



**NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**

## **HARINGEY ASSOCIATION OF NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCHES**

### **MINUTES OF THE HANHW QUARTERLY MEETING**

Civic Centre, Wood Green

19th January 2017 at 7pm

#### **Present:**

Ian Sygrave (A/Chair)

Guest speakers: Police Supt. Nigel Brookes, Gary Bird (Thames Reach), Police A/Sgt. Alistair Jackson, Cllr. Alan Strickland (Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Planning).

Fui Amevor, Jennifer Bell, Karl Biddle, Celia Bower, Paul Boylan, Pat Bromley, Angeline Burke, Jenny Buzzard, M Cardio, Ron Dalliday, Margaret Driver, Cllr. Sarah Elliott, Friedrich Ernst, Renee Fletcher, Lesley Flynn, Patrick Flynn, Margaret Fowler, Pranabesh Ganguly, Jackie Goodwin, Richard Green, Lauritz Hansen-Bay, Mary Holtby, Martin Iles, Maggie Izmeiyi, Tony Jackson, Eric Jury, Helena Kania, Gillian Kilby, Arthur Leigh, Susan Mears, Cllr. Peter Mitchell, Anna Muller, Cllr. Sheila Peacock, Randolph Pereira, Allison Pibworth, Vivien Rodgers, Joyce Rosser, Chris Sharpe, Victoria Simmons, Gail Stean, Helen Story, Nick Summers, Pauline Syddell, Mary White, Fred Williams, Michael Williams, Sharon Wood, Simon Zachariou,

#### **Apologies received from:**

Christine Barnwell, Rita Cotteridge, Eve Featherstone, Wendy Hill, Ryan King, Brian Livingston, Maeve McGarrity, Joan Morrison, Las Roman, Jacqueline Servat, Allison Smith, Judith Steiner, Sally Mustoe, Christine Tait, Reg White, Alan Whitehouse.

#### **1. Welcome - Acting Chair Ian Sygrave**

- No new Watches to announce this period, however there are a few in the pipeline.
- Some news of interest to those Watches in the Muswell Hill area; "Socialite Bar" Muswell Hill has had its license revoked.
- Ian mentioned that the owners of Socialite Bar will appeal via the Magistrates Court so if any members have any positive or negative comments about the venue please make your views known.

#### **2. Minutes of the last meeting held on 26th May 2016**

Minutes from the last meeting were agreed.

### **3. Guest Speaker: Nigel Brookes, Police Superintendent for Haringey's Neighbourhood Policing**

- Supt Brookes is from South London and has taken over from Amanda Dellar.
- He has been in his role for two months and oversees the Safer Neighbourhoods programme and all the community engagement that goes on in the borough. He has had a varied career, dealing with counter-terrorism and 999 calls to dispatch and was also a member of the command team during the Olympics.
- Supt Brookes has spent the last few weeks patrolling the Wards – visiting 17 of 19 Wards – which has helped him to better understand the layout/geography of the neighbourhoods.
- What he has learnt:
  1. There is so much green space and officers are committed to keeping the spaces green and free of crime.
  2. There is great pride and a willingness of the community to engage and make the neighbourhood a great place to live.
  3. Although turnover is an issue, there is fantastic dedication of officers to help where they can to make things better for neighbourhoods that are experiencing problems.
  4. There is great variety in the neighbourhoods in terms of demographics and community challenges (e.g. burglary, antisocial behaviour, gang activity). It is important to have the support of groups in the different areas who can relay back what the issues are.
- Helen Millchap has taken over from Victor Olisa as Haringey Borough Commander and has set some clear priorities for the future with some statements of intent:
  - o Prioritising victims first. Protecting the vulnerable (e.g. children).
  - o Building communities that can trust their police constabulary and can call us for help when they need.
  - o Working in partnership with those that can help us prevent crime (e.g. schools, community groups).
  - o Tackling those who commit crimes and bringing them to justice.
- Neighbourhood Watches have a role to play in all aspects of this.
- Supt Brookes relayed that a key priority for one of his inspectors was to build on NHW representation.
- He asked whether the NHW attendees knew who their Dedicated Ward Officers (DWO) were and whether they had communicated/seen them in the last six months. Most attendees raised their hand and Nigel relayed that he has had nothing but positive feedback from about DWOs.
- For example, a Neighbourhood Watch in the Highgate area reported a suspicious male. Officers identified this man who was trying to buy drugs and this issue has now been contained. This highlights how valuable NHWs are at helping officers to intercept illegal behaviour.
- Supt Brookes also mentioned that a lot of attention has been put on Ducketts Common over the years. The problem does clear up, however sometimes at the cost of displacing the issue. Please let officers know if you become aware of issues being displaced in your area.

**Q** – What are officers doing about the issue we’re experiencing with a nightclub at Dukes Mews?

**A** – Officers have put effort into helping to resolve the issue, tell us if this is any better.

**Q** – I live in Finsbury Park where there is a drug issue in the park, and now an issue with people living in tents in the park. The police know about the drug issue; however, I have not found that the area is being patrolled.

**A** – It might be best for an officer to contact you for more information. Pauline added that MSC Officers (Volunteer Police Officers) as well as DWOs do patrol the park as there have been recent arrests.

**Q** – I am a counsellor from Northumberland Park and there is currently a lot of prostitution and drug dealing in the neighbourhood, with drug paraphernalia left on the street. Who can help?

**A** – This problem is known. It would be best for an officer to contact you directly.

**Q** – There are flats that sell drugs in Stella House, at the top of the Borough. The Council employed two security guards to help mitigate the situation; however these guards have now been taken out – which has meant a return of the issue. The NHW for Stella House is relatively new. How do we go about rectifying?

**A** – Let the police know what’s going on so that the problem can be eradicated in its entirety instead of being passed onto another borough. The trouble with prostitution is that the penalties are not severe enough to deter the behaviour.

**Q** – Our neighbourhood has an issue with rough sleepers. The DWOs are aware and follow the rough sleepers to their new locations until the individuals get tired of being moved on and go elsewhere. This might not always be the most effective/appropriate way of handling the issue. Another member offered that it’s not always the case that rough sleepers are indeed that – they may be professionals. Outside of Wood Green station, there is a man who gets dropped off and collected every day and this member has never seen anyone challenge or engage with this man to find out what’s going on.

**A** – Supt Brookes offered to speak with the Ward Sergeant.

**Q** – Do you see any changes to the future of NHW?

**A** – Supt Brookes responded that he sees a greater future focus on people who are vulnerable and would like to see this focus filtered out to the various groups. There are 19000 NHW members in Haringey who are at officers’ disposal, so officers should not be afraid to leverage members’ knowledge and support.

- Pauline added that NHW is not just about crime; being part of a NHW give members the opportunity to work together to solve issues and gives residents a support network.
- For example, people move in and out of neighbourhoods and some do not have English as their first language, so members act as reference points to distribute important information.
- A NHW member relayed that sometimes she feels that the DWOs are not concerned with connecting with NHW members. She offered to run some workshops/training sessions so that everyone was on the same page, however this did not seem to be of interest to the DWO.
- Sometimes people are working towards different priorities, but it’s important to keep the dialogue flowing.
- A NHW member shared that the problem areas in Haringey that we tend to focus on are those with a criminal element. Society focuses less on those who are vulnerable. The problem is that we tend to blame people, when the problems are much more complex. As problems with those who are vulnerable increase, so will the crime.

- Supt Brookes thought this point was “well-articulated” and suggested that this perspective is filtering fast into the Met priorities.

#### 4. Guest Speakers on “Rough Sleeping”:

##### **First Speaker - Gary Bird - London Charity ‘Thames Reach’**

- Gary is a London Outreach Worker as part of the Thames Reach programme which is funded by the Mayor of London and covers 18 Boroughs of London and Heathrow airport.
- The team provides a service for boroughs that don’t have their own outreach to help people get off the street. They go out across the 18 Boroughs in 4 different shifts that cover all parts of London.
- There has only been positive feedback about the programme.
- If you need to contact the service, you can do so through <http://www.streetlink.org.uk/>. Anyone can make a referral. If any members would like a digital poster, this can be shared. Simply contact the team.
- Users of the service simply need to download the app on their phone and click the “locate me” button on the app to pinpoint where they are/where they need a member of the team to be dispatched.
- This is a National organisation, where requests are filtered to the local area teams.
- The teams look for people within a two-hour window so if the public want to make a referral, it’s best to choose a location where the rough sleeper can stay for a while i.e. “park bench” might not be a good referral location because if it rains, it might be difficult to connect with the person if they have left for cover elsewhere.

**Q** – What do you do for these people?

**A** – We help them get to the assessment hub.

**Q** – Do you ask the referrals about their history? I.e. how they got in the position they’re in?

**A** – Yes. Quite a few men who get referred have had their relationships fall apart (romantic, family) and they have no place to go. Some have been in prison or have mental/health issues and were staying in institutions. Others are awaiting decisions on their housing benefit claims and then there are those who have suffered a bereavement which has led them into drug and/or alcohol abuse.

**Q** – Do you provide ongoing support for the referrals?

**A** – The initial step is to get a rough sleeper to the assessment hub so we can investigate identification, benefits, health – because if these aren’t in order, it will be a challenge to secure accommodation.

**Q** – Are you in touch with other organisations (e.g. St. Mungo’s)? Does the local NHS know about this programme? E.g. when individuals are discharged and have nowhere to go?

**A** – We work closely with the hospital discharge teams. Sometimes there is an outreach worker in the hospitals.

**Q** - A NHW member shared that she volunteers at a soup kitchen and finds herself referring people who are homeless to the local hospital to sleep for the night. Is that the right thing to do?

**A** – Refer individuals to the StreetLink programme. Give us a call. The individuals will need to give their location to make a referral e.g. you can ask an individual whether they are rough sleeping and if so, where. The team will make up to three attempts to find the person in need.

- **Q** – Are you aware of how many ex-military are sleeping rough? I am ex-military and was told that I was not eligible for housing support.
- **A** – Ex-military are the easiest people my team can get off the street as there are so many services for veterans. These individuals compose approximately 3% of rough sleepers across London. It would be good to better understand what went wrong in your situation. Let's discuss after the meeting.
- Individuals who are not eligible for public funds (e.g. from the EU) will be asked by immigration if they want to be return home. Asylum seekers are eligible for public funds, as they are part of a separate group.
- If individuals say they want to be returned home, then they will be held in a temporary detention centre until their departure. For those that have drug and alcohol issues, they can access a detox centre and can then be linked with an appropriate route home.

### **Second Speaker - A/Sergeant Alistair Jackson - Haringey Police**

- A/Sergeant Jackson provided a Haringey police point of view of rough sleeping.
- He relayed that dedicated police officers are aware of where their rough sleepers are.
- His team work with the Council and the Home Office to help rough sleepers get off the street and access support services that are available to them.
- A/Sergeant Jackson relayed that the previous Friday, his team went to areas of known rough sleeping to identify whether sleepers were eligible for assistance. Three individuals were found rough sleeping and all went to immigration to be assisted home.
- A/Sergeant Jackson encouraged NHW members to use the StreetLink app/phone number.

**Q** – Does a database exist that keeps track of homelessness statistics?

**A** – Nothing official yet. We are slowly building something up. Every time we encounter people/places, we take this intelligence and add it to the database.

### **Third Speaker - Cllr. Strickland - Cabinet Member for Housing Regeneration and Planning**

- Cllr Strickland provided a discussion on rough sleeping from a Council perspective.
- Rough sleeping has been increasing. There are different types of homelessness. Rough sleeping homeless are the most vulnerable. It is dangerous to be homeless.
- The National charity "Crisis" interviewed 400 rough sleepers. From these 6% said they had been verbally or physically assaulted and 7% said they had been sexually assaulted.
- Reasons why people can be homeless:
  - o Immigration issues
  - o Health issues
  - o People coming to London for a good life and finding it more challenging than they thought
  - o People being thrown out by family members
- The challenge is that we cannot see people who are homeless as a single group.

- Some people might be aggressive when they solicit because they need money. Others don't want help/assessment.
  - Common rough sleeping areas are: parks, garages, inside and around council blocks.
  - A very high percentage (90%) of rough sleepers have one issue or another (e.g. health issues, drug problems).
  - The Council are working hard across the borough to make things better, but acknowledge that more work can be done.
  - The Council is trying to work jointly with various organisations to ensure rough sleepers are more holistically supported.
  - Individuals from the European Union can live in the UK for up to 3 months, however beyond 3 months, they need to either:
    - o Work
    - o Be a student
    - o Be self-sufficient
  - If an individual is not any of the above after 3 months, they lose their right to live in the UK. This is the same for UK citizens abroad.
  - Some individuals voluntarily return home and some are arrested for immigration infractions.
  - If an individual comes to the Council and say "I'm about to get kicked out of the country" we mediate.
  - Specialist housing is provided for people who may have drug/alcohol issues. Several former care homes have been converted to emergency hospital accommodation.
  - While individuals are being assessed, they are housed in these buildings (in a council building with council staff) instead of being passed through the private sector.
  - The Council will offer anyone an assessment and are negotiating a new contract with Thames Reach.
  - Homelessness has been caused by the lack of affordable housing.
  - Ian mentioned that in Harringay Ward the residents decided to spend some of the Ward Budget money for beds for the homeless. If any members think their ward has some budget for this, it would be good to allocate some funds to this cause.
- Q** – I've noticed various property development in Haringey. How many will be private? How many for the Council?
- A** – The Council is building their own homes. We're pushing the private sector much harder on affordability of housing. We're working with housing developers to garner opportunities for shared ownership/starter homes.
- Q** – Could you define affordable?
- A** – Not much is set by the government on what is affordable. The government says "Housing that's up to 60% of someone's income"; the Council says "...up to 40%" counts as "affordable".
- Q** – If an individual has no funds, no state assistance, what emergency accommodation can work for them?
- A** – We are working on a homelessness strategy to help address these scenarios.
- Cllr Strickland shared that London Mayor Sadiq Khan is implementing:
    - o An increase to the grant for affordable housing
    - o More homes to be built where they are needed

- The creation of “London Living Rent” – rent based on a third of average local income, not market rates. Giving more people the chance to save for a deposit.
- The Councillor also mentioned that there is a national package of support for leaseholders, to protect the rights of leaseholders dealing with estate “regeneration schemes”. E.g. knock it down or do it up?

#### **5. A.O.B.**

- None at this time.

**NEXT MEETING**  
**27<sup>th</sup> April 2017 at 7pm**  
**Civic Centre, Wood Green, N22**