

The Harrogate & District Neighbourhood Watch Association
Minutes of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
held on Tuesday 8 November 2011 at Bilton Community Centre.

Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming the attendance of so many people associated with H & D NHW and welcoming comments and suggestions to help the development of NHW and improve partnership working with North Yorkshire Police.

He then introduced His Honour Judge Leslie Spittle and invited him to address the meeting.

Guest Speaker

Judge Spittle began by describing his background in the north east and his progress from an early school leaver to becoming a law student, a barrister and finally a circuit judge.

He described the way that justice is dispensed in England and Wales and in particular his own approach to delivering justice which he summarised as the "three c's". These were

- **commensurate:** ensuring that a sentence takes into account the offence, the profile of the offender and the community consequences.
- **consistency:** in which any sentence is seen to be in line with broader sentencing guidelines.
- **comprehensibility:** by which it is intended that the sentence is fully understandable to the defendant, the wider public and any subsequent appeal court.

He illustrated his points with a range of entertaining and instructive courtroom anecdotes.

In a lively question session he responded to the following points:

- How victim's interests are considered
- Sentencing practices following the recent riots
- The effectiveness of community sentencing compared to imprisonment.

David Siddans proposed a vote of thanks to Judge Spittle.

After a refreshment break, the Chairman then turned to the formal agenda of the Annual General Meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Brian Watkinson (Ripon), Cllr Anne Jones (Knaresborough), Janet Hall (Killinghall) and Chris Dunning

2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 19 October 2010

Proposed by Peter Dallas and seconded by Chris Oates that the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 19 October 2010 be approved. This was carried.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4. Chairman's Report

The chairman, Keith Roberts, introduced the members of the committee and presented the following report:

At the 2010 AGM the Harrogate District Commander, Superintendent Ken McIntosh addressed the meeting and outlined five key points of policing strategy. He has now moved to a post at Police HQ. I have been pleased to represent H&DNHW at monthly progress meetings and take part in the Tasking Partnership meetings held every two months.

Overall, progress has been good, but patchy. The District Commander summarised his opinion on progress in a letter sent shortly after his departure. He reported on a reduction in crime, disorder and road casualties and particularly commented on the NHW contribution to innovative partnership programmes such as "My Neighbourhood" and "STOP Burglary". As a result of these initiatives we have seen a dramatic increase in the requests for the formation of new schemes and the public's better understanding of NHW. I will convey our thanks and the good wishes of the meeting to Supt McIntosh.

The Chairman then touched on a number of issues which have arisen in the past year:

- **Schemes:** We now have 950+ NHW schemes in the District but need to integrate more effectively with Rural Watch activities.
- **Ringmaster:** This is still the greatest problem with far too few messages reporting incidences of crime. Coordinators are not being informed until well after an incident, if at all. Several never see their SNT PC/PCSOs and cannot therefore act effectively as a communicator with their neighbours. On the plus side, the rejection of email messages has reduced considerably as changes to contact details have been notified. There has also been progress on the mapping of scheme data. Maps have been produced but can only be accessed by Police "Superusers". Soon it is hoped that District Leads will also have access.
- **Communication:** We expect to relaunch the H&D NHW web site shortly in a more user-friendly format. We have also started a Twitter account which we expect will attract an input from the younger generation.
- **Bluetooth Technology:** We have invested in computer equipment for the Police, Fire & Rescue and NHW to broadcast urgent messages to Smartphone users, although limited police resources have inhibited progress.
- **Crime:** The three problem areas currently are the theft of metals, theft of vehicles and theft from outbuildings. By being active in reporting suspicious behaviour, we could help to improve the detection rate, which is perhaps the greatest local deterrent to crime.
- **Nominated Neighbour Scheme:** NHW was instrumental in helping to set up many NCCZs but financial constraints in Trading Standards have resulted in a long waiting list for new schemes. However, we took the

initiative and, together with Knaresborough Police, launched a trial of the Nominated Neighbour Scheme in Great Ouseburn and Ripon. We are now ready to expand to other areas to protect the vulnerable and elderly from bogus callers and distraction burglaries.

- **My Neighbourhood:** The new concept of focussing on localised areas with specific identified problems with a multi-agency team started with Woodfield Ward and continues with local engagement. Similar evaluation of needs has commenced in Ripon Minster ward and others will follow.
- **Gift Aid and Easyfunding:** Our treasurer has been very active in developing ways of boosting funding in these stringent times.

The Chairman concluded by thanking the committee for their contribution and the coordinators who interface with the police and their membership. He extended an invitation to any coordinators to come forward to join the work of the committee.

5. Treasurer's Report 2009-10

Katy Piazza circulated copies of the following Treasurer's Report and the audited accounts for 2010-11.

At the end of the financial year our bank balance was comfortable at £4,025.

Our income for the year was £2,045. We received £1,085 from very generous donations given by 20 NHW schemes and 11 individuals. Donations were down £200 from last year. The rest of our income was mostly from the sale of gatepost signs and 39 units of SmartWater. SmartWater sales have also slowed down considerably this year. We are awaiting a cheque for approximately £21 from HMRC for reclaimed income tax from recently received Gift Aided donations. This is the first year we have been registered for Gift Aid.

Our expenses totalled £2,314. £976 was spent on purchasing stock including SmartWater and signs. We procured a laptop and necessary software at a cost of £452 for use by the police to upload information to a Bluetooth broadcasting device. This is being used to warn members of the public with active Bluetooth devices about thefts, crime trends, appeals for witnesses, and public safety incidents. Other expenses included £155 for labels and envelopes for Look Out. We bought a 2 year supply as this was a cheaper option and meant we did not have to pay for postage. We purchased a banner at £78 for advertising NHW for use at local shows and fetes and a graffiti removal kit at £81. The AGM cost £132. Other expenses included room hire, postage, printer cartridges and stationery.

Our expenses exceeded our income by £62 but the laptop, software, and banner were a 'one-off' purchase and labels and envelopes for Look Out should not need to be purchased again for 2 years.

Our year-end stock was valued at £685.93 and included 19 units of SmartWater.

The committee had agreed to keep a contingency fund of £1500 to £2000 in the bank. Approximately £1000 would shortly be needed to order more SmartWater, leaving the rest for other projects

The accounts were approved and also approved was the proposal to confirm Mr. Terry Harrison as the independent auditor.

6. Election of Committee for 2010-11

The following persons were nominated and elected unopposed:

Chairman: Keith Roberts
Secretary: David Siddans
Treasurer: Katy Piazza
Members: Peter Dallas, Tina Oates, Chris Oates, Eric Walker,
Maureen Asher, Catherine Park Peyton, Graham Sleights.

There were no other nominations received prior to the meeting or from the floor.

7. Q and A

There was a lively discussion on the shortcomings of the Ringmaster system including the relevance of some of the messages which were getting through. Comments were made that far too much material was being posted which was irrelevant to specific coordinators. Suggestions were made that the police should be more discriminating in which messages were sent where. Although recognising the palpable shortcomings of the system operation, it was generally considered preferable that unfiltered messages are posted leaving coordinators to identify the relevant ones, rather than expecting the police to sort the relevant messages for each area.

Further questions were raised concerning the reference to a CCTV trial system promoted by H&D NHW, including the cost. It was confirmed that the system under trial, which is portable, had been donated freely. Once the results of the trial have been assessed, the option of purchasing a system could be considered. In answer to a further question on cost, the treasurer reminded the meeting that some of the association's balance could be set aside for projects in general. It was further confirmed that the intention would be that any such system would be available to any member on request

8. Any Other Business

Christine Dobson (The Eleanors) said that she wanted to express her thanks to the committee for the work it is doing.

There being no further business, the Annual General Meeting concluded at 9.15 pm.