



NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

HARINGEY ASSOCIATION OF NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCHES

MINUTES OF THE HANHW MEETING Civic Centre, Wood Green 25th January 2018 at 7pm

Present:

Ian Sygrave (A/Chair)

Guest speakers: Sophie Konradsen, Alison Crowe

Jennifer Bell, Eileen Bralech, Pat Bromley, Lynn Eastman, Margaret Fowler, Pranabesh Ganguly, Jackie Goodwin, Richard Green, Lauritz Hansen-Bay, Mary Holtby, Martin Iles, Tony Jackson, Helena Kania, Peter Lawlor, Arthur Leigh, Julian Lewis, Anna Muller, Ged Murphy, Vivien Rogers, Jacqueline Servat, Lisa Sihotang, Helen Story, Pauline Syddell, Julie Vanstone, Mark Watson, Mary White, Alan Whitehouse, Simon Zachariou, Francesca Zeeman

Apologies received from:

Alison Atkinson, Fui Amevor, Martin Ball, Jenny Buzzard, Sheila Carrano, Rita Cotteridge, Friedrich Ernst, Androulla Kounnamas, Liisa McDougall, Susan Mears, Olivia Montuschi, Joan Morrison, Sally Mustoe, Christine Nickles, Mary Rawitzer, Stephen Rigg, Vivienne Rochester-Clarke, Adrienne Rudkin, Peter Thompson, Don Wiley, Michael Williams

1 Welcome - Acting Chair Ian Sygrave

- Ian thanked Pauline for helping to put together the meeting and shared that she would be shortly undertaking surgery and away for a while. On behalf of the Association, Ian wished Pauline a speedy recovery.
- Since the October 2017 meeting, there have been four new Watches joining us, taking the total to 321.
- New Watches are:
Northcott Avenue, Ranelagh Road, Mountford House, Terront Road.
- Two events were highlighted:
 1. Cineworld Wood Green, 21st February 2018, 10 o'clock – a protective security event: understanding what to do in the event of a terrorist attack in London, confirm attendance in advance to Chris Palumbo.

2. Dog watch initiative – this is up and running now. Was first held in Finsbury Park, then Priory Park. The next dog walk will be at Downhills Park 28th January 2018 at 10.30am. You don't have to be a dog owner; you can attend and provide support.
- 21 apologies tonight, we will make a note of these in the minutes.
 - Ian shared that closure of some of the police station front counters (mentioned in the October 2017 meeting) has now happened with only Tottenham now open.
 - Tottenham police station is 24/7.
 - The public can connect with police officers weekly at local venues/contact points for face to face discussions. If members want to know more, they can contact their local SNT.
 - The police have agreed to do as much personal, local interaction as possible. So, although the stations have closed, there are still local contact points which aim to alternate between day and evening time support.
 - Ian suggested that members investigate further where local contact is not happening in their Ward.
 - Concerning *Road Watch* (also discussed in the last meeting), please contact Mel in the Safer Transport Team to volunteer for this scheme.

2. Minutes of the last meeting held on 17th October 2017:

Minutes approved by all attending as a true reflection of the meeting.

3. Guest Speaker – Rough Sleeping, Sophie Konradsen

- Sophie's presentation focussed on the following:
 - An update on the outcomes of the rough sleeping count
 - Sharing of preventative measures are being worked on
 - An update on the draft strategy that is being written in relation to the rough sleeping initiative
 - Highlighting what members of the public can do
- 3,108 people were identified/seen as rough sleeping in London last year, 2016/2017.
- Of these, 146 were seen in Haringey.
- In 2011/2012, this number was 43. There has been a similar country-wide increase.
- National statistics have been published and there is an increase of 15% from last year across the country.
- There has been a distinct increase in rough sleepers from the EU with substance abuse, mental and physical health issues. These can be a challenge to support.
- In Haringey, there is a rise of large encampments in the Borough. In parks, small numbers of tents together, gatherings in corridors, garages.
- Why has there been an increase in numbers?
 - Welfare reform – the introduction of universal credit
 - Changes in entitlements to benefits for EU Nationals (people who come here are no longer able to claim benefits)
 - Rogue landlords (less security for people, tenancy can end at any time)
 - Unemployment
 - People choose to sleep rough to save money (on rent)
- Rough sleepers count - how has this been carried out.

- A database that is used by all outreach teams to collate statistics on rough sleepers.
 - The annual rough sleepers count (did this in November 2017) must be done between October and December, between midnight and 5am. An actual count is taken and/or through an estimation meeting (gathering intelligence from the public).
 - In Haringey, both methods were combined. There were 43 volunteers and 16 teams.
 - When the teams collated their count, there were 43 rough sleepers identified. Last year, this figure was 30/31.
 - Preventative measures – what is being worked on
 - Sophie shared that members of the Haringey housing community and local government are working together.
 - Funding was provided which helped establish 4 posts, in collaboration with St. Mungo's, e.g. a Health Coordinator and a Night Shelter Coordinator.
 - A Community Host Scheme was set up – where households provide a spare room for people who are homeless.
 - Collaboration with the prison and probation teams is key.
 - A new "Trailblazer" project has also started, to support people who are at risk of being evicted.
 - Preventative measures – what is being worked on
 - The strategy is in its final stages of completion. This has been shared with the Senior Leadership Team before publishing in March. Input from other stakeholders has already been obtained.
 - Some priorities of the strategy are:
 - Intervening earlier to prevent issues down the road, i.e. rapid intervention to offer a route off the street
 - Improving health, wellbeing and resilience
 - Tackling street activity associated with rough sleeping (e.g. begging, street drinking, sex work)
 - We want to leverage our community point of contacts and form collaborative partnerships, commissioning more effectively
 - What can you do?
 - Report to Street Link <https://www.streetlink.org.uk/> if you see someone who is rough sleeping, make a referral, give as much detail as possible.
 - Support client outreach at Wood Green library or Marcus Garvey Centre.
 - Be a Community Champion (this is from the Strategy) – a network of volunteers who will take the lead at looking out for rough sleepers or supporting members of the public in knowing what people can do.
 - Sophie will share the details on how to be a Community Champion when this programme is up and running.
 - Ian expressed his surprise that the Haringey rough sleeping count was as low as 43, as he saw 5 rough sleepers on his way to this meeting.
 - Sophie responded that this figure has been independently verified by Homeless Link. It's hard to get all the information, which is why Sophie's team try to make the collation of statistics as robust as possible.
- Q.** How many more rough sleepers do you think there might be?
- A.** Probably about 20 more, i.e. about 60 in total.

- Q.** How has it been decided that you gather intelligence on one night?
- A.** It is a strict process that is followed. One night only between midnight and 5am. People move about, double-counting is possible, thus it can be challenging to ensure uniformity across the Boroughs.
- Q.** Many rough sleepers have a pet (e.g. to help prevent loneliness). What about the pet? What is the strategy on this?
- A.** Sophie is aware of only 1 hostel that accepts pets. There are 17 other places which have allowances for pets, but it needs to be better. Buildings are not great. Some locations are not feasible for pets.
- Sophie has used Street Link, it does work, but do check with the person that is rough sleeping whether the place you see them at their permanent spot. Generally, where people beg, they do not sleep.
- Q.** How do you work with the charitable groups. How will your policy work with these organisations? Is there anything in the Strategy which will prevent Haringey from creating homelessness (legally)? E.g. this NW member knows people who became bankrupt and had to go on the street.
- A.** The Strategy will be published in March. We work with Thames Reach, St. Mungos, Highway of Holiness. We are working to create a forum for all the groups to talk to each other. The *Homelessness Reduction Act* – puts more pressure on groups to help prevent homelessness. (Minute-taker adds: The Act says that “*Everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help, irrespective of their priority need status, as long as they are eligible for assistance*”.)
- Q.** Night link shelters, what rules are there before someone who is homeless can stay?
- A.** All People All Places, winter only shelter in Haringey, they work with churches. Council agencies can refer people into this shelter. Highway of Holiness, they (Pastor Alex) are open to receiving people every day of the year. No referrals required.
- Q.** I’m concerned about people who say “I don’t have anywhere to go tonight”. Do people have to be registered as homeless for them to get into a (winter) shelter? I.e. is there a loophole?
- A.** No.
- Q.** Are there any links with parks? I contacted the parks about a tent encampment, why aren't they doing anything?
- A.** The Community Safety & Enforcement team can't just take down the tents. They give notice – it is unlawful to forcibly remove someone.
- Q.** Is an encampment against park by-laws?
- A.** No, I don't believe so. We do enforce, alongside the support provided via outreach teams.

4. Guest Speaker – Property Licensing, Alison Crowe

- Alison is a legislative consultant on property licensing.
- How does licensing work?
- An HMO property is a house in multiple occupation (HMO) if it is a shared house that is occupied by more than one household and who share one or more amenities (i.e., shower, bath, cooking facilities). There are additional specifications.
- Although there are many good landlords in the private sector, there are cases of HMOs being poorly managed/in poor condition (in particular, smaller rented properties). Licensing, which was introduced in 2006 is aimed at raising property management standards for larger HMO's.

- The additional/new licensing scheme aims to tackle issues with smaller HMOs, e.g. antisocial behaviour (noise, rubbish dumped from property etc.).
- From 2001 to 2011 the private housing sector has grown; currently about 20% private rental across Great Britain, 33% across Haringey.
- The government spent a year, analysing complaints, inspecting properties and reviewing policy crime statistics and it was decided that there is a need to introduce this additional license.
- Q.** Why are the landlords being fined when the tenants are the issue? E.g. you rent out a property to what seems like model tenants and then after two months, they cause issues.
- A.** We work with the landlords. It's the landlord's responsibility - get tenants to sign a tenancy agreement and ensure a reference check is completed. There are some landlords who do not live in the property, and don't take notice of issues. The licensing scheme is a good way to ensure better control around the whole process. This scheme was piloted and landlords liked it because it helps them understand what the rules are e.g. requirements of fire safety and disposal of rubbish.
- Benefits of licensing:
 - Reduction of rogue landlords
 - Enhanced protection for tenants e.g. a tenant's complaints can remain anonymous
 - Drives up standards
 - Improvement in conditions
- Newham Borough has had the most successful take up of the licensing scheme.
- 29 hotspots within Haringey have been identified (and validated) where all privately rented properties need to be registered in addition to the licensing of HMOs.
- A voluntary public register exists on the Council's website.
- For a mandatory or additional licence, Haringey Council charges a standard HMO licence fee of **£208 per unit** of accommodation or bedroom in a shared house. So that is £1,040 for a three-storey shared house with five single person lettings.
- If you're a good landlord, then a licence will be granted for five years, if not, then every year an application will need to be made.
- Similarly, compliance checks will be based on risk. If you are identified as a good landlord, then you won't be bothered.
- There are training courses that landlords can take.
- An independent organisation will analyse the results of public consultations that have taken place.
- Q.** How are benefit services considered? Whether this is taken into consideration might make a difference to how this scheme is viewed/whether landlords voluntarily register.
- A.** Unfortunately, this answer is not known.
- Q.** If somebody doesn't obtain a licence will they be acting illegally?
- A.** Yes.
- Q.** What about house swaps/holiday lets/B&Bs?
- A.** These don't count as this scheme only covers a tenancy that is in place, with 3 or more lodgers. Kensington and Chelsea Borough are having an issue with B&Bs. Haringey is looking at this scenario.
- Q.** A house next to me rents the extension to multiple people. He has permission to make a further extension. There are currently 10-12 people living in the property and there is only 1

bin which has been causing issues. The property is not registered as an HMO. What do I do, as there is an issue with rubbish?

- A.** The landlord should register as an HMO to get more bins allocated to the property. Ian suggests that the NH member call private sector housing to investigate.
- Q.** What is the exact definition of an HMO as we have 6 flats – self-contained, not consolidated?
- A.** The property would need to be looked at to confirm.
- Q.** What is the penalty for non-compliance?
- A.** A landlord can be banned from being a landlord, they can be taken to court – the penalty depends on the infraction.
 - o The Chair believes that this scheme is in the best interest of both landlords and tenants and should be taken seriously. He urged all members to respond to the forth coming consultation.

The chair closed the meeting and thanked the guest speakers and attending Neighbourhood Watch coordinators/members.

Date of next meeting: TBC