

## Minutes of the Monthly Parish Council Meeting

Held at the Community Centre Monday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

**Present** Cllrs, D North (Chair), R Booker, P Makinson, J Giles, K Wicks, P Archer, L Holt, J Walker (clerk). Ward Cllrs, J Ennis, A Cherryholme. Ex, MP, S Peacock. South Yorkshire's PCC Dr A Billings and assistant. Police sergeant R Wilson, Barnsley Chronicle reporter and 23N<sup>o</sup> Members of the public.

**61. Apologies for absence** were received from: - Cllrs P Ford, B Lee and Ward Cllr D Higginbottom.

### **62. South Yorkshire's Police and Crime Commissioner.**

Dr Billings, this is my third visit to Shafton during which time the numbers of police officers has gone down and we previously had an inspection report which was bad. Three years on we now have an inspection report of good. Durham is the one police authority with an inspection report of outstanding. When I appointed the present Chief Constable the one thing I asked him to do was to reintroduce neighbourhood policing.

All the major political parties are promising to increase police officer numbers. In South Yorkshire the numbers in 2010 was 3,000 officers, through the period of austerity/budget cuts this number was reduced to 2,600 officers. We have increased the number of officers this year so we are getting back to the number of officers we saw in 2010. Moving forward we are looking to recruit graduates to be problem solvers that although they won't be visible in the communities they will be working to fight fraud and cyber-crimes. An effect of the period of austerity has been that all the social activities have gone from our communities, so it shouldn't be a surprise that anti-social behaviour has gone up. We want all other community services improved like youth clubs with youth workers and sports facilities brought back. Violent behaviour is on the increase and we need to get this out of our communities. We were given 1.6 million pound to reduce violent crime and stop people getting involved in crime.

Ward Cllrs said they welcome the return of neighbourhood policing, as I remember the first PCSO officers were in Grimethorpe. The work they did along with regular police officers and the specials is greatly missed in our communities. Dr Billings confirmed that the number of specials has reduce in South Yorkshire. We are looking at recruiting more special officers. Not necessarily to go out on beats but people who have specialist skills in their day jobs. Who could bring their skills into our organisation detecting fraud for example? PCSO<sup>s</sup> have proved their worth in the communities and they are gradually coming back. We are carrying out a review of the work they do because we are aware that their work is valuable to communities.

A member of the public, said on your last visit to Shafton you said improvements were being made to the 101 telephone system and it would be all singing all dancing in the future. But people are still waiting 40 to 50 minutes before anyone answers. What are you going to do about it? Also would you like to stop the 2% precept? Dr Billings replied we would like the government to cap the precept at 2%. The government want to increase police officers but they want us to pay for it through the precepts. I want to keep it at 2%. We are looking at ways we can make savings throughout the Police and Fire and Rescue Services.

The 101 system is a national system that was established to divert non-emergency calls away from the 999 service. The system was 15 years old and so needed the upgrades that have been put in place the new system is working reasonably well and is supplemented by other methods of contacting the police via email and online forms. Employing more call handlers would increase the number of calls you would have to deal with. Subsequently raising the number and variety of issues raised. The other support services that have been reduced or have gone completely would need to increase to deal with the variety of issues raised. But as the support services have been reduced or gone, therefore now more goes to the police via 101. The police have to do what they say regarding following up issues raised, they can't simply say it's not ours to deal with. This in turn takes officers away from their day to day work in the communities. We have recently looked at the response times on the 101 system and the average waiting time was 9 minutes. The 101 system does have a call back option although this isn't a 24 hour option at present. So overall 101 is improved but it's not perfect.

A member of the public said 9 minutes is too long people hang up, so a lot of crime isn't reported because you cant get through and the old aren't technically minded. Dr Billings replied I hear this wherever I go.

## **62. South Yorkshire's Police and Crime Commissioner. (Continued).**

We can see how long people are waiting, a factor of the system is that some calls are not genuine issues and these have to be dealt with as well. I'll speak to the Chief Constable to ask if 101 is poor due to its demand.

A member of the public said the crime rate in Shafton is the highest it's ever been. The police used to work with local youths but they don't now. Dr Billings replied there has been a rise in crime locally although I understand the main offenders are now being dealt with through the courts. The election manifestos are promising 20,000 new officers. Whilst these are being recruited and trained we will have approximately 300 officers retire so the job is to recruit/train and retain officers. Sergeant Wilson reported that the local neighbourhood policing team will be recruiting 1 more officer in February so the neighbourhood team will be 5 after February. A Cllr asked what the situation with our PCSO officers is. Sergeant Wilson replied the officers will increase but PCSO's will reduce.

A member of the public said they had been attacked by a burglar and got a very poor response from the police. Saying that her children had witnessed the attack and response, so how can we bring our children up to respect the police? Dr Billings said I take your point and we do need to work with communities to get the respect rebuilt. A Cllr said we used to run with 9 control rooms, now there's one control room it doesn't work because all the local knowledge has gone. Dr Billings replied that restoring neighbourhood policing would give back the local knowledge. Technology records who has called and when which also identifies vulnerable people. South Yorkshire is run as 4 districts in different ways according to the needs of each district. A member of the public asked if it was true there is a projected underspend of £4.0 million.

Dr Billings said no it isn't true the projected underspend is £400,000 but we have a way to go to the end of the financial year. We don't raise money for the sake of it. We were awarded £2.8 million to target knife crime and the only way to do this with the current staffing levels was through overtime, which is not sustainable. We will be asking the new government to put a long term plan in place rather than giving lumps of money to deal with such serious issues.

A member of the public asked if he thought the media had an influence on crime. Dr Billings said he finds it hard to believe that the media has no influence. Cross party thinking is to get in front of crime and to reduce poverty. Whilst enforcement needs to be effective.

Dr Billings and assistant left the meeting at 08.30pm.

**63. Minutes of the previous meeting.** Held Monday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2019 were read.

**64. Matters arising** from the minutes of the previous meeting.

**36 A.** A member of the public said the hedges on Hawthorne Street are overgrowing the pavement and the steps leading onto Bedale estate are overgrown. The ward Cllrs said they would look into these issues. This has been reported to Berneslai Home who are responsible for the hedge maintenance.

**46 B.** A member of the public asked why the fence hasn't been repaired in front of The Singing Man. The chair said we were about to repair it when BMBC said they would repair it. We will chase it up again and if BMBC won't do it we will.

**65. Ratification of the minutes of the previous meeting.**

**65 A.** Ratification proposed by Cllr R Booker seconded by Cllr K Wicks. The minutes of 28<sup>th</sup> October 2019 are ratified.

**66. Police Matters.**

**67. Roads/ Footpaths/ Lighting.**

**67 A.** A member of the public said that The Gas Board have left bollards/barriers obstructing the pavement on the High Street. The chair said he would get our caretaker to move them out of the way.

**67 B.** A member of the public said that the concrete bollards on the old Brierley Road have been broken allowing quads and motorcycles to use it as a shortcut.

**67 C.** A Cllr said he has spoken to Dr Billings to ask if the PCC would fund a speed camera for Sandybridge Lane. Dr Billings asked that The Parish Council write to him with the request. The clerk was asked to write.

**68. Community Centre/ Playing Fields/Allotments.**

**69. Correspondence.**

**69 A.** We have received confirmation from BMBC elections office that they will be using the community centre as the polling station for the upcoming election.

**70. Any other business.**

**70. Date of next meeting**

27<sup>th</sup> January 2020 at 07.00pm.

There being no further business brought for discussion the Chairman closed the meeting at 09.10pm.