

Abbeydore & Bacton Group Parish Council

Meeting with Police & Crime Commissioner Mr John Campion
Held in Abbeydore Village Hall Thursday 22nd February 2024 at 7.00pm

Attendees

Abbeydore & Bacton Group Parish Council

Parish Council Chairman Cllr Mrs Ann Booth
Cllr Mr Richard Fenton
Cllr Mr Melvin Jenkins
Parish Council Clerk Mr Malcolm Walker

Ewyas Harold Group Parish Council

Cllr Mr Alex Culpin

Kentchurch Parish Council

Parish Council Chairman Cllr Mr John Chance
Cllr Mrs Jenny Evans

Kilpeck Parish Council

Parish Council Vice-Chairman Cllr Mr Mark Parsons
Cllr Mr David Howie
Cllr Mr Roger Probert

Longtown Group Parish Council

Cllr Mr Stephen Cook

Vowchurch Parish Council

Parish Council Chairman Cllr Mrs Elizabeth May

Also Present

Golden Valley South Ward Councillor Mr Mathew Engel
Jeff Rouse PC 3687
Jemma Towers PA to Mr John Campion
Mrs Sheila Walker (taking notes for the Parish Council)

Abbeydore & Bacton Group Parish Council Chairman Mrs Ann Booth welcomed everyone and following introductions invited Mr Campion to give an overview of his role as the West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner.

Mr Campion clarified his role explaining that he is responsible for the Governance of the force which included budgeting which related to Council Precepts. His role also includes the appointment of the Chief Constable.

The issue of the level of Rural Policing being one of the main local issues, it was stated that there were 500 more Police Officers than there were five years ago which brought the force up to 2,500 Officers, however it was pointed out that this only returns the Officer numbers to that of the pre Government “cut backs” in 2010.

A prominent initiative being Rural Crime Prevention with the theft of agricultural vehicles and relevant equipment being highlighted. Currently the “Smart Water” type of marking being encouraged so that the recovery of stolen equipment can be identified thus assisting in prosecutions.

Question:- How does the closing of rural police stations such as the one at Peterchurch

In an effort to save money the police now share the Fire Station in Peterchurch as their base, although there is no counter service, something which will not in the foreseeable future be a service offered.

The Commissioner emphasised that emergency calls should be made to 999 with other issues being reported on 101. There is also the facility to make a report online which reflects the questions that would be asked by the telephone operatives at the 101 centre.

Question:- Why is there an apparent poor response to rural crime in particular poaching which can involve firearms?

All “live” issues relating to firearms should be reported using 999 where the call handler will arrange the appropriate response.

Other suspicious incidents should be reported using 101 or contacting your local force so that all such intelligence can be collated to possibly assist future operations.

Clearly crime is very different to that of 2010 in particular online fraud or email scams these should be reported to www.ncsc.gov.uk/collection/phishing-scams/report-scam-email

Question:- Why do we not receive feedback following incidents

Direct feedback to victims of crime should take place with more general updates being provided in the Safer Neighbourhood Publication

Question:- We would like to see more police presence in the area is this likely to happen?

With the existing West Mercia Police budget being approximately 280 million pounds which has to cover Officers as well as 800 vehicles and ancillary equipment, the cost of more Officers would have to be reflected across the West Mercia Area in the Police precept part of everyone’s Council Tax

Question:- What is the situation with regards to Special Constables

The level of Special Constables is down currently to approximately 50 this in part is due to the level of resource required for training purposes although this has now been resolved and the aim is to have 120 Specials with a view to increasing this to 160

Question:- What is the situation regarding Drug & Drink Driving

Currently Drug Driving is on the increase with what appears to be an increase in the recreational use of drugs such as cocaine on nights out and the effects still evident in the system during the next day(s)

Dedicated traffic teams are now able to conduct road side spot checks and test for drugs as well as alcohol

The use of unmarked cars can sometimes create the impression of a lack of police patrols, however statistics prove that the use of these vehicles greatly improves intelligence gathering and as a consequence operational successes.

Operation SNAP is also assisting in the report of dangerous driving with members of the public being encouraged to report using dash cam footage which will then be reviewed and acted upon as appropriate. There are reportedly as many as 3 million dash cams in use in the UK.

Question:- Is domestic burglary taken as seriously as it should be with the emphasis appearing to be on providing a crime number with many incidents not receiving (if at all) a visit until days later.

Burglary is always taken seriously and there is a commitment to attend every incident. However in practice due to other ongoing operations this may not always take place as soon as it should but to repeat it is a commitment which we endeavour to fulfil.

Question:- Can victims be assured that they will receive feedback about an investigation

Again this is always a commitment to keep victims as up to date as possible

It had become apparent during the meeting that the Parish Council areas were covered by to different forces.

With the Golden Valley Safer Neighbourhood Team being considerably more visible in the area they covered than the parishes covered by the South Wye SNT and it was the general opinion that this was because the South Wye Team were Hereford City based and the parishes which they covered were on the fringes of their operational area.

The Commissioner advised that there was a small budget for crime prevention schemes and more information was available from their local policing team. There is also some funding available from the West Mercia Police Towns and Village Project which is being administered by the “We Don’t Buy Crime” Co-ordinator Amy Brice 62966 and can be contact for more information by email: amy.brice1@westmercia.police.uk

There being no further questions the Chairman Cllr Mrs Ann Booth thanked the Commissioner and Councillors for attending and declared the meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Malcolm Walker
Clerk to Abbeydore & Bacton Group Parish Council