

Harrogate & District Neighbourhood Watch Association

Minutes of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on Thursday 11th February 2016 at Harrogate Grammar School

1. Welcome from the Chair

The Chair gave a warm welcome to all those attending the meeting. She introduced the members of the Committee who were in attendance – Maureen, Tina, Nick, Graham, Richard, Derek and Associate Peter.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Katy Piazza, Irwin Blenkiron, Richard Cole, Paula Collier, Chris Oates, Elma Stewart, Barbara Stone, and Peter Triggs

3. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 19th November 2014

There were no queries on the minutes of the last Annual General Meeting. The Chair pointed out that three members elected at the AGM (Brenda Greetham, Mike Josh and Alex Raubitschek) had not actually joined the Committee. The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting (proposed by Nick Andralojc & seconded by Tina Oates).

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising. The Chair informed the meeting that some members of the Committee had experienced periods of ill health during the year. This had reduced the opportunities for discussion that resulted in funds not being spent as anticipated at the last AGM. She assured members that the funds would be spent appropriately.

5. Chair's Report

Catherine mentioned that she had taken over from Keith as Chair of the Committee. He was well known in NHW circles and had clearly been difficult to follow. She and the Deputy Chair had considered the position following the last AGM and agreed that there was a need for change. They were aware of the need to make some changes in terms of the relationships with the North Yorkshire Police and in seeking new ways of communicating with the community. She read out the contents of a letter from Chief Inspector John Wilkinson who confirmed the commitment of the police to the relationship with Neighbourhood Watch.

She referred to the necessity of boosting the number of Coordinators and ensuring that they received information more quickly. The Committee had encouraged two-way communications – there was a telephone number to ring together with contact by e-mail and Facebook and Twitter accounts. Information on all these means of communications was contained on the website. It was essential that Coordinators advised the Committee if there was any change to their circumstances: at present our membership list was out of date. It would be really helpful if any Coordinators

deciding to retire could find a replacement, otherwise the scheme would close until a new Coordinator was found.

There had been some organizational changes within the Neighbourhood Watch nationally. Home Office funding had been withdrawn and consequently the national association was seeking alternative sources. The national association had decided to remove the "Regional" tier from the structure, with the county and district levels remaining. This was why Coordinators had been receiving e-mails direct from Terry Wallis, Chair of the North Yorkshire Neighbourhood Watch. Members expressed irritation and concern at the volume and duplication of e-mails currently being sent to Coordinators. Terry Wheldon cited a recent example of a message relating to fraud and whilst he got positive feedback from some of his scheme members he received no comment from most of them. John Parker supported the comments relating to the excessive volume arguing that it was very difficult to "sort the wheat from the chaff" especially in the light of the poor quality content of the messages from county level. Mike Simms added that receiving the same messages from different sources had the effect of diluting the message and led to uncertainty amongst Coordinators as to who was in control. Some semblance of control was required so that the Coordinator would not have to act as the last level of decision-making. The Chair advised the meeting that she had already made representations to North Yorkshire Police but had been advised that nothing could be done pending the next meeting of the North Yorkshire Neighbourhood Watch Committee which was due next month. She would speak about these problems at the next county meeting but in the meantime members should feel free to e-mail any complaints direct to her.

Catherine informed members that another of the national changes had been a re-branding exercise including a revision to the logo. The Ringmaster system was due to close in mid-year, with the new system being in place around August. She was a member of the Procurement Committee for the new Community Messaging System which should be easier to use, would facilitate direct contact from the Committee to district Coordinators, and should go a long way to addressing the issues which had been raised.

Catherine completed her report by outlining that the Committee wished to proceed during the coming year through holding information evenings and social events. Neighbourhood Watch needed to be seen delivering the message out in the community.

6. Treasurer's Report and Election of Inspector of Accounts

On behalf of the Committee Nick Andralojc submitted the accounts for the 2014/15 financial year. The Treasurer reported that the Independent Examiner was satisfied with the accounts.

The movements from the opening assets (£5,024) to closing assets (£4,302) were summarised as being the impact of:

Receipts of £131 – mostly donations augmented by Gift Aid together with nearly £2 interest and £5 of sales. Members were thanked for their donations and encouraged to continue making them.

Payments comprising: sundry costs of £158 including small gifts including biscuits for NYP colleagues and on the retirement of long standing NHW committee members; £135 on the NHW "0300" phone line; £146 on printing, stationery and postage (it was noted that no one attended the meeting as the result of receiving a posted copy of "Lookout" which announced details of the AGM); and, £104 of other costs – including the audit fee, travel, refreshments at meetings. It was explained that given the low

value of sales in the year (£5) £309 worth of stock was written off to avoid overstating the assets in the accounts. Those stock items would, nevertheless be sold

where possible and, if not, then given away at NHW events. In response to a question from Terry Wheldon the Treasurer confirmed that the bulk of the cash in the account had been raised through SmartWater sales and donations.

The meeting accepted the accounts (proposed by Nick Andralojc & seconded by Mike Sims).

The meeting also agreed to re-appoint Terry Harrison as the Independent Examiner of the accounts for 2015/16 (proposed by Nick Andralojc & seconded by Alan Cale).

7. Election of Committee 2015-2016

From the floor of the meeting it was proposed and accepted that the proposed new committee be elected in full (proposed by Alan Cale & seconded by Sue Lewis). There were no objections. The new Committee would be:

Chairman: Catherine Park Peyton

Vice Chairman: Katy Piazza

Treasurer: Nick Andralojc

Secretary: Derek Benbow

Committee Members: Maureen Asher, Tina Oates, Graham Slights, Richard Kirby,

The Chair observed that there were still four vacancies for Committee members. More help was required especially from people with specific skills such as marketing. The Committee would be keen to hear from anybody who might be interested in joining it.

8. Any Other Business

There were no other matters raised and the formal business of the meeting concluded at 7.31 p.m.

9. Andy Fox, Divisional Officer, North Yorkshire Trading Standards

Andy explained that he was a member of a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Team. The body had had Public Health funding for three years. They carried out investigations, made arrests and undertook safeguarding activities for the protection of the vulnerable and elderly. At present he had around 2,000 people on his list. Their activities ranged from the small scale to the £300,000 fraud they were currently investigating.

Overall, North Yorkshire was a very safe place to live, but nevertheless there were various scam schemes in existence of which people needed to be wary.

Scam mail was a very psychological process in which the scammers attempted to build up relationships with people – usually the elderly and isolated. Mail was often the only form of communication some people received. There were various schemes, most of which centred on the scammers seeking payment of a small administration fee which once paid solicited a request for a further, larger fee and so on.

There were also a number of phone scams that people might easily fall prey to. People have given details unwittingly to scammers, believing that they were speaking to the police. Last year in Harrogate, a scammer purporting to be an Inspector (Regent Street) was ringing

people to say that an arrest had been made of someone who possessed the individual's stolen bank card. On being advised that the individual was still in possession of their card the scammer then asked for the card's details.

"No Cold Calling Zones" are usually established where there has been a history of cold calling and where some of the people living there are particularly vulnerable. Schemes were established where agreement of 75% of the residents had been secured. Occasionally people objected to the establishment of No Cold Calling Schemes believing that house prices would be depressed if people saw the signs as evidence of high crime rates. However statistics show that these schemes do work. They promote a sense of security and community in which people look after each other. Andy also demonstrated a piece of equipment to the meeting – a call-blocker made by TrueCall that filtered out nuisance calls.

Andy concluded his remarks by asking members to look out for the vulnerable by reporting suspicious activities to Trading Standards.

10. Sergeant Ed Rogerson, Harrogate Police

Ed informed the members that Harrogate Police had invested in the purchase of a "dot peen" property-marking machine. Dot peen marking involved the use of a tungsten carbide-tipped pin to indent an object with dots to create a visible, permanent unique number. This number could then be registered on a national database that would enable the police to trace the owners of stolen property. The new machine could be used to mark a wide range of surfaces from metal to plastic or leather and was suitable to mark everything from garden tools to laptop computers. The equipment fit alongside other methods of property marking, such as SmartWater, but was not intended to replace them.

He gave a practical demonstration of the machine marking a laptop and mobile phone. Ed explained that it was his intention to organise a number of property marking events, such as in locations that were burglary hotspots. This service was free, initially to residents in Harrogate, although he intended to make the kit available for use in Knaresborough and Ripon.

Ed also reflected on the discussion that had taken place earlier in the meeting. He pointed out that door-to-door salesmen were required to possess a Pedlar's Certificate and residents had a right to request to see it. This certificate is issued by the Police Force and would have a police badge as part of the design.

He concluded by mentioning that he had been the first police officer to use social media as a means of contacting the community and indeed advised other police forces on its use. He now had 8,000 followers on Twitter, a ready audience to whom instant messages could be sent. However members felt about the use of social media it was certainly the best means by which to contact the younger elements of the community.

The meeting closed at 9.08 p.m.