Community Council); Councillor M.Y. Williams MBE (Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council); Councillor L. Price (Llancarfan Community Council); Councillor P. King (Llandough Community Council); A. Pryer (Llanmaes Community Council); Councillor C. Reece (Michaelston Community Council); Councillor J. Marks (Michaelston Community Council); Councillor G. Thomas (Pendoylan Community Council); L.N.A. Evans (Peterston-Super-Ely Community Council); Councillor R. Preston (St. Brides-Super-Ely Community Council); Councillor S. Allen (St. Georges and St. Brides-Super-Ely Community Council); Councillor S. Palmer (St. Nicholas and Bonvilston Community Council); Councillor A. Foyle (Welsh St. Donats Community Council); Glyn Jenkins (Welsh St. Donats Community Council); Councillor E. Jervis (Wenvoe Community Council); Councillor I. Moody (Wenvoe Community Council); Councillor P.J. Thomas (Wick Community Council).

Also present: Councillor N.P. Hodges (Vale of Glamorgan Council); Inspector A. Rice and Assistant Divisional Fire Officer N. Brown (South Wales Fire Service).

536 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE -

These were received from Councillors R. Bertin, J. Clifford, Mrs. V.M. Hartrey and Mrs. M.R. Wilkinson; Councillor D.B. Thomas (Colwinston Community Council); Councillor S. Wilson (Ewenny Community Council); Councillor E. Hacker (Llantwit Major Town Council); Councillor D.M. Thomas (Llantwit Major Town Council); Councillor J. Curran (Penarth Town Council); Councillor G. Roberts (Penarth Town Council); Councillor K. Griffiths (St. Dontas Community Council); Councillor R. Skinner (Penllyn Community Council); and Councillor M. Roach (St. Georges and St. Brides-Super-Ely Community Council).

537 MINUTES -

AGREED - T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 26th September, 2006 be accepted as a correct record, subject to it being noted that in respect of

- Minute No. 338 - Police Matters - the representatives from Llandough Community Council also advised Committee that the PACT meetings were working well in their area; and
- in respect of the referral to Cabinet from the Committee that “Cabinet consider additional areas within the Vale to be designated under the legal drinking laws” - the Committee was advised that the Cabinet had on 18th October, 2006 Cabinet resolved that “Kate Thompson (Operational Manager Regulatory Services) prepare a report on this matter for consideration at a future meeting of Cabinet”.

538 POLICE MATTERS -

Inspector Andrew Rice (recently appointed Inspector for the Barry sector), advised Committee that the Police detection rate for the Vale of Glamorgan was good but that there had been an increase in crime within the Vale of Glamorgan - for Barry and the Rural Vale 7.7% with a decrease in Penarth of 2.2%.

Crime incidents were reported as follows:

- violence - 519 incidents
- dwelling burglaries - 96 offences
- autocrime - 95 thefts of motor vehicles, 205 thefts from motor vehicles.
- Drug offences – 132

It was also reported that to date, the biggest crime was in relation to criminal damage with 663 incidents being reported.

In respect of the Penarth area, there had been a significant reduction in youth annoyance. The success of policing on Halloween and Bonfire Night had been very good, these were traditionally noted as the most busiest nights for the Police within the Vale but had proved relatively quiet.

Reference was made to a fire at Barry Dock which the Inspector advised that no doubt the Fire Officer present would provide more detail on. However, currently no success had really been made in detecting who had been responsible for the attack.

The Inspector further reported that the PACTs in Barry were working well but that he was aware that Inspector Patterson and Inspector Taylor were experiencing difficulties in recruiting people to the PACTs in their areas.

The Alleygates Programme had been “expanded further in the Barry Area, the gates were in place and the keys had been issued.”

In respect of a request for the placement of speed cameras, the Inspector agreed to refer the matter to Inspector Patterson who was responsible for the Welsh St. Donats area.

AGREED - T H A T Inspector Rice be thanked for his attendance and presentation at the meeting.

539 SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE MATTERS -

Assistant Divisional Officer Neil Brown was welcomed to his first meeting. Mr. Brown Assistant Divisional Officer based in the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service Partnerships Division and would be attending Community Liaison Committee meetings on a regular basis to update the Committee on matters affecting the Vale. He further advised that the Partnerships Division had been set up to work with Statutory Partners including the Police and that he himself was covering two Unitary Authority areas i.e. the Vale of Glamorgan and Bridgend.

Statistics

From April 2005 - March 2006 over 51,000 emergency calls had been made to the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service. These calls included, for example 13,000 of the calls for fires, 1,500 road traffic collisions, 120 rescues of animals and 1,000 false alarm calls. Within the Vale of Glamorgan the following staffing of stations existed:

- Full time Station at Barry
- Day Staffed Station in Cowbridge
- Full time Station in Penarth
- Retained Station in Llantwit Major.

During the year three school fires had taken place in the Vale of Glamorgan and the Youth Activities Co-ordinator was currently working with individuals in respect of these incidents where possible. A significant issue facing the Service was the number of vehicle fires that were taking place in the Vale of Glamorgan. There had been 17 in July, 50 in August and 70 in September.

In respect of hoax calls, as a result of increases of these types of calls, the Fire Service had appointed staff to challenge the callers with certain questions which were being asked to enable them to decide whether the call was a genuine call or a hoax call.

Another problem facing some Fire Service areas was the physical assaults that were being made on Fire Fighters and he was pleased to report that in the Vale of Glamorgan there had been no attacks on Fire Fighters to date.

Road traffic collisions were also on the increase and a number of hot spot areas were noted in the Vale e.g. Cowbridge A48, Llantwit Major, (the back lane from Llantwit Major to Cowbridge), Barry and a few incidences in Penarth. In May there had been 16 reports, August 12 and September 14. A Member of the Committee asked the Assistant Divisional Officer what the success rate was in respect of the 1,000 hoaxes that were being received and had there been a successful outcome. The Assistant Divisional Officer advised that a monitoring system was in place and he would arrange for the statistical information to be available at the next meeting.

Another member of the committee stated that he lived in Wick, and that he had not heard any mention in the officers presentation of any incidents in the Wick, Ewenny or Ogmores by Sea areas. The Assistant Divisional Officer explained how the Service's database was set up and that it did not indicate ward by ward. However, he explained that these areas would have been addressed under Llantwit Majors and other surrounding Stations figures. Due to the locality of the Areas and the nearest and best response times of the Stations not all of the figures would come under the Vale. He did however, assure the Councillor that the Service would be covering all of the mentioned areas at all times.

In respect of a fire incident at the Docks, he advised that several businesses had been affected and the first call in respect of the fire had come from the Dock Security Guards themselves.

The Chairman expressed his appreciation at the attendance of the Officer and reiterated to the Committee that the Fireman "is a real professional in his role and the role is far more diverse than it had previously been."

AGREED - T H A T Assistant Divisional Officer Neil Brown be thanked for an informative presentation and the Committee looked forward to seeing him at future meetings.

540 GRASS CUTTING 2006 (DEER) -

The report outlined for committee the grass cutting work that had been undertaken in 2006. Although it was reported that grass cutting was not one of the Council's statutory services, it was clearly an important local service for the community. The current grass cutting service had been organised in order to provide the best and most appropriate service possible within the budget available. The report outlined and explained the rationale behind the grass cutting arrangements that had been employed for the 2006/07 season. It was further reported that grass cutting was a heavily resource dependent service due to the nature of the work and was highly mechanised and required significant staff resources. Over the years the Visible Services parks Division had introduced a mix of service delivery options involving "in-house and external service providers" in order to obtain the best value for money. Work had therefore been undertaken by a combination of external contractors, skilled parks employees and seasonal staff. For the 2006/07 season the grass cutting arrangements were reported as follows:

- Highways Grass Cutting - strategic routes such as the A48 were mown under contract by tractor-mounted flails six times per season. Non-strategic routes were mown by a tractor mounted side arm flail on a twice per season basis. Both these functions were undertaken by a local farmer under contract;
- Vale Gateway Routes, Strategic Highways - external contractors cut the main tourist route into the Vale of Glamorgan from Culverhouse

Cross to the Airport on a monthly cycle six times per year. It also encompassed a number of other subsidiary routes, .e.g. Barry to Cosmeston Lakes Country Park;

- Barry Ten Day Routes - the Council's in-house staff supplemented by seasonal staff employed for the summer period, cut a number of different routes into and around Barry on a ten day cycle. The work included Cardiff Road, Docks Link Road, Millennium Way and Barry feature parks;
- Rural Communities Grass Cutting - the work was undertaken on a nine cuts per year basis on a fifteen working day cycle and generally included the rural communities such as Dinas Powys, Llantwit Major and Cowbridge as well as the majority of small villages. All the work was undertaken by external contractors which were managed by the Parks Division. The report also highlighted the number of Community Councils supplemented the Vale Council's regime at their own cost and the Parks Division were willing to modify the schedule where contractually possible to assist in competitions such as the Best Kept Village;
- Urban Grass Cutting - the Council's "in-house staff" supplemented by seasonal staff employed for the summer period cut all the areas of amenity grass including sites in the remit of parks, highways and housing in Barry and Penarth. The work was undertaken on a nine cuts per year basis on a fifteen working day cycle;
- Parks and Playing Fields - formal parks and playing fields were cut on a ten day cycle. This was again undertaken by the Council's "in-house staff" supplemented by seasonal staff employed for the summer period;
- Sports Facilities - e.g. bowls, cricket, rugby and football were cut to the requirements of the sports' governing body by skilled "in-house staff".

It was noted in the report that the grass cutting arrangements for 2007/08 season were currently under consideration but that it was envisaged there would be no likelihood of increased cutting frequencies due to budgetary constraints. As such, it was therefore, planned to aim for a similar level of service to that provided in 2006/07.

Committee was then advised that if they had any issues in relation to their Town and Community Councils, to contact Phil Beaman and advise him of the areas of concern.

Members however, at the meeting, raised a number of issues as below:

- Hedges

The Officer advised that the Council did not cut hedges unless they were owned by the Council.

- Ragwort

Ragwort was not cut, it was pulled out and it was based on a priority area.

- A Wenvoe representative congratulated the Vale on the work undertaken at Station Road;

- The use of contractors

The Officer advised that a review had been completed by the Audit Commission in Wales with a recommendation that the Authority should look at the use of contractors as opposed to in-house staff. Over the years this had been regularly reviewed and as such the use of outside contractors and in-house employees was balanced;

- Wet grass on pavements left after grass cutting

It was the contractor's responsibility to ensure that all grass was picked up and if there were any issues the Officer asked that they be reported in order that appropriate action could be taken with the contractor;

- Damage to hedges by contractors

Again the Officer asked in the case of specific incidents could these be reported as soon as possible in order that the matter could be taken up with the contractor.

- Japanese Knotweed

For treatment in parks and open spaces it was the Parks Divisions responsibility, for public rights way, it was the landowners responsibility. For Japanese Knotweed on the adopted highway it was the responsibility of the Highways Maintenance Division.

AGREED - T H A T the report be noted and the Officer be thanked for his informative presentation at the meeting.

541 GRANTING OF FREEDOMS IN THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN (DLRS) -

The report informed Members of the nature of Freedoms granted by local authorities and the procedure for granting such Freedoms.

There were two types of Freedoms; Honorary Freedom and Freedom of Entry.

- Honorary Freedom of the Borough was an honour granted by the Local Authority to individual citizens of the Local Authority area .
- The Freedom of Entry was an honour granted to service units such as regiments, ships of the Royal Navy, RAF stations etc., which had rendered

conspicuous service and which were closely associated with the Local Authority.

The granting of such Freedoms was governed by Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). The Act provided that a County Borough Council may admit the persons of distinction and persons who have in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the County Borough as Honorary Freemen. Freedom of Entry was also granted under this section. However, the Act provided that a Town or Community Council who, by grant under the royal prerogative, were entitled to the status of a royal town, may also grant such Freedoms.

The report further highlighted the ceremony to be undertaken for the granting of such Freedoms.

The representative from Barry Town Council stated that they were disappointed that the author of the report was not present at the meeting as they would have liked to have asked what the view of the Vale of Glamorgan Council was in respect of Barry Town granting a Freedom of Barry. Councillor Hodges, having been granted permission to speak, stated that the report was clear from the Monitoring Officer and that if Barry Town wished to seek the views of the Council that they should write in to the Council. The Chairman then asked the Committee for their views and it was

AGREED - T H A T the report be noted.