

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING  
HELD IN THE COMMUNITY CENTRE  
14TH APRIL 2014**

**Present:** 13 residents of Stocksfield  
Sergeant Mick Stephenson, Northumbria Police  
Ms Rosalind Saul, Hexham Courant

**Apologies:** Mr I Hall, Mr P Gascoigne, Mrs B Gascoigne, Mrs M Martin

Ms Hunt, Chairman of the Parish Council, in the Chair

Ms Hunt introduced Sergeant Stephenson, Neighbourhood Sergeant East Tynedale.

Sergeant Stephenson opened his remarks by saying that in the 12 months to the end of March 2014, 67 crimes had been recorded in Stocksfield. He acknowledged that there had been a lot of break-ins recently but said that compared with other areas the crime rate was still low. He suggested that the criminals were coming from outside the area. Currently police operations are targeting Stocksfield. He said that the Community Support Team was in Stocksfield every month. He said that residents are best placed to see and hear what is going on.

Sergeant Stephenson asked if residents were aware of the Community Newsletter which is sent out regularly by e-mail and covers half of Mickley, and the area bounded by the A68, the Durham Border and the River Tyne.

Sergeant Stephenson went on to talk about the proposals for the closure of police stations. He said that the changes were being driven by Government cuts. Northumbria Police, however, are considering closing police stations rather than lose officers. Currently, of Prudhoe, Corbridge and Ponteland Police Stations, only Prudhoe has a front office. Northumbria Police are actively looking for a new site to replace Prudhoe Police Station. It is expected that, in the future, 24/7 policing will be run from Hexham. He stressed that realistically residents will not notice any change, and may even notice a greater police presence as there will be a bigger pool of resources. He stressed that Hexham and Prudhoe have always worked together. There are five shifts based in East Tynedale, each with 5 officers and in addition there are 6 community officers.

Sergeant Stephenson said that the volunteer system of Community Speed Watch is working and plays a vital role in speed control.

A resident asked about why Neighbourhood Watch was no longer operational and if it was likely to be started up again. Sergeant Stephenson said Neighbourhood Watch Schemes were now self-generated with volunteer co-ordinators. He said that there was a link on the Northumbria Police website to a Government site which explained the scheme.

Ms Hunt suggested that the Parish Council might organise a meeting to facilitate setting up new Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

Sergeant Stephenson concluded his remarks by saying:

- don't leave keys in open view
- lock doors
- be cautious about opening doors to strangers
- CCTV use in Northumberland is under review – he suggested that the use of too many cameras might infringe human rights
- automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) might be more useful

There being no further questions Ms Hunt thanked Sergeant Stephenson for attending the meeting.

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2013**

Prof. Thompson proposed and Mrs Dale seconded and it was agreed that the Minutes of 15<sup>th</sup> April 2013 were a true record of the meeting

**Matter Arising** – none

**Stocksfield Community Association Trading Arm (SCATA)**

Mr Duncan outlined the history of SCATA and made the following points:

- SCATA is a community owned not for profit company based in Stocksfield
- SCATA is the trading arm of Stocksfield Community Association
- SCATA and the Parish Council have a close relationship
- SCATA is currently looking to provide affordable homes for rent on previously developed land – 6 at Guessburn and 1 at Branch End. A meeting is being held this week to finalise everything. The builder is an Isos contractor. Isos will manage the development. The tenants will have connections to Stocksfield. Building is expected to start at the end of April.
- The snooker tables are now in store
- The proceeds of the sale of the Snooker Club will be used to extend the Cricket Pavilion
- SCATA is looking towards their next project and will have a new proposal fairly soon
- The recent Housing Needs Survey had produced a statistically good result

**Reports from the Parish Council and County Councillor**

Ms Hunt outlined the following points from the Chairman's Report in the Annual Report:

- The Parish Council is currently finalising a Carers' Information Card which has been drawn up in partnership with Carers Northumberland
- A Community Flood Plan has been developed in partnership with the Environment Agency
- An Energy Savings Project had been initiated with support from Newton & Bywell
- The Cricket Field has received Fields in Trust Designation.
- It is hoped that the development of the car park at the Sportsfield can be included in the plans for the development of the Cricket Pavilion
- Residents and Parish Councillors are concerned about losing the Green Belt and the need to identify previously developed land. A County Council Planning Officer is to attend the May meeting of the Parish Council.
- New Ridley Development – the Parish Council has called a public meeting to discuss the latest proposals on 6<sup>th</sup> May

County Councillor Mrs Dale outlined the following:

- Northumberland County Council Core Strategy document – it is important that residents submit their views on this consultation
- County Hall – the present building is too big. It has a large maintenance bill which is a drain on council tax. Staff are coming back to districts – this will save money as staff will not have to travel between the districts and County Hall.
- The County Council has to make £130m savings over the next three years. A lot of services will be cut back. There is a need to ensure that services are properly funded.

There were no questions.

**Finance**

The unaudited accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March had been tabled and were noted. There were no questions.

A summary of the budget for the 2014-15 year had been circulated and was noted. There were no questions.

**Any Other Business**

Ms Hunt said that the Parish Council had a small supply of stickers encouraging dog walkers to pick up after their dogs.

Ms Hunt closed the meeting by thanking those present for attending.