

# Stockton Home Safety Association

A meeting of Stockton Home Safety Association was held on Tuesday, 12th December, 2006.

**Present:** Cllr Mrs P A Cains, Cllr K Dixon, Cllr J M Roberts

**Officers:** Mrs B Campbell (Diversity Team); Mr F Russell (Trading Standards); Mrs L Provett (Sure Start); Mrs G Corking (DNS); Miss S Johnson (LD)

**Also in attendance:** Cllr P Kirton; Mr K Jarvis (Resident)

**Apologies:** Cllr W Woodhead; Mr C Snowdon (DNS); Mr D Turton, Mr P Dix (Cleveland Fire Brigade); Inspector M Thornton, Sergeant M Shallow (Cleveland Police)

## 1 Minutes of the meeting held on 10th October 2006

CONCLUDED that the minutes of the meeting held on 10th October 2006 be agreed as a correct record.

## 2 Matters Arising

Crucial Crew certificate frames

The Project Officer, Gillian Corking, presented Members with details of the certificate frames requested at the last meeting of the Association on 10th October 2006. Fifty nine schools attended the Crucial Crew event and Gillian Corking advised Members that forty frames were required as they already had nineteen in stock. The Project Officer advised Members that the cost of the forty frames would be £236.32 and that this was the price from the Council's preferred supplier. The Association agreed to cover the cost of £236.32 for the frames as Crucial Crew was an event supported by Stockton Home Safety Association.

CONCLUDED that the Association would cover the cost of £236.32 for the Crucial Crew school certificate frames.

Stockton News

The Association discussed the Home Safety article included in the Winter edition of Stockton News. Members agreed that it was an excellent article and hoped it would encourage residents to become involved in the Association's work.

## 3 Report of Secretary

Council ID Cards

The Secretary reported on the information gathered so far on Council ID Cards and the possibility of including Braille on them. Human Resources had been asked to collate some figures on the numbers of Council staff who visit properties as part of their duties. Human Resources had advised that this would not be possible and suggested contacting Heads of Service to ask them to collate the figures on their own staff. Members agreed that considering the work loads of Heads of Service this would not be feasible.

The Secretary advised Members that Craig Willows, the Customer First Manager, had commented on the issue. Mr Willows advised that the Council's new software Customer Relations Management, currently being developed, would hold information on a resident of the Borough, such as a visual impairment. This information would be available to staff to view and would be especially helpful for those visiting properties. Mr Willows said that it would, however, raise questions as to how accurate the information was as the system would rely on the customer to provide such information.

Members of the Association were shown an example ID card including Braille kindly produced by Stockton Blind People's Voice for the meeting. As requested by Members at the meeting on 10th October 2006, the ID card included a name, department and telephone number in Braille and the existing Council ID card had been used. Stockton Blind People's Voice had advised that the cost of putting Braille onto the card was £0.50. Members expressed their thanks towards Stockton Blind People's Voice for producing the card.

The Association agreed that the current Council ID card was not accessible and needed to be much bigger.

CONCLUDED that the information be noted.

#### **4 Report of Trading Standards Officer**

##### Griddle Pan

The Trading Standards Officer advised that this issue had now been resolved. The Officer reported at the Association's meeting on 12th September 2006 that a complaint had been received about the pan marking a kitchen worktop and that the pan folded over onto the hand when tipped past a vertical angle. The company who had imported the griddle pan had been identified. The instructions included with the item now displayed a warning only to use it with an oven glove and not to tip the griddle pan past a vertical angle.

##### Underage Sales

The Officer reported that there had been two underage sales of alcohol since the Association's meeting on 10th October 2006. One sale was a national supermarket and the second sale was a local store. The Officer advised Members that the second sale was by an illegal immigrant who was now in jail.

The Trading Standards Officer advised the Association that it was becoming consensus of opinion that Trading Standards and the volunteers used to test purchase should be able to tell lies in underage activities. The Officer explained that many stores had become familiar with the Trading Standards Officers and the children they used to carry out test purchases.

Members of the Association raised concerns over self service supermarket facilities and the purchase of alcohol using the facility. Concerns surrounded the possibility of under 18's being able to purchase alcohol without being checked for identification. The Trading Standards Officer advised that self service facilities alert members of staff in supermarkets of any purchase of alcohol and that they are responsible for ensuring the customer is over 18. The Officer

agreed to look into this issue further.

The Trading Standards Officer reported how pleasing it was that there had been no underage sales of fireworks this year.

#### Fireworks

Trading Standards had received a complaint about a roman candle firework purchased locally. When lit, the firework had fallen over and fired into the kitchen, burning a child. Trading Standards test purchased the firework and did not find any problems. The Officer explained that it was likely the stick had been broken when the firework had been pushed into the ground and this has caused it to fall over.

#### Witches Hat

The Officer explained that a witches hat purchased locally had failed a test purchase. A criminal investigation against the company responsible was ongoing. The Officer advised Members that the company responsible had refused to be interviewed and had a history of offences and each time just paid the fine.

#### Pushchair

The Officer reported on a faulty pushchair that had been brought to the attention of the Trading Standards department. After testing it was discovered that air bubbles were in the metal of the pushchair when it had been cast, causing the metal to crack. Trading Standards had contacted the Home Office and it had been resolved with the company in Spain.

CONCLUDED that the information be noted.

## **5 Beware the Bogeyman**

The Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Protection was invited to attend the meeting to discuss the Beware the Bogeyman initiative, No Cold Calling zones and Operation Strongbow with the Association.

The Trading Standards Officer gave details of the progress so far on the No Cold Calling zones. The two areas chosen for the scheme, Yarm and Oxbridge, had been given the support of the residents. The officer reported that signs for the lamp posts were currently being made. The officer showed Members a paper version of the sign which displayed red writing on a white background warning trades people that cold callers were not welcome in the street. The officer advised Members that the Police did not want their number on the sign as it was not a criminal offence to cold call. The officer advised that the £200 donated from Stockton Home Safety Association had been used to cover the cost of the signs and thanked the Association for the contribution.

The officer also showed Members an example of the window stickers they intended to have produced and distributed to the residents of the No Cold Calling Zones. The sticker was double sided and the officer advised that they were currently pricing the stickers based on a yellow background. The outwards

facing side of the sticker displayed wording warning that the household does not buy from door step callers. The side facing inwards displayed contact numbers for Neighbourhood Enforcement, Trading Standards and the emergency number. The officer advised Members that they currently had a costing of £600 for 1000 window stickers.

The Association discussed how funding was still an issue as Trading Standards did not receive any funding for the zones. The Chair of the Association commented on how hard the Trading Standards department had been working on the No Cold Calling zones. The officer advised that Stockton Council now had more zones than both Redcar and Cleveland and Middlesbrough Council's. The Association agreed that they would be willing to contribute to further zones.

Members also discussed the recent Beware the Bogeyman presentation and Operation Strongbow. The Association agreed that there needed to be a follow up on the presentation to ensure the message was getting to older people.

The Chair of the Association gave details on a project called the Retired and Senior Volunteers Project (RSVP). The project used their volunteers to 'train' vulnerable people, such as the elderly on issues such as Beware the Bogeyman. The Chair advised the Association that Redcar and Cleveland and Middlesbrough Council's had both applied for a lottery grant to pay for the RSVP to work in their areas. The project was linked to Operation Strongbow and the Crime Reduction Team were involved. The Chair advised that the gentleman who had put the lottery bid together for Redcar and Cleveland and Middlesbrough Council's had agreed to do the bid for Stockton with Stockton Home Safety Association as the front organisation for the bid. The gentleman advised that the lottery grant would then enable him to use his volunteers in the Stockton area to train elderly people. The funding required to put the bid together was £850. The Chair asked for Members of the Association to agree to provide the funding for the lottery bid to be put together with Stockton Home Safety Association as the front organisation.

Members of the Association agreed that elderly people in the Borough needed the support of a project like RSVP in order to better inform them of how to protect themselves.

Members also discussed the budget for the Association in light of the recent support provided for the No Cold Calling zones and the agreement to support the lottery bid for RSVP's services. The Project Officer, Gillian Corking, advised Members that the current balance was £3,274.01, not taking into account the cost of the Crucial Crew certificate frames. The officer advised that the money would need to be spent before the end of the financial year. Members agreed that as they had decided to support any further No Cold Calling zones that it would be appropriate to ask the Finance Manager to allow the Association to carry the budget over for this purpose. The Chair agreed to contact the Finance Manager. The officer also advised that as her role had now changed it was no longer relevant for her to be a Member of the Association and responsibility for the budget would need to be transferred to another department. Members agreed that arrangements would be made for the budget to be transferred to Trading Standards starting from the new financial year.

CONCLUDED that

1. The Association would be willing to contribute to more No Cold Calling zones.
2. Funding for the lottery bid for the RSVP be provided by Stockton Home Safety Association.
3. The Chair would contact the Finance Manager to arrange for the Stockton Home Safety Association budget to be carried over to the next financial year.
4. Responsibility for the budget be transferred to Trading Standards from 1st April 2007.

## **6 Council ID Cards - The Diversity Team**

A member of Stockton Council's Diversity Team, Barbara Campbell, attended the meeting to talk to the Association about the Diversity Teams work and Council ID cards. The officer explained that the Diversity Team had been established to ensure that no one was discriminated against when accessing Council Services and was there to provide advice to Council departments.

The officer advised that it would be best to liaise with people with a wide range of impairments when looking at the accessibility of Council ID cards. Members were advised that a recommendation had been made across the Council that all printed documents needed to be more visible. The officer advised that all printed text should be font size 12.

The Association was advised of a new group established by the Diversity Team. Stockton Disability Advisory Group had been established as a result of the consultation undertaken when the Council was establishing the recently published Disability Equality Scheme. The officer explained that the findings of the consultation showed that people with a wide range of impairments felt disabled when accessing Council services and felt that they were not consulted enough. The officer advised that 20 people had committed to the group so far and the first meeting was on 15th December 2006. Members of the group would be asked to use their expertise as users of Council services to advise officers on how best to improve the services for them. The Diversity Team would take on a supporting role for the group.

The officer advised that a work programme for the group was to be established in the new year and that Council ID cards would be suggested as a possible topic for discussion. The officer also suggested inviting some members of the Stockton Disability Advisory Group along to Home Safety Association. Members of the Association agreed that the Stockton Disability Advisory Group would be an excellent forum for discussing Council ID cards and they would welcome any members of the group along to Stockton Home Safety Association. The officer agreed to liaise with the Secretary of Stockton Home Safety Association on this issue. The Association thanked Barbara Campbell for the presentation.

**CONCLUDED that**

1. The Diversity Officer would suggest Council ID cards as a topic of discussion for Stockton Disability Advisory Group; and that
2. Members of Stockton Disability Advisory Group would be invited to attend Stockton Home Safety Association.