

SOUTH GOSFORTH RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

17TH SEPTEMBER 2007

Welcome

Jerry welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies

Abigail McDonald, Lord Mayor Peter Arnold, Reverend Cunningham, Paul & Hazel Spicer, Colin Walmsley, Ayesha Brown.

People Present

Jerry Ruddick (Chair), Gordon Robinson (Treasurer), Sonia Bradley (Secretary), Dave Roberts (Neighbourhood Rapid Response Manager), Irene Matthewson, Mike Cookson (Ward Councillor), Pat McDonald, Sheila Park, Siobhan O'Brien, AnnHogg (East Gosforth Community Co-ordinator), Norma Shannon, Caroline Simpson, PC Amanda Barry, Special Officer Adam Mohammed.

Minutes of Previous AGM

Minutes were agreed as a true record.

Report from Chairman

Jerry gave a brief summary of last years events and has made a full report; anyone wanting a copy of the full report can e-mail the SGRA Secretary.

Jerry informed the meeting of his invitation to attend the Lord Mayors inauguration at the Civic Centre.

Jerry wished to formally acknowledge the help Annabel McKinnon has given him over the last year.

Dave Roberts thanked Jerry for his support and help over the last year.

Update of Issues arising from the AGM September 2006

Wrendale House - Persimmon Homes Building Site

On the 17th of October 2006 a meeting was held at South Gosforth 1st School, this was a highly charged meeting.

An extra special meeting was held by the SGRA on the 23rd of October 2006 to discuss the implications regarding license and other questions were raised.

On the 6th of November 2006 the License was finally granted by Newcastle City Council to the developers NML Ltd.

The fence around the Persimmon homes building site – around New Year this fell down and needed replacing.

Update of Action Points from Last SGRA Meeting

Street Lights Outside Mildene Home

Big thanks to Dave Roberts for providing these.

Dropped Kerbs

These kerbs have now been installed in Ridgewood Gardens. Big thanks to Dave Roberts for this.

Recycling Bins

Ann Hogg has referred this matter to the Recycling Department.

Land outside Mildene Home

Suggestions have been made to pave this area and place bollards there also to deter people from using it to park on.

Action Point:

Post Box:

This was originally removed from Percy Terrace and resited at the top of Field Street. Ann Hogg has left a message with the Highways Department Officer and is awaiting a reply. This Post Box should have been resited outside M Steels Cycling Shop.

Action Point:

Report from Treasurer

Gordon gave the meeting an update and passed round a copy of the Treasurers Report for 2007. Anyone wanting a copy of the full report can e-mail the SGRA Secretary.

It was noted that monies have been coming in from people using the SGRA Website to do on line shopping. Members of the meeting were encouraged to tell friends and family about this facility as it will help funds. ASDA have agreed to come on line and can be accessed via the SGRA Website.

Ann Hogg mentioned that there are new forms that can be downloaded from the Council Website to apply for grants for next year.

Ann suggested that these forms be prepared in time for the November 2007 Ward Meeting.

Action Point:

Nominations

Jerry Ruddick returned as Chairman
No nominations for Vice Chairman
Gordon Robinson returned as Treasurer
Sonia Bradley returned as Secretary

Police Issues

Jerry thanked Amanda and Adam for attending the Meeting.

Discussion ensued on the following topics:-

Telephone Boxes

Gordon mentioned that the telephone box on Station Road has been vandalised again.

PC Amanda Barry acknowledged that this is an issue in the area. Crime in general in the Gosforth area is low. However, it was recognised that youth disorder leads to criminal damage.

Audley Road – Quarry Park

The street lights are currently off in this area. PC Amanda Barry enquired about the possibility of more street lights being placed in this area as it proves a good deterrent. Mike Cookson recognised that this would be a good idea and hopes to try and extend the lighting to include Audley Road, the back of Haddricks Mill and the Children's play area. There are huge cost implications but Mike hopes this can be included in the PFI renewal plan.

Action Point:

PC Amanda Barry emphasised the need for residents to be reporting any problems as this is the only way of having resources redeployed and recognising if there are areas of concern in the ward.

Action Point: All Residents

Consultation with Youth

Mike mentioned a recent consultation that had taken place the Gosforth Civic Hall. Youths in the area had requested a bigger police presence in the area. The Youths other priorities almost mirror that of the local council.

There is a directive from the Police to sort out any drug dealing in the area.

PC Amanda Barry reminded the meeting that if residents have concerns about youths being drunk in the park areas then they should report this as it is an offence. Police would encourage residents to ring as they have a duty to respond. All calls are prioritised but Police will eventually attend and they asked for the public's patience in relation to this.

Ann Hogg suggested that people think about ringing **101** to report concerns and this service will redirect reports to the police where appropriate. This again would help to generate better information and help the police etc to identify 'hot spots'.

Action Point: All Residents

SNAPS (Safer Neighbourhoods and Problems Solving)

Mike mentioned the above scheme where Police and Ward Staff will be working closer together.

PC Amanda Barry encouraged residents to contact the Police and report issues 'even if we think it is small it may be important to the Police'. Even after the event and you have removed yourself to a place of safety, contact the police to report any crime as the Police will use these pieces of intelligence to enable Community Police to be aware of what is happening in the area.

Action Point: All Residents

A wider discussion ensued about the Criminal Justice System.

Smoking Ban – South Gosforth Club

Members of the meeting raised concerns that members of the club are taking their drinks outside when having a cigarette. The club is also leaving the fire door open. A resident had reported this to the local police, in doing so the police will have reported this to the licensing authorities to deal with.

It was also noted that at times the noise levels are quite bad. Ann Hogg and the police will pass this information on to the licensing authorities.

Ann had contacted the club steward today to discuss providing bins for the use of clientele who smoke outside the building.

Action Point:

It was noted by the meeting that the club generally poses no concern to local residents.

Gordon also enquired about who owned the land separating the club from the local houses as it is usually covered with cigarette butts. Apparently this is private land owned by the club.

Wrights Garage

A local resident expressed frustration about the above garage using public land to park cars that are awaiting repair. Also they now provide a service to 24/7 pick up vehicles who are dropping off cars for repair at all times of the day and night. These vehicles are very large and cause a lot of noise, especially when operating in the early hours of the morning, as well as causing obstruction to local residents who cannot gain access to or from their own back yards.

One resident has photographic evidence of cars being serviced on the public highway by garage staff. Also the business has connected up an external ringer which alerts them when the phone is ringing, this also rings when the business is closed and is very disruptive to local residents.

Police advised residents to contact the trading standards authorities who would be able to investigate and take action more quickly than the council to resolve any issues.

One resident noted that Wrights were renting car parking space from Aubrey Cornfoots (to the rear of the property). However, the business has grown and recovery vehicles are dropping off cars at the back of residents properties. It was noted that it would be deemed as an obstruction if vehicles were parked across resident's back doors.

There are also problems with obstruction when Aubrey Cornfoot vans are parked at the front of the business and at the top of Field Street.

Traffic Wardens

Amanda made the meeting aware that currently there are no traffic wardens operating in the Gosforth area. There is a pilot being carried out whereby all current wardens are operating in the City Centre and provide a responsive service to outlying areas. The police currently police the Highways Act.

Mike Cookson re-iterated that the Chief Constable is carrying out this pilot in the area and once legislation is in place our local Council will be taking over the de-legalising of parking restrictions.

Mike outlined who was responsible for each part of the Highways Act.

When there is a highway obstruction, this is a matter for the police. Residents who report problems in this area were assured the Police would respond.

The Council give out parking ticket offences; however, from November 2007 Community Officer will have this authority.

Parking Permits etc.

Irene pointed out problems with cars parking at the top of Station Road in such a way that members of the public have to walk on the road to get round them.

The meeting recognised that paving has been replaced to the front of Dominos Pizza shop. However, Gordon requested that the Council consider putting bollards up to stop people parking as this will cause the paving to break up again.

Action Point:

Police enquired about permit parking or traffic management Schemes in the area as such that are in place the Grove Park Development.

Residents in the Grove Park and Rectory Area were able to apply for a Section 116 because of developmental change in the area.

It was noted that Introducing Residents Parking Scheme in Rothwell Road and the Terraces has had a knock on effect to the surrounding streets that do not have parking restrictions.

Mike made the meeting aware that the Council will sell as many Resident Parking Permits to as many people who apply and therefore this would not resolve the issue. Multi-occupancy is another issue.

Several members of the meeting echoed general concerns that businesses in the area had grown, causing increased problems with congestion and distress to local residents. The meeting felt that local businesses were impeding on what is supposed to be a residential area. One suggestion was to consider the businesses moving to the local industrial estate.

Issues around cars parking outside the local takeaways were also noted. The police informed the meeting that dropping off and picking up outside the business was reasonable, but people actually parking their cars and getting out of the vehicle was a ticketing offence.

Gordon mentioned that repainting the road signs to make them more visible may help to deter some people.

Any Other Business

General Security of Homes and Personal Property

PC Amanda Barry advised residents to be more vigilant as the nights are drawing in sooner and at this time of year tends to mean an increase in crime i.e. pick pockets, burglaries. People are advised to leave lights on in the house as it is often dark before people get in from work and leaving a light on can help deter break-ins.

Wrendale- Persimmon Homes Parking Occupancy

Gordon pointed out that there was not sufficient parking for residents in this new block.

Mike informed the meeting that Persimmon had approached Newcastle University to purchase some extra parking from their land which is adjacent to the new development. It is up to the University and Persimmon to come to some kind of agreement.

It is thought that the new development will have its first occupants in from October 2007.

Mike has tried to address concerns over parking with Persimmons suggesting they ensure parking spaces are allocated as properties are purchased.

Upkeep of Private Rented Properties in the area.

Gordon enquired about the Council's thoughts on encouraging local private landlords to ensure the upkeep of their properties.

Mike informed the meeting that Newcastle City Council has been in talks with the Newcastle Landlords Federation to encourage better upkeep of properties. Certain areas of the city such as Arthur's Hill and Wingrove Road have been identified. Specific areas of South Gosforth are also to be looked at, including shared housing.

Mike pointed out that if a building is a danger to the public then the Council can act, however, it is a judgement call on what can be described as 'dilapidated'.

YHN (Your Homes Newcastle)

Mike informed the meeting that YHN and City Design are proposing to provide decent homes in the area.

They have approached the Council to consider sites in the area where units can be put up to show proposals. Mike has suggested areas such as Coxlodge.

The Council will be updating properties in the area which will mean more construction traffic in the future.

Date and Time of Future Meetings

1st October 2007, 7pm, The Victory Pub

5th November 2007, 7pm, The Victory Pub

The Chairman thanked everyone who came to the meeting and advised that there were refreshments and drinks for those who wished to participate.