

## Old Windsor Neighbourhood Action Group Chairman's report 2008/9

The Neighbourhood Action Group includes representatives from the Police, Parish Council, local schools, Windsor Housing, Neighbourhood Watch, Borough officers and members of the local community. This forum brings together a wide range of expertise and influence which it applies to resolving local problems. The NAG primary objectives are decided by public meeting and for 2008/9 they included burglary, anti social driving and anti social behaviour.

During the course of the year the NAG representation was increased to include members of staff from local schools, Windsor Housing Association and officers from departments of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. Sadly, despite a number of invitations, RBWM Youth Services were unable to provide a representative but Andy Aldridge, who you will previously remember as our village PCSO, was a regular attender in his new role as the RBWM Senior Community Warden. He also provided a valuable communications link with other Borough departments.

In June a meeting was held at St Peters School in Crimp Hill and we thank the Headmaster and staff for their interest and hospitality. This was part of a longer term plan to engage more closely with local young people.

In terms of achievements the footpath lighting across the recreation ground is now installed and working. The aim of the project was to provide better policing of the recreation ground after dark by making trouble makers more visible and so reducing anti social behaviour. The NAG proved a useful multi agency forum to support the search for funding for this project. The scheme involved the Old Windsor

Community Partnership, the Police, the RBWM street lighting team and the Parish Council. In its application for funding The Community Partnership stressed the support for the project from the Neighbourhood Policing team which proved invaluable in securing additional funding for the scheme. The Parish Council provided the remainder of the funding and the project was managed by the Community partnership in conjunction with the RBWM street lighting team.

Neighbourhood Watch is an integral part of the NAG system by keeping people informed about the latest crime trends, and how to protect against them. They also provide information to the Police about suspicious or unusual local activities. The Police can react to crime and apprehend the perpetrators but in the first instance the responsibility must rest with local residents to ensure they don't leave themselves open to crime.

Whilst youngsters on motor bikes and in noisy cars were the most visible anti social driving offenders Police action has reduced the problem they cause. As a casual observer local people with unrestrained children in their cars, driving whilst using hand held mobile phones, parking inconsiderately or ignoring traffic regulations represent a much greater safety hazard. The NAG initiated speed checks in St Lukes Road, Straight Road and at the request of residents, Church Road. The results showed that for the most part drivers obey the speed restrictions with only occasional transgressions. Use of hand held mobile phones is a much bigger problem.

A recent Parish Council survey revealed a widely held view that anti social behaviour has diminished markedly in recent months. This followed extensive Police efforts to identify the ringleaders and

monitor their activities. In addition to this the Police and Parish Council identified numerous ways in which to provide additional activities for young people on the basis that if they are kept occupied they are less likely to cause problems. Additional facilities were provided for the Youth Club with the purchase of a Wii computer games console proving very popular. Following open days and consultation with the young people ways of improving the Youth Club have been identified.

The failure of the RBWM to provide trained support for the Youth Club was addressed in a letter from the Parish Council to the RBWM Chief Executive complaining about the lack of Borough officer support. No satisfactory explanation has been forthcoming but in recent weeks a significant improvement has been noted and the youth club has been open regularly on Wednesday and Thursday evenings.

The village has suffered in recent years from a failure to report crimes and vandalism. This results in the village being perceived as a lower problem area than it really is. So there is a clear lesson for us all to learn. If you don't report problems they will never be sorted out. So remember the non emergency number to contact the Police 0845 8 505 505.

Finally the NAG can and does address other problems which occur during the year so if you have a concern about something which arises during the year please draw it to our attention. You can do this via your local Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator, your Parish Councillor or direct to myself – my telephone number is on the village notice boards.

Tony Troughton 14/10/09

