

Stockton Home Safety Association

A meeting of Stockton Home Safety Association was held on Tuesday, 10th October, 2006.

Present: Cllr Mrs P A Cains (Chair), Cllr B Woodhead; R Baker, E Young (Neighbourhood Watch); D Sanders (Cleveland Police Crime Reduction Team); P Dix (Cleveland Fire Brigade)

Officers: F Russell (Trading Standards); Mrs L Provett (CESC); Mrs T Harrison (LD)

Also in attendance: No other persons were present.

Apologies: Cllr K Dixon, Cllr J Roberts, Mrs G Corking (DNS) and D Turton (Cleveland Fire Brigade)

1 Minutes of the meeting held on 12th September 2006

Members considered the minutes of 12th September.

CONCLUDED that the minutes of 12th September be approved.

2 Matters Arising

The Chair informed the Association that one of their members, Mr John Thomson had passed away and that a card had been sent to his family giving the Associations condolences. A moments silence was held in honour of Mr Thomson.

I.D. Cards

Members were advised that investigations were still ongoing. The Secretary had contacted Human Resources to compile the figures on how many Council staff carried out regular home visits.

The cost of Council I.D cards were £3.00, which were recharged to the individual departments quarterly.

Christine Durnion from Stockton Blind People's Voice would provide a cost for including Braille.

Members requested that only basic information be included such as: Name, Department and phone number and that they be provided only for employees required to make home visits.

Operation Strongbow

In the conclusion for the Operation Strongbow item on the previous minutes, Members had agreed that the Secretary would invite the Cabinet member for Community Safety to attend Stockton Home Safety Association to talk about 'no cold calling' zones. The Chair advised that the Trading Standards Officer would now be responsible for speaking with the Cabinet Member.

Recruiting more Members

The Chair advised that she had written the recruitment article and submitted it to

the publicity section. The Stockton News would not be published until the beginning of December, however it was suggested that the article be posted on the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's internal electronic notice board.

Sure Start had received an invitation from the Secretary to be represented at Stockton Home Safety Association. The Chair was pleased to welcome Mrs Provett who was present at the meeting and was the representative from Sure Start who had been included in the membership of the Association.

The Parish Council's were yet to be contacted.

Concluded that that matters be noted.

3 Report of Secretary

The Secretary reported on behalf of Gillian Corking who could not attend the meeting.

Gillian Corking had requested that the Home Safety Association sponsored the cost of certificate frames for all the schools who attended Crucial Crew, the total cost would be £236.32 which it was hoped that the Association would provide considering that the budget would need to be spent before March.

CONCLUDED that Gillian Corking would be invited to present the request and provide a breakdown the £236.32, prior to a decision being taken.

4 Report of Trading Standards Officer

The Trading Standards Officer advised that investigations regarding the griddle pan and the garden spiral items reported at the previous meeting were still ongoing.

Underage alcohol sales

Members were advised that there had been one sale of alcohol to an underage young person. The sales person had only been in the country for 2 months and was fined £80, action would be taken on the owner of the shop.

Fireworks

Licensing Officers would shortly being visiting premises selling fireworks and they would be testing underage sales.

Doorstoppers

The Trading Standards Officer had delivered leaflets in the Yarm area asking residents if they wished for the area to be a no cold calling zone to which they received a positive response.

35 residents attended a meeting regarding doorstoppers and unanimously voted to make the area of Yarm a 'no cold calling' area.

Frank Cook MP contacted the Trading Standards Officer upon learning about the

scheme in Yarm and requested that it be done in the area of Oxbridge where he had a house.

The Trading Standards Officer was pleased to report that there would be two schemes running in the Stockton-on-Tees area but observed that they would be looking for funding as the cost of the scheme was approximately £1000.

Once the scheme was proved viable, the Council could be approached to fund future schemes.

Members proposed to contribute £200 toward the cost.

It was observed that great progress was being made in tackling cold calling.

Beware of the Bogeyman Event

The Trading Standards Officer advised that people attending the Elderly Person's Event would be invited to attend the morning session of 'Beware of the Bogeyman' event. However, if people wished to attend the training as a volunteers in the afternoon, they would be given lunch.

Trading Standards would have a stall at the Elderly Person's event which would publicise 'Doorstoppers'.

A project is being undertaken by Trading Standards to carry out tests on Halloween clothing, toys and equipment.

A complaint had been received about a pushchair that had been made in Spain but bought locally due to the fact that the welding had snapped. The pushchair failed the safety tests then it was discovered that 3 other pushchairs of the same model had been reported for the same problem around the Country. It was possible that investigations would be pursued.

The Trading Standards Officer observed that they purchased their own product of which they have received a complaint and carried out the tests on that item as they could not be sure of the amount of wear and tear on the product from the person reporting the fault.

The Sure Start Officer advised that they were organising information/training on the need for parents to look after and maintain pushchairs. The Officer advised that if they became aware of any faulty pushchairs they would be reported to Trading Standards.

CONCLUDED that

1. The report be noted.
2. Home Safety Association would contribute £200 towards the cost of the Doorstoppers scheme in Yarm.

5 Report of Fire Officer

Accidental Dwelling Fires

The Fire Officers was pleased to report that accidental dwelling fires were below target.

Home Fire Safety Checks

The Officer reported that they were doing well in the undertaking of Home Fire Safety Checks in the areas of Newtown, Mandale and Campus area in Billingham. Many of the dwellings belonged to Tristar.

The Fire Service focused on the vulnerable within the specified areas and assisted in supplying or selling deep fat fryers as a replacement for chip pans; fused 4 way mains extension cables rather than cubed plug in adaptors and fire proof bedding for those who smoke in bed and letter box covers.

The Fire Service were looking for funding which could be obtained from Neighbourhood Renewal Funding. Funding had previously been obtained from Neighbourhood Renewal and a group had donated 150 deep fat fryers; the group could be asked to make another donation.

The Secretary commented that in a previous meeting the Association may have chosen to contribute towards funding for the home fire safety checks. The Chair requested that the Secretary look through the minutes to confirm.

CONCLUDED that:-

1. The report be noted.
2. The Secretary would investigate whether the Association had offered to contribute to the Home Fire Safety Checks in previous minutes.

6 Crime Reduction Team - verbal presentation

The Crime Reduction Team introduced themselves and advised Members of their role.

Their team sat within Community Safety, which dealt with locks, bolts, bars, general security and advice however their role had grown. The Crime Reduction Unit also carried out security surveys, both private and commercial.

They could not recommend a particular company to ensure that favouritism was not shown or perceived.

They also ran a 'Repeat Burglary Scheme' which was available to victims of repeat domestic burglaries which a 12 month period. The team check the property and give security advice. Since running the scheme they had seen an 83% reduction in burglaries in the areas in question.

Members were advised that the highest risk of burglaries to neighbouring properties within a 1 to 2 mile radius of the burgled house was within 24hrs of the burglary.

Outside lights were a good deterrent, however the best lights were dusk to dawn

lights as the motion detector lights were often ignored and potential burglars could take advantage of the motion detector light. Burglars did not like the dusk to dawn lights as they would be seen.

They also assist vulnerable people and pass information on to the Fire Service and other relevant organisations when they identify someone in need. The Fire Service and Trading Standards also inform each other as well as the Police to ensure peoples safety.

The Crime Reduction Team provide talks about security and bogus callers to residents and any other groups who request their attendance, this was done free of charge.

The Crime Reduction Team looked into anything that was of concern however limited budget dictated the level of help the team could provide.

Their office is manned Monday to Friday with an answer machine which would pick up out of office hours messages but on occasion they could offer assistance during out of office hours time. Their number is 302271.

A Crime Reduction Officer addressed the Association advising that his role was Neighbourhood Watch Liaison Officer.

There were 40,000 Neighbourhood Watch members in the district which did not just consist of houses but also charity shops, farms and schools. They were also planning the introduction of a Junior Neighbourhood Watch but were trying to obtain funding for the scheme. The scheme would be the only one in the Country and would only be the second throughout the world; the first was successfully running in Australia.

They also ran a scheme called 'Site Watch', its aim was to reduce the number of thefts from building sites as developers had increased the final cost of new houses by 20% to cover the cost of the high level of thefts from building sites.

The Officer carried out a lot of work with Strongbow to tackle incidents involving bogus callers; however he had discovered that some victims, especially elderly people did not wish to pursue the matter as they wanted to forget about it and were embarrassed although the Officer advised that they had no need to be embarrassed.

The Officer advised that they had a computer system called Ringmaster which aided in Neighbourhood Watch. They could not put all Neighbourhood Members on the system but the Officers advised that he would put the press release from Home Safety Association which would hopefully result in more members for the Association.

Members were informed of a scheme called Operation Crystal, where householders near the scene of a burglary are advised how to keep their homes safe.

Members discussed that many people assumed that the wind had triggered alarms and therefore did nothing. It was also observed that some people left their doors wide open or unlocked instead of locking their doors to prevent

opportunistic burglaries.

Concern was raised regarding vulnerable, house bound people who had to leave their doors unlocked to enable the home carers, doctors, gas or electricity people to enter the property. Something needed to be done to ensure their safety.

CONCLUDED that the report be noted.

7 Any other Business

Stockton News would not be issued until December; however the Home Safety article could be put on the Council's internal electronic notice board after the meeting, which it was hoped would result in the recruitment of more members onto the Home Safety Association, much earlier.

Members discussed the date of the next meeting.

CONCLUDED that:-

1. The Secretary would post the Home Safety article on the Council's internal electronic notice board.
2. The next meeting of the Home Safety Association will be held on 12th December at 1.30pm.