



**Aim and objective of the group:** To work together, moving forward to address the current crime and ASB issues in the town.

### Crime Reduction Group Meeting Notes

Monday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2019, 11am

There were 42 people present including representatives from the Police, Parking Enforcement, local town and parish councils.

1. Welcome - Mr M Sheehan introduced himself as Chair of this community group which is supported by the Town Council and the police. It needs to stay as a community group to look at issues in town and find ways to fund solutions. We are not here to have a go at anyone but work together to sort issues with partners such as housing, police, schools etc. Projects achieved so far include SmartWater and CCTV. If anyone wants to be kept up-to-date please leave your email address.
2. Mr K Lane was elected as Chair. Mr Lane is a retired police inspector who was brought up in Cleobury so knows the area well.
3. Apologies were received from Mr P Blackburn and Mr J Griffiths.
4. CCTV update – Mr Sheehan reported that the 26 cameras have really helped police. Cameras can only be viewed by two approved people. There are five people trained to view footage but we do need more volunteers – they will have to be DBS checked. We are looking to have additional cameras to cover two blind spots which have been identified at Furlongs Rd/Rockley Bank and by the Parish Hall. The Town Council is responsible for the cameras. Mr C Smith informed the meeting that having CCTV and SmartWater has helped reduced home insurance premiums.
5. I) Parking – Mr Sheehan had requested Mr C Evans from Parking Enforcement to come out to address the problem areas at Lion Lane, bottom of the Hurst and blocking school buses. Parking issues can be reported on the Town Council, Shropshire Council and police websites. Cllr M Shinton also asked people to report problems on 'My Shropshire' on Shropshire Council's website and let her know how well this new system works. She highlighted a potential problem at Mortimer Gardens where five additional houses have been permitted for development and asked if the Town Council and Parking enforcement can give a view on how this will be managed. Mr Sheehan stated that parking is being looked at by the Crime Group and will report their findings to the Town Council. Mr Evans will patrol Cleobury in the evenings this weekend, starting with the parking issues outside the takeaways. A resident raised serious concerns about inconsiderate parking at the junction to Lion Lane which has prevented emergency vehicles attending incidents in the past. Mr Evans confirmed there are Standard Operating Procedures to follow regard parking issues and that they have to be consistent in their approach. Issues regarding people driving home after being in the pubs were voiced. Tickets ultimately work as people will not change their behaviour if they know they can wilfully get away with it. There are on-going issues with parking by the new Nursing home. Any new road restrictions need to go through highways for full consultation with all parties. Mr Sheehan has sent information in and is awaiting an assessment. Cllr

Shinerton asked for a copy of the plan so she can also chase Highways on this. It was agreed to form a Parking Sub-Group to focus on parking issues and report to the Town Council – members include Mr K Lane and Mr C Smith.

II) Dog fouling – Mr Sheehan showed a Paws on Patrol leaflet which asks people to report issues if they see something. He can give witness statements but everyone can report issues. He asked for help to promote Paws on Patrol, putting up posters etc. Littering can also be reported via the link on the Town Council and Shropshire Council websites. Mr Sheehan gave an example of reporting young people emptying their pockets of litter which was caught on CCTV and a warning was issued to the parents. There can be fines up to £1,000. Cllr Shinerton confirmed that we need evidence to enforce. Mr J Reynolds said he will put something in the Clarion if the Crime Group will let him know what's going on.

6. Sergeant Thomas, West Mercia Police wanted to open up the room for discussion. He stated he couldn't report on the current situation regarding issues the previous week other than to say arrests have been made, interviews carried out and bail posted as it is an on-going investigation. Inspector N Roberts had issued a statement but Sgt Thomas asked people to be careful with Facebook comments as they are very close to identifying and thus targeting individuals. He understands the frustrations with the lack of police but he asked that people are mindful of what they are saying as comments could be deemed as malicious communications. Things in this area had been very quiet until 14<sup>th</sup> October. He agrees that there is not enough police presence and a PC is needed on duty again. Currently there are only two PCSO's to cover the whole Highley to Cleobury area. It is good to see the strength of feeling at this meeting about this and he does get cover over here. Concerns were raised that families come here who don't fit in or don't want to be here and that a knife had been used to threaten people. Statements have been given. Sgt Thomas doesn't want the community to get involved in retribution and that the police will deal quickly and arrest anyone carrying knives. There are limited resources but people in imminent danger will be responded to. Those who have had an issue but are now home safe will not be dealt with immediately. Questions on how to help the police were raised. People were urged to phone 101 and give any information to the police but also consider becoming Specials. Questions regarding the psychological factors that children are scared due to the intimidation were raised. There were also comments that some children were scared to approach the police. Mr D Reynolds, head of Lacon Childe School said they have trained people and a support mechanism for children to talk about concerns. The social media impact on children can be dramatic and things can get blown out of proportion. It is worse for adults with talk of burning houses down. Social media groups are more helpful when reporting vehicle thefts, sheep rustling etc. He felt dismayed that parents felt it unsafe for children to walk to school. Mr Lane asked that any information at all should be fed to the police via 101, Crime stoppers, West Mercia Police website, as it may be a missing piece of evidence or to let him know and he will forward it on. Sgt Thomas asked that people report the threats of assault and rape to the police. He is fighting for another police officer for this area to support the PCSOs who do have patrol plans to follow. Police can do Stop and Search and will be present at school this Thursday and Friday. Some people felt the police presence frightens children. Others were glad to see teachers outside school as the person who made the threats was still seen around. Sgt Thomas said that bail conditions may prevent that but he could not reveal what the conditions are due to the on-going investigations. He agreed with comments that parking outside the schools is a major problem. There are some signs the schools can use to help with safety concerns.

The Chairman asked for an overview on rural crime. Sgt Thomas explained that we are still in a low crime area despite various thefts and other incidents. Cllr Shinerton asked if there are any increased incidents when the street lights go off. There is no evidence of this but also the Bronze Level Tasking group ceased a few months ago for the partnership working with the council.

7. Future Agenda Items – Driver behaviour through Cleobury i.e. speeding, overtaking on zebra crossings. Consider sending letter to hauliers and also consider Community Speed Watch. Mr G Oliver from the Police and Crime Commissioner's office stated that whilst we have less problems than most towns thanks to the CCTV, he will ask that we get a new police officer from the new batch being trained. Mr Sheehan thanked everyone for coming and supporting the group but also the Town

Council for giving him the time to do this. Please send out positive messages for Cleobury going forward. Cllr A Vanderhook thanked Mr Sheehan for getting this group running.

**8. The next meeting will be held on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> January, at 7pm at the Cleobury Country Centre.**

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