

**Minutes of the Eleventh Annual General Meeting of the Woking Association of Neighbourhood Watches  
Held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 11th June 2019 at Goldwater Lodge, Wishbone Way,  
Woking, GU21 3RT.**

**Present:** Chairman: Mr Martin Stilwell  
General Secretary and Treasurer: Mr Geoffrey Johnson  
Committee Member: Mr Marc Alderman  
Committee Member: Mr Tony Kremer

And 20 members of the Association

**Speaker:** Mr Mark Richmond.

**1. Welcome.**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. He thanked those who had organised the event and everyone for their attendance. He was pleased to see that the attendance level met the 10% of the current membership as required by the Constitution.

He also welcomed the guest speaker Mark Richmond .Woking Borough Commander Andy Greaves was unfortunately unable to be present, but had provided the Chairman with the text of his talk.

**2. Apologies for Absence.**

Apologies had been received from Membership Secretary Steve Dew, Committee Member Alan Taylor and a number of members.

**3. Minutes of the AGM held on 20th May**

The minutes of the 2018 AGM having previously been circulated were accepted by the meeting.

**4. Chairman's Report.**

Mr Stilwell presented his first report as Chair. See below for full text of report.

Mr Stilwell also thanked his Committee for their support & appealed to the members present to consider joining the committee.

A copy of the Chair's address is to be found at the end of these minutes.

**5. Treasurer's Report.**

Geoffrey Johnson presented the Accounts which had been agreed by the Independent Examiner.

Mr Johnson reported that during the year the Association did not receive any income apart from bank interest.

Expenses comprised the 2018 AGM £80.46, ongoing cost of the website £58.95 & £150 in respect of a Surrey Neighbourhood Watch Association training conference. This is to be repaid in the next few months when Surrey receive their grant from the Police & Crime Commissioner.

Mr Johnson noted that as long as the Association was able to continue to use Goldwater Lodge for Co-ordinator meetings without charge, the current level of funds was adequate.

Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Angela Williams & seconded by Ken Chapman The accounts were duly accepted.

**6. Election of Officers.**

The existing committee were offering themselves for re-election .

In the absence of any other nomination, the committee for the coming year was proposed as follows:

Mr Martin Stilwell : Chairman,

Mr Geoffrey Johnson : Treasurer /General Secretary

Mr Steve Dew : Membership Secretary/Multi Scheme Administrator.

Mr Alan Taylor

Mr Marc Alderman

Mr Tony Kremer

Mr Mark Pengelly

The election of the Committee as above was proposed by Gerard Sweeney, seconded by Angela Sweeney and duly elected.

#### **7. Appointment of Independent Examiner.**

The Treasurer announced that qualified accountant Mr Deryck Fowler had agreed to continue act for WAN in this capacity. The proposal to appoint Mr Fowler was included in that for the committee election.

#### **8. Woking Police**

Martin Stilwell delivered the talk which had been forwarded by Woking Borough Commander Andy Greaves. Martin asked that any specific comments from members should be forwarded through him.

Copy of report below.

#### **9. Mark Richmond**

Mark and his wife run the not-for-profit organisation called Barnabas Fresh Start CIC. They provide work for local people who, for whatever reason, have found themselves on the edge of society and are keen to get back into work. They have been particularly successful in this and carried out a lot of cosmetic improvements to Walton Court in Maybury. This project was led by Woking Police (not NVH or WokingBC) but funded by NVH with support of WBC. These 5 storey blocks are often at the root of much of the crime in Woking and by bettering the lives of the residents the crime has reduced. Unfortunately, NVH and WBC chose not to fund the completion of the project, thus depriving the residents of the final cosmetic improvements.

Mark gave a very entertaining talk on his work in the past and with Walton Court.

#### **10. Close of Meeting.**

The chairman thanked those present for their attendance & contributions & closed the meeting at 9.30pm.

**Those giving apologies:**

## WAN Chair's Report JUNE 2019

Welcome to all and thank you for coming along tonight.

Insp Andy Greaves has had to pull out of talking to us this evening, but was unable to offer us a deputy. This is disappointing to say the least and I have let him know that no Police presence is not a great way to impress the citizens of Woking. I asked for a written report and have received a detailed one that I will shortly read out.

I'd like to welcome Mark Richmond of FreshStartCIC who will give us a talk on his organisation and what he has been doing in Walton Court in Maybury.

As regards Woking NhW we are following the strategy of Surrey NhW (sometimes leading the strategy) and moving towards a neighbourhood/community-based organisation rather than a street-based one. This means more people will hear about more things much more quickly. This requires the use of social media such as Facebook and Whatsapp, and people having access to computers and smartphones. But none of this will help those who do not wish to use such things yet who still want to be aware of what is going on. For this reason the principle of street-based Watches and email communication will remain, and be enhanced. The social media-based communications are "top cover". Communities, villages, estates etc can have a "super Watch" covering a larger area and include many street-based Watches. It is important for the coordinators of the street-based Watches to be aware of, and in touch with, the coordinators of the "super Watch". This structure will also enable the borough NhW teams to 'reverse engineer' the promotion and generation of street-based Watches, where none currently exist, by looking for volunteers within the social media-based "super Watches".

However, there still remains some issues with the grand scheme that Surrey are working on.

One issue regards the quality and quantity of the information we receive from the Police. At present, in Woking, Steve Dew produces a weekly report (on just acquisitive crime) that goes out as an Alert on Thursdays to all those who are registered on the system. This is currently to 189 coordinators and 855 residents. Steve is not permitted to report on any other crime type, and the information can be up to a week out of date. He is assisted by another volunteer who is only available at weekends and covers for him when he is away. Whilst these reports are useful and maintain the contact between the Police and us, the public, we really want to be informed immediately of any important information that may affect our lives. We already receive Alerts from Surrey Police, from Action Fraud and NhW UK, but we receive little from Woking Police. This is not consistent across the county where some borough teams provide a lot more information than others. As an example, Runnymede Police send far more Alerts to their residents than any other borough. So if they can do it, why not others? But Woking is no worse than many other boroughs in Surrey. This needs to be resolved at Surrey Police level with better training, funding and resourcing.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> issue is that the public currently have to report crime, or potential crime, via 999 or 101. There is no "instant" reporting method other than 999. The '101' can be via phone or through Surrey Police's website. The phone system has a poor reputation due to the time you can be held waiting for an answer. The call goes to Guildford, as do the website created reports. They are not thrown in the bin! They are categorised, prioritised and dealt with. However, there is work to be done by Surrey Police to assure the public of the value of the 101 reports.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> issue is the feedback to the public of the value of their calls and reports. It would be good to know that something we report on resulted in an arrest; a conviction; the prevention of crime; or contributed towards a current campaign by the Police. Quite understandably, much information cannot be released as it may compromise a current trial or investigation. But the Police need to be much better at keeping us informed. We can all go onto the Police.uk site and see all the crime reports for our area, and most will have the outcome (usually no action taken), but the data is usually more than 2 months old. [pictures of Police.uk maps]

Surrey NhW are working towards improving the situation, which needs to be addressed at Surrey Police level, although borough inspectors are aware of the different ways they work (but do not seem to be pro-active in resolving this)

Apart for 999 and 101 there is actually a 3<sup>rd</sup> method of reporting crime, and much more use needs to be made of this. It's via Crimestoppers. Where a 999 or 101 will contain your details, a Crimestoppers report is absolutely anonymous – guaranteed every time. They are a charity that's been going for 30 years and in all that time not one submitter has been identified, such is the automatic sanitisation of contact details and the processes used by the staff to pass on reports to the Police. Crimestoppers also offers rewards. Last year 450,000 reports across the UK resulted in 27,500 crimes being solved or prevented.

No one here should feel the need to use Crimestoppers instead of 101 of course, but consider those people who live in places such as Walton Court, which Mark will be telling us more about. These residents see drug dealing all the time but are usually afraid to report it in case the criminals identify them as the informant. Now they can do so without any danger of their identity being traceable. Even the report is sanitised by Crimestoppers before sending to the Police in case something in it would have identified the person or where they live.

So please be aware of what is going on around you. Periodically look at Police.uk data to see where the crime is and how that affects the Police time. Note the number of crimes we would not normally know about personally – anti-social behaviour, domestics, etc

Make use of the InTheKnow/OurWatch registration. If you have a relative living outside Woking, you can log into your account and set up to receive Alerts from elsewhere – anywhere in UK. This is called "Alternate Alerting Areas" and that's why I know about the Alerts from Runnymede as I have an Alternate Alerting Area set up for there. If you cannot find the settings in your account (there is a "forgotten password option.....") email me and I'll point you at the feature.

Do not dismiss out of hand the use of social media just because you do not like it. You may not be a fan, but others are, and having a street-based Watch in a "super Watch" area can be of enormous benefit to everyone concerned. We will be issuing a map of where the current "super Watch" areas are and how to contact them. We are looking to fill the gaps at street level. There are no hard and fast rules regarding the size of these "super Watches", but there are rules regarding their use – they are for NhW only. Many Residents' Associations make use of social-media, and these are also plugged into NhW as an alternate communications method.

And never be concerned that something you see may not be treated as important to the Police. You report it. It may seem a relatively unimportant piece of information to you or you think it's a waste of time to report it, but it may well be one of many similar reports received that give a "picture" to a crime and help the Police to make arrests.

### **Woking Borough Commander`s Report**

#### **Strategy:**

Since speaking to NhW in October 2018, the demand on Woking police continues to be unprecedented whilst our resourcing has continued to decline. Despite this, the focus of Woking Police is to protect the most vulnerable people in our communities, pursue offenders to protect and detect crime and through preventing crime and disorder, make Woking the safest Borough it can be.

Much of our work is now with Partners - through partnership work we intend to target those offences and offenders that present the greatest risk of harm and ensuring we place the victim at the heart of our investigations. This represents an effort to tackle the exploitation of vulnerable people, whether through drugs, sex or other criminality, as part of County Lines or Woking based offenders. As such, Woking Police is working with partners, children homes, hotels, taxis, licenced premises as well as large religious establishments to educate the community and recognise exploitation.

Exploitation is certainly a growth area and much of our focus, as per my priorities is to tackle exploitation, often driven by drug supply.

**Borough Priorities:**

1. Walton Court – drug supply and related violence;
2. Heathside Road car park and Hotels where exploitation of children occurs.
3. Pound House – tackling child criminal exploitation.

**Statistics:**

Actual reported crime within Woking Borough for the quarter 1 January 2019 to 31 March 2019 has increased by 17% compared to the same period last year. This represents the Borough's commitment encourage the public to report crime, as well as a spike in certain crime areas, namely serious sexual, battery, robbery and criminal damage offences. There remain a number of crime types which we remain focussed on, and the following is a summary of crime types in Woking Borough, including those being focused on by Surrey Police:

- Drugs offences continue to have a significant impact on the community of Woking and I have set tackling drugs, particularly with associated violence or exploitation as the top priority of the Borough. It is recognised that to tackle drug supply positively influences rates of exploitation, violence and burglary. Through the use of a bespoke Proactive team, augmented by Neighbourhood Policing teams; A series of operations with British transport Police; Residential closure orders on problem properties, as well as encouragement to the community to report all drug related activity, the number of recorded offences has increased by 41% compared to the same quarter in 2018, demonstrating the continued focus on this area of criminality. It is evident that by tackling drug possession and supply in conjunction with partners, particularly housing, it is anticipated that associated crime types such as cuckooing can be significantly reduced, whereby protecting the most vulnerable members of the community. Because of the increase in management of drugs offences, the positive outcome rate has shown an increase of 42.9% in the FYtD.
- Domestic Violence offences on the Borough have seen an increase of 9.8% (FYtD). This increase is, as per the last report largely due to nationwide HMIC direction to ensure that all domestic related offences are correctly and accurately recorded and has been wholly adopted by Surrey Police, thus increasing the number of recorded domestic related offences. Unfortunately, largely owing to a number of factors including (and not limited to) staffing and demand, the positive outcomes within domestic violence (charge/summons/caution/community resolution) has reduced by 36.4% for offences committed in Woking Borough. Woking Borough continues to work closely with partner agencies to support victims of domestic abuse.
- There has been reduction in domestic burglaries, from 33 to 30 FYtD with positive outcomes remaining static compared to the last reporting period. Interestingly, the last quarter has seen a spike between Jan and March of 59% compared to the last period, particularly January and February and these include a large number of shed and garage breaks rather than homes. Domestic Burglary is a priority for the Woking Borough Policing Team with resources from both the Safer Neighbourhood Team and Neighbourhood Policing Team tasked to target the identified series. The burglaries can be characterised by some being attributable to local offenders and some offences have been linked to a wider regional series.
- Hate Crime offences have reduced since the large spike in the last reporting period which was largely due to increasing reporting through awareness and engagement with faith and LGBT+ groups. In this last period, 47% less crimes have been reported, Woking Police continue to work closely with the Public Protection Support Unit, Independent Advisory Group members and key locations to seek the best ways to tackle hate crime, frequently affording repeat victims with a single point of contact and prosecuting offenders wherever possible.

**Future:**

- In terms of the way forward, I am working hard to engage with the Mosque to develop and improve the relationship with this huge portion of the Woking population. This is going well and I speak monthly/twice monthly at Friday prayers to deliver key messages – recently it has been about, “The Police come from the Community, the Community are the Police”; Exploitation and about encouraging reporting of crime on the adage – if we don’t know about, we can’t do something to help you.
- I appreciate some people are becoming dissatisfied with not getting an officer attending when they report a crime. This is simply because we have to be very picky with what we do attend as we simply don’t have enough officers. I always encourage the public to report as even if we don’t attend, it builds an intelligence picture. Where there is high harm, threat or risk we will always attend.
- In response to the public saying that they never see officers, I have also slightly restructured how we operate in Woking. Our response officers cover 999/101 calls across the whole Borough, but these tend to be concentrated in certain areas – what we were not good at was covering all the Borough when there were not specific incidents bringing us there. As such, I have looked at the highest demand/risk wards, namely Maybury/Sheerwater/Knaphill/Town Centre and Byfleet and each area has been given 2 officers per rota (10 in total) to proactively patrol these areas in their down time. I hope that there has been an increase in officer visibility and I welcome feedback.
- We have Woking Pride on 10 August 2019 – this will be a big event and I encourage your members to support the event wherever possible.
- I recognise that we are still not good enough at our Social Media – I am looking into this to try to get as good as some of our other Boroughs.

Kind regards,  
Andy