

Stockton Home Safety Association

A meeting of the Stockton Home Safety Association was held on Tuesday, 11th April 2006.

Present: Councillor Mrs Cains (Chairman); Councillor Dixon, Roberts and Woodhead; F Russell (Trading Standards); Miss G Corking (DNS); Mrs T Harrison and Miss S Johnson (LD); P Dix (Cleveland Fire Brigade); Mr Jarvis and J Thomson (Wolviston Parish Council).

Also in attendance by invitation: H Turton (Redcar and Cleveland Council)

Appointment of Chair

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs Cains be appointed Chair of the Stockton Home Safety Association for the Municipal Year 2006/07.

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of C Snowdon (DNS); D Turton (Cleveland Fire Brigade); Inspector Thornton and Sergeant Shallow (Cleveland Police); Mr Menell and Mr N Thomson.

Appointment of Vice Chair

RESOLVED that Councillor Dixon be appointed Vice-Chair of the Stockton Home Safety Association for the Municipal Year 2006/07.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th March 2006 were agreed as a correct record.

Invitation to Stockton Blind People's Voice

The Secretary advised that Mrs Durnion of Stockton Blind People's Voice had extended the invitation to the Chair and Secretary of the Stockton Home Safety Association to meet with her for a tour and meeting to discuss what their organisation did and what Stockton Home Safety Association could do to assist the visually impaired.

CONCLUDED that the invitation be accepted and a date would be arranged for the visit by the Secretary.

The use of Braille on Identity Cards

There did not appear to be one type of ID card that would cater for the many types of visual impairment however Members felt that putting Braille on the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's ID badges would not affect the remainder of the ID card as it was a clear plastic strip which was placed over the back of the card but would be of great benefit to Braille readers.

CONCLUDED that the Secretary would investigate the costings of including Braille onto the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's ID cards.

Terms of Reference

Members approved the new Terms of Reference with the amendment of the date.

CONCLUDED that upon the amendment of the date on the Terms of Reference, it would be signed and dated by the Chair and the Secretary.

Trading Standards

Sauna Belt

Members were updated on the Sauna Belt that the Trading Standards officer had informed them about at the previous meeting which had burned the user.

The belt had failed tests as it had heated up to 160 degrees and there was no fuse. The Officer advised that it looked like a prosecution would take place.

Underage Sales

The Trading Standards Officer advised that they were carrying out test on shops for underage sales the following day.

Scatter Cushions

Members were shown a scatter cushion that had fire damage upon tests it was discovered that the outer cover was not covered by the fire regulations and had therefore not been treated with fire retardant and caused a lot of damage.

People who bought material to match cushion covers with curtains would need to check with the shop whether the material had been treated with fire retardant. Alternatively individual could get the material treated elsewhere.

Baby Sleep Quilt

Members were advised that a mother had nearly throttled her baby when trying to do up the poppers on the sleep quilt purchased from Mothercare as the neck of the quilt was too small for the baby's neck.

Members were advised that there were no regulations regarding the required neck width on baby clothing and items therefore Trading Standards were not able to take the matter further as it was considered fit for the purpose but not for the baby in question.

Doorsteppers

Mr Howard Turton of Redcar and Cleveland Council addressed member to advise what they had done in Redcar and Cleveland regarding doorstep cold callers in conjunction with the Doorsteppers scheme.

In studies it was shown that 90% of people did not want people calling at their door but this did not seem to stop cold callers, some of whom did shoddy or no work at all and some who stole from the owner.

In Redcar they identified vulnerable areas and set up the scheme in an area with no more than 80 residents with the average age of 65 and who had been troubled with cold callers previously.

Upon finding an area they contacted neighbourhood watch to find out if any watch scheme was in place, thirdly they spoke to resident groups and provided sticker, posters, signs, checklists and information which would help residents. Training was also given to residents on how they should answer the door.

Trading Standards Officers, Wardens and Police all worked together and were a support system to the residents.

Residents were given the opportunity to decline involvement in the scheme or visits from Officers involved in the scheme.

After the pilot period of six months they would speak with residents to discover if the scheme had deterred doorstep callers.

Avon callers and similar callers were considered pest callers and were therefore welcome in the area but the message was being sent out that uninvited callers were not welcome.

Some marketing companies were not happy about the scheme but they were advised that it would only affect them if they were not invited by residents.

Cambridge Authority had recommended that no more than 40 residents be included in the scheme to ensure that the scheme was manageable and run effectively, however Redcar and Cleveland were happy with 80.

Doorstep crime had mostly been unreported but they intended the scheme to change the number of reports. Three builders had been jailed after coning residents out of lots of money.

Members observed that if there were a lot of personal questions on the forms they send out, elderly residents could feel uncomfortable or vulnerable by giving the required information.

Members requested that residents who had reported a doorstep caller, got feedback as to whether or not the caller was legitimate.

CONCLUDED that the report be noted.

Fire Officer

Accidental Dwelling Fires

The Fire Officer was pleased to report that the trend on accidental fires was down from previous years and in answer to a question, there had been no fatalities reported in the district within the first 4 months of 2006, however this is not unusual.

The Fire Service had undertaken ten thousand home safety checks in the Stockton District and were still encouraging residents to 'Ban the Pan', in their campaign to ban chip pans and encourage their replacement with deep fat fryers which were safer.

They were still looking for funding for buying deep fat fryers.

CONCLUDED that the report be noted.

Budget

Members were advised that the budget for last year had been given approval to be carried forward to the new year. The combined budget would be £3546.50.

Concluded that the report be noted and that some of the budget would be used for the stall being provided by Stockton Home Safety Association on the 'Trips and Falls Day' in June.

R.O.S.P.A

Ms Corking had looked into the cost of joining R.O.S.P.A but advised Members that she felt it was not worth joining as John Davies was already a Member on behalf of Stockton-on-tees Borough Council and therefore received all the information from R.O.S.P.A, which Ms Corking feed back to the Members of Stockton Home Safety Association.

Members were advised that for £18.50 a year we could receive the publications but she would enquire how many copies we would receive and would report back to Members.

CONCLUDED that Ms Corking would find out how many copies would be provided to Stockton Home Safety Association if we subscribed to R.O.S.P.A's publications and would report her findings to the next meeting.

Trips and Falls Day

A letter would need to be sent to Tesco requesting their permission to erect a stall at the entrance to advertise Trips and Falls Day and enquiring whether any other groups or organisations would be erecting stall that day at Tesco for the same event. Ms Corking would provide the Secretary with the required information, the secretary would then send out the letter.

Ms Corking had been unable to contact the PCT to ask if they wished to join the Home Safety Association on the stall for Trips and Falls day but would do so and then report back to Members.

CONCLUDED that:

1. Ms Corking would provide the secretary with the information for Tesco
2. The secretary would write to Tesco requesting their permission to erect a stall in the entrance of the Large Tesco Store on Durham Lane and enquire if any other groups/organisations were going to be in place at the same time.
3. Ms Corking will report back to Members at the next meeting upon inviting the PCT to join Stockton Home Safety on our stall.