

Harlow Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter, Tuesday 14 June 2011

We're sending round this update about our work and plans, and hope to do this regularly.

1. Next Meeting - Public Meeting to discuss drug-related crime in Harlow: Speaker, Lewis Basford, Essex Police detective - Monday 27 June, 7.00pm, Civic Centre, Harlow

We'll be meeting again on **Monday 27 June at 7.00pm** at the Civic Centre, Water Gardens. It'll be in one of the Committee Rooms, just ask at reception when you arrive. All are welcome. Essex Police detective Lewis Basford, from Harlow Police Station, has kindly agreed to speak to our meeting. He has a presentation which covers various issues on the general subject of the prevention, detection and prosecution of drug-related crime. I am told that this will include some footage relating to the practice of illegally growing cannabis in residential properties, something which has occurred a number of times in Harlow.

The purpose of the meeting is to raise awareness of the problems caused by drug abuse in our community and to discuss what residents can do to help the police minimise drug-dealing and drug-abuse in Harlow. I'd like to emphasise that ALL are welcome to attend our meetings, so please inform anyone who might be interested in hearing more about this important subject.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting, held on Monday 9 May

17 people attended. Graham Anthony, Crime Reduction Officer, and Colin Freeman from Essex Watch sent their apologies. Councillor Joshua Jolles from Harlow Council attended. Amy Vernon, a Community Police Support Officer covering West Harlow, attended and spoke about her work which included work with young people. She had been trained in youth and community work and sports coaching and was anxious to use and develop her skills. She has begun initiatives at Berecroft and elsewhere, and expressed great interest in the Baseball Project, hoping that she could develop work with young people in and around Northbrooks, which was within her patch.

Paul Wadley, Secretary, updated us on developments with the Baseball Project (see below) and on his attendance at the recent Essex County Neighbourhood Watch Association. Paul took on a big task in co-ordinating all of the work in re-establishing this project and continues to liaise with the relevant bodies with a view to developing youth work around this project. Mike Ruocco (Treasurer) explained that we had now opened a Bank Account and that Essex County Neighbourhood Watch had kindly donated £500 as a start-up grant to help us re-develop our work in Harlow.

We received reports from members about recent incidents. There were continuing and serious problems with heavy lorries using Churchgate Street; the appropriate authorities seemed powerless. A member from Churchfield had reported problems with a multiple-occupancy house where young people had been guilty of antisocial behaviour. Other reports were received.

Three members of the Great Parndon Neighbourhood Action Panel (NAP) attended and gave their views on a number of matters including liaison with the police and also about possible overlap between the work of NAPs, Harlow Safer Partnership and Harlow Neighbourhood Watch. They had had some success tackling the problem of speeding motorists on some roads and were active in raising community issues.

3. Baseball Project

For those reading this newsletter for the first time, the 'Baseball Project' was the initiative of our former Chairman Albert Hobdell. He and the Committee worked hard to obtain funds from Barclays Bank (via the Football Federation) for a 'baseball diamond' at Northbrooks Playing Field, the main purpose of which, from Harlow Neighbourhood Watch's point of view, was to develop baseball coaching and participation by young people in the area. A high quality pitch was laid out - and on 5 April 2009, an official launch took place, attended by Lord Lieutenant of Essex, Lord Petre. A baseball team, Harlow Greensox, was founded, and the involvement of young people in baseball coaching and playing began, involving several dozen youngsters. By last summer, however, the project had lapsed and your present Committee has set about reviving it, under the leadership of our Secretary, Paul Wadley.

On 18 April this year your Committee signed a new management agreement under which the Northbrooks Playing Field is leased to Harlow Neighbourhood Watch. Under a separate agreement, Harlow Neighbourhood Watch has agreed with a registered baseball team, Southern Nationals, that they may use the pitch for their league matches, in return for which they will assist us in developing baseball coaching and the involvement of local young people on this site. Their first match was played on 8 May and they have played several more since.

We'd like to place on record our thanks to all those involved, including Barclays Bank, the ultimate sponsors, for helping us to re-start this facility.

4. Baseball Project Open Day - Sunday 7 August

An Open Day, which will act in effect as an official re-launch of the Baseball Project, is earmarked for **Sunday 7 August**, and we will make further announcements about this in due course.

5. Harlow Council's Neighbourhood Forums

Harlow Council has invited Harlow Neighbourhood Watch to present a short talk at their series of 'Neighbourhood Forum' meetings, being organised by their 'Big Society' Team. We have agreed to participate. Tony Bennett attended the meeting for The Stow on 17 May at The Spinney School where useful contact was made with other community groups. Tony is due to speak tonight at the Great Parndon forum at Longwood School. Several more such forums are being held.

6. Essex Watch e-mail newsletters

Colin Freeman is employed by Essex Police to act as 'Essex Watch Co-ordinator', which includes responsibilities for development work with Neighbourhood Watch groups. Before 1 April, he was responsible for such work in Uttlesford and Epping Forest areas; since then, his responsibilities include Harlow.

Colin produces a useful regular newsletter which includes reports on national and local Neighbourhood Watch activities and on home safety and crime prevention tips. Anyone can receive this by simply contacting Colin on 0300 333 4444 or sending an e-mail to him at Colin.Freeman@essex.police.pnn.uk asking to be put on his regular e-mail list.

7. Local Neighbourhood Watch Schemes in Harlow

Some areas have decided that they would prefer to run local 'Neighbourhood Watch' schemes in their own areas. Schemes that we are aware of are those in: Mulberry Green, Morningtons, Thurstans and New Hall. There may be others. We are comfortable with people setting up their own schemes; some of these send representatives to our meeting and they are always very welcome.

8. NAPs

The issue of 'overlap' between the work of Harlow Neighbourhood Watch and Neighbourhood Action Panels was raised by members of the Great Parndon NAP at our last meeting (see item 2 above). Our view is that any overlap or duplication is best overcome by members of both groups talking to each other about issues of common concern and we shall do our best to promote this.

9. Recruitment Event

We have discussed holding a 'Recruitment Event' to obtain new volunteer members, perhaps hiring space in the Harvey Centre to distribute literature about this and answer questions from the public. We'll let you know more about this as soon as we have firmed up our plans.

10. Junior Neighbourhood Watch Training Afternoon - 24 June

Essex County Neighbourhood Watch Association are running a training day for those interested in ideas around raising the awareness of young people about antisocial behaviour issues. It's on **Friday 24 June, 2.00pm at Police HQ**, Chelmsford. If anyone is interested in attending, let me know.

11. Essex Police grants for Neighbourhood Watch Associations

Geoff Ireland from Essex County Neighbourhood Watch informs me that despite government cuts Essex Police have said they will still support district neighbourhood watch schemes like ours with an annual grant of £500. We have discussed the possibility of setting up a Harlow Neighbourhood Watch website at some stage in the future and this grant could enable us to do so.

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