

**Hammersmith & Fulham
Neighbourhood Watch Borough Association
Annual General Meeting
5th July 2011**

Attendance was recorded from the following schemes:

Crabtree (3), Millers Court, Archel Road, Gironde Road, Breer Street, Dymock Street, Harbledon Road (2), Brecon Road, Horder Road (2), St Peters Villas, Epirus Road, Brightwell & Lowlands (2), Millers Court, Delaford Street, Tilton Street, Iffley Road, Mustow Place, Napier Court, Lysia Street, Althea Street, Wendell Road, Gransden Street, Cloncurry Street, PRARA, Cambridge Grove, Leamore Street, Agate Road, Perrers & Atwood, Warbeck Road, Langthorne Street, Lancaster Court, Felden & Swift Street, The Grampians, Sterndale Road, Ashchurch Grove, Hemlock Road, Colwith Road, Redmore Road, Dalling Road.

Apologies were recoded from the following schemes:

Dymock Street, Ravenscourt Road, Ravenscourt Square, Racton Road, New Hurlingham Court, Fulham Embankment, Hamble Street, Bloom Park Road, Furber Street, Settrington Street, Snowbury Road, Hamble Street, Tasso Road, EAKS, Stonor Road, Disbrowe Road, Melrose Gardens

Committee members in Attendance:

David Millar (Chair, Flanchford Road), Dev Bhurton (Treasurer, Wormholt Road, Danuta Bildziuk (Committee Member, Masbro Road), Arthur Bildziuk (Committee Member, Masbro Road), Mrs C Sharma (Committee Member, Sulgrave Road), Inspector Dave Rees, H&F Police), Pat Cosgrave (Secretary, LBH&F)

Invited Attendees:

Superintendent Lucy D'Orsi (Borough Commander H&F Police), Adrian Simmons (Retired PC, H&F Police), Belinda Donovan (Addison Ward Councillor, LBH&F – Deputy Mayor).

Introduction

David Millar (DM), Chairman of the H&F Neighbourhood Watch Borough Association, welcomed all attendees to the meeting. He introduced the H&F Police Borough Commander, Superintendent Lucy D'Orsi (LD'O) to the coordinators.

Douglas Hurd Cup

Inspector Dave Rees (DR) read citations for the winning scheme, Iffley Road, and the commended scheme, Gironde Road. The coordinators of these schemes, Claire Harris and Sarah Chambers, were presented with their awards by LD'O.

Q&A Session with Borough Commander

DM began the session with a number of general questions for LD'O, before opening the floor to more specific questions from coordinators. (NB. DMs

questions are marked “DM”, with questions from the floor being denoted by a “Q”. The borough commander’s responses which have been edited for space are denoted “LD’O”).

DM	How have you enjoyed your first months on the borough?
LD’O	Very much. Hammersmith & Fulham is a very diverse borough. There are areas of great wealth nearby to areas of deprivation. There is the unique challenge of having three professional football clubs with their ground within a small area. One thing that has been pleasing since I arrived in February is the standard of police officers within the borough.
DM	What are your overall priorities for the borough?
LD’O	There are a lot of plates to spin! One of my immediate priorities is to tackle serious youth violence and reduce the amount of knife and weapon crime on our streets. Burglary is obviously a concern and my officers will be working to reduce this. Yesterday on the borough we only had one burglary and one attempted burglary. This shows that the borough is a relatively safe place, but we will work to improve it. For the next six months my officers will be concentrating on the Shepherds Bush area particularly, seeking to reduce all types offending within Shepherds Bush and the surrounding area.
DM	We read in the papers that the police, in common with other public sector services, are facing significant budget reductions. How do you think this will impact on Safer Neighbourhood Teams, as the SNTs are a vital element in the support for Neighbourhood Watch?
LD’O	My approach is that whatever budget I am set to work to, my challenge regardless of the amount is to maximise the value I can get for each pound. One thing I am keen to do is to protect the officers on the front line. Many of you will be aware that there has been a recent review of neighbourhood policing across the Metropolitan Police area. The overall number of PCs and PCSOs should not change, at least until after the Olympics. However, the review has shown the Met to be a little “top heavy” in terms of Sergeants, so these are subject to review. In H&F we will reduce the number of SNT Sergeants from 16 to 12 across the borough.
DM	You mentioned earlier that there are three football teams in the borough. What are the particular challenges this brings?
LD’O	All sporting events create policing challenges. We are reviewing how we use officers on match days, especially to tackle the issues around our town centres and licensed premises. These areas need to be policed robustly. The policing style will vary from club to club, and whilst it isn’t easy, it is a very exciting challenge.

DM	<p>Although you've told us that there were a low amount of burglaries yesterday there seems to be a sense that crime is rising. How does this impression balance with the figures that you see?</p>
LD'O	<p>There is currently a 9% reduction in burglary across the borough (compared to the same period last year). Neighbourhood Watch has an important role to play in this, ensuring that the community are informed about how best to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>Car crime in the borough is a current concern. We have however, had good success using "sting" vehicles. Four prolific motor vehicle offenders were arrested in the past week using these tactics. These offences are encouraged by members of the public leaving vehicles unsecured or items on display, so vigilance has a role here in keeping crime down. I'm interested in how Neighbourhood Watch can help, and outside work I'm a member of my own local scheme.</p> <p>Last week there was an arrest in Shepherds Bush directly arising from community intelligence and this is something I want to encourage.</p> <p>I don't think that the fear of crime and the reality always match. This is a fundamentally safe borough and at this time crime is on a downward trend.</p>
Q	<p>As a coordinator in the Shepherds Bush area, I'm interested as to why it is a priority area for the police?</p>
LD'O	<p>Shepherds Bush has had significant crime generators for many years. The Westfield Centre encourages many visitors to the area and there is a large night time economy there.</p> <p>I want my officers to look at the bigger picture, and the links between offending, such as theft, handling stolen goods and drugs and see how they can disrupt these linked offences.</p> <p>Placing additional resources in Shepherds Bush should have a positive impact not only on offending there, but also across the borough.</p>
Q	<p>You've mentioned that the SNTs may lose some Sergeants, but in my experience on my ward we no longer have the 2 constables and 3 PCSOs that were in the team originally.</p>
LD'O	<p>As you probably know, the borough has enhanced some of the SNTs across the borough, especially in the town centres. At the moment I need to ensure that my officers are deployed flexibly, which may sometimes mean putting two ward teams together at times to solve a particular problem which doesn't fit neatly into the ward structure of the police and council. This means that some wards will at times require more intensive policing than other wards. However, whilst we have increased our flexibility there will always be a minimum of two officers still allocated to any ward, regardless of the calls on resources elsewhere.</p>

Q	I live on an estate in Fulham Town ward. We've recently lost our local crime prevention PC who has retired and not been replaced. I've heard that there is now only one crime prevention officer for the whole borough when we used to have three.
LD'O	There are a large number of building developments planned within the borough in the next 10-15 years, and we need to ensure that security is built into these developments at the planning stage. There is a difficult balance to strike however. If I recruit to the post of a crime prevention officer, it could mean losing a resource in another important area, such as ASB or offender management. I will look at the whole picture with an eye on the work that needs to be done and see how I can resource priority activities. This is still a work in progress.
Q	In my area there seems to be a disproportionate volume of violent and weapon crime.
LD'O	There has been a number of recent, high profile, incidents. We want to tackle the root causes of violent crime, which are often drug or alcohol related. It's important that we build a strategy to tackle licensing issues. The role of our dedicated drug squad is vital in targeting this involved in drugs markets. Information from the community will assist us in disrupting these markets and we will act on information. The local authority have agreed to continue funding enhanced policing in town centres and this commitment means that we have 40 extra uniformed officers on the borough.
	LD'O had to leave the meeting at this time, but informed the meeting that any further questions to her could be directed via hammersmithandfulham.police@met.police.uk putting "Ask the Borough Commander" in the Subject field. DM thanked her on behalf of the Association for her attendance.

Review of the Year in Neighbourhood Watch

DM began his review of the year by introducing the members of the Executive Committee and thanking them for their work to help develop the Association in the past year. He stated he would welcome more coordinators becoming members of the committee and asked anyone who was interested in assisting to contact him.

The main points of his review of the year were:

- Cathy Robertson standing down as Chair at the 2010 AGM.
- The Neighbourhood Watch event at the Lyric which was well attended and gave coordinators the chance to quiz the police Borough Commander and the Councillor who is Cabinet member for Residents' Services.
- The annual H&F Crime Summit in March, where DM was invited to speak from the platform to talk about the work of Neighbourhood Watch in the borough and appeal for more of the public to get involved.

- The number of watches in the borough has increased. At the previous AGM there were 242 streets covered by 179 schemes. Over 20 more have been added in the past year. Where schemes have stagnated, we are working with the SNTs to support them back into being effective schemes.
- The website has been up and running for over a year now (<http://www.hfnhw.org.uk/>). There have been over 17,500 visits to it. The borough commander's fortnightly bulletin is now linked to it. There has been a range of crime prevention advice placed on there for coordinators, and shortly there will be some interactive crime prevention resources available.
- In the coming year the Association want to work to promote Neighbourhood Watch in those areas that have been traditionally hard to reach for the initiative, such as housing estates. To this end we are developing new printed recruitment materials.
- There will be a comprehensive crime prevention guide for coordinators, which is currently being written and will be available soon.
- DM thanks all the coordinators, both at the AGM and those absent, for all their efforts and for ensuring that Neighbourhood Watch is active and effective in Hammersmith & Fulham.

DM then opened the meeting to the floor for a general discussion about local Neighbourhood Watch issues, a précis of which is shown below.

Can coordinators have more regular and proactive communications from the Borough Association committee?
DM responded that the committee will increase regular communications with the members of the Association and we will also make the feedback section of the website more prominent to facilitate two way communications. Whilst DM wouldn't guarantee a monthly frequency of communications, he agreed that this would become more frequent than is currently the case, and as and when it is appropriate.
Can the Association share the minutes of Executive Committee meetings?
It was agreed that these would be placed on the website subsequent to meetings.
With the added pressures on policing on the borough, can the Association assist with the setting up of schemes?
DM agreed that the committee would help to facilitate start up schemes, but reiterated that it was important that the local SNT were involved in the process. The committee can be contacted on committee@hfnhw.org.uk There is advice on setting up a scheme in the coordinators handbook, a copy of which is available at http://www.hfnhw.org.uk/securezone/coordinatorzone.html
How can we keep our schemes active and motivated? Is there some way of sharing the expertise of coordinators with other members?

DM replied that the committee would look at how they can facilitate bring coordinators who are geographically located near one another together and how we can share experience across schemes. The committee will revisit previous proposals to bring together all coordinators within a particular electoral ward at least once a year. We will look into the feasibility of sharing “hints and tips” via the website.

The issue of communications with the SNT was raised by a number of coordinators. They asked whether there was scope for a system whereby if the team was not on duty that their calls would be diverted to another SNT nearby. There was however acceptance that it was unreasonable to expect a 24 hour response from SNTs.

DM replied that he would raise the issue with the borough commander. Sergeant McMahon who was also in attendance from SNTs reiterated that if calls are urgent (i.e. a crime is being committed) that people should ring 999. For non urgent issues, and when the SNT are not on duty, people should use the non emergency number 0300 123 1212.

Close

DM made a presentation to the recently retired PC Adrian Simmons, who has recently completed his 30 years of service. DM, on behalf of Neighbourhood Watch, thanked Adrian for all his work over the years in assisting with the setting up of schemes, the formation of the Borough Association and his ongoing support for schemes.

DM also thanked the representatives of the various SNTs in attendance for their diligence and assistance.