

CLERKENWELL SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS PANEL

Meeting on Wednesday 18th March 2015 at City University

Present: DS Brian Quail, PC James Ryder, Howard Clark – Chair (Sadlers Wells), Richard Mansfield (City University), Darian Mitchell (Lloyd Baker Estate), John Ferguson (Claremont Close) Sony Tan (Granville Square), Susie Norris (Rosebery Avenue), Sally Calistan and Chris Ruff (Brunswick Estate).

Apologies: Anita Croy, Sophie Burdess, Edward van Dorp, Wilma Henderson and Deborah Spencer.

1. Islington Safer Neighbourhoods Board.

There was a Crime and Safety Summit on 14th March which no one from Clerkenwell was able to attend. The subject was Youth Crime. Howard will circulate any information which comes out of it when available.

The levy on licenced premises, which stay open after midnight, came into force last November. This measure will be reviewed after a year and a report circulated. The levy should help to fund extra police in the borough.

There was a feeling that the Board needed to be better organised. The £32,000 for community safety projects was not allocated in a sufficiently consistent or effective way.

2. Report from Clerkenwell Safer Neighbourhoods Team

DS Brian Quail reported on some of the police activity over the past two months. They have stepped up patrols on the Margery Street Estate and Wilmington Square because there has been increase in anti-social behaviour owing to the lapse of an injunction banning two youths from entering the estate. They are seeking a further injunction. A crime prevention officer, who has worked for the police Trident team, has been round the estate to advise on measures to improve security. He will provide a report to Johnathon Gallagher. Otherwise there has been a reduction in anti-social behaviour in the ward. An operation which involved advising motorists how to protect themselves from motor vehicle crime has been conducted. A prolific offender has been charged with drugs and knives offences. A brothel has been closed down in Wharton Street. Squatters have been removed from a house in Rosebery Avenue. A drug dealer living in Joseph Trotter Close has been evicted. There have been a number of reports about rough sleepers in the area.

DS Quail described the current status of the local policing model after a recent review. A situation had developed where local police were being taken away from the area to cover for other police teams. It was decided that this was not satisfactory, and that the public wanted a more consistent police presence on the streets. Recent recruits have been assigned to the local teams, which has enabled them to do more patrols. The response teams have also been given more officers which will reduce their need to call on the local teams for support. One of our new recruits, David, has been reassigned, but Georgina is still with us. We are getting two more in May. The PCSOs are being phased out in favour of police officers because they have the full range of powers which PCSOs do not. Existing PCSOs will be kept on, but will not be replaced.

There are current discussions in the police service about how best to survive with a reduced budget, which includes dividing police operations over 16 rather than 33 boroughs, which could mean Camden and Islington being under one superintendent. They are also talking about abolishing the chief inspector and possibly the chief superintendent roles and giving more responsibility to the lower ranks. These changes might come in by 2020 if they are accepted.

Gerry Campbell, our current borough commander, is moving on and will be replaced by Catherine Roper, who has worked in the borough before.

3. Report from Islington Council

Johnathon Gallagher could not attend so DS Quail reported on behalf of the Council. The police and council are organising a day to discuss what to do about the problem of rough sleeping.

The MAGPI interagency meetings are being abolished, although the MAGPI co-ordinators will remain. Instead a committee of the heads of the relevant council departments will hear information from the MAGPI officers about problems in the borough and decide on the action to be taken. The anti-social behaviour team will also continue.

4. Report from Panel Members.

Brunswick Estate: The gangs of youths seem to have disappeared. Students from the university are still hanging around Berry Place, drinking and urinating. There is also a problem with dog poo. Chris was advised to contact Johnathon and report student activities as anti-social behaviour.

Granville Square: scooters riding around the square seems to have stopped. Generally quiet.

Amwell Street: Darian said that she witnessed an attempted break in to one of the offices on Hardwick Street one Sunday morning and called the police and made a statement. They didn't manage to catch the offenders at the time, but have since arrested them.

City University: theft of pedal cycles from the cycle racks continues to be a problem. The University will be open for longer hours this year because of the demands of students. Cleaning has been scheduled for night time, rather than daytime. All this means more activity at night. The biggest piece of the current construction work will start in the Spring around the main entrance. Concern has been expressed about the security of the copper decoration to the façade of the building.

Sadlers Wells: there have been some internal thefts, but otherwise quiet.

Rosebery Avenue: situation concerning dog poo and condoms has improved. Generally quiet.

Claremont Close: the external lighting in the close does not get repaired promptly. Some lights have been broken for months despite repeated requests from residents. John was advised to write to the chief executive of the council and to raise it as a health and safety issue.

5. The next Meeting will be on Wednesday 29th April 2015 at 7.00 at City University.