

DISCUSSION DOCUMENT REGARDING THE GT CHESTERFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION PANEL – JUNE 2011

Background

Neighbourhood Action Panels were set up on a nationwide scale for local groups to have contact and discussion with their local police force in order to address social issues.

Over the last two years, the Great Chesterford Neighbourhood Action Panel has been regularly meeting with our local PC, Sonia Grayland. Even though we have a very low crime rate and few social problems, we have covered topics that have varied from the proposed festival at Field Farm through to parents' fears and rumours of a proposed halfway house in the village for rehabilitated sex offenders.

The system works by the Chair making contact with key members of the village to find out if there are any issues they would like me to bring to the police's attention. These contacts cover the Church, the Community Centre, the Chapel, the school, the shop, the skatepark, youth club, Little Chesterford, Wendens Ambo & Audley End.

Government cuts have forced Essex Police to recommend that the NAP does not continue in its current format. One option is that we should have 'Neighbourhood Meetings' where our local police attend, but we have a more flexible open session for anyone to bring up issues.

At our meeting, we agreed that the link to our local PC was important and should be maintained. However, we need to decide on the format of future meetings.

Proposal:

1. We have a quarterly (?) Neighbourhood Meeting at the Community Centre, but in the evening (7.30?) to maximise attendance chaired by the current NAP chairperson. Minutes continue to be taken by the police and after discussion, 'priorities' are made and worked on.
2. The village is notified via the Broadsheet and Google Groups rather than local press. (If advertised in the Saffron Walden local press, we run the risk of people attending with issues that aren't relevant to our area.)

For Discussion:

Should this continue to be PC led? Is there anyone else who will take it on?

Given the public nature of the meetings, will people feel that they can discuss issues especially if it involves neighbours? In some of the previous NAP meetings we have had to discuss confidential information.

Will quarterly neighbourhood meetings be well attended? The reason we have the current system where I contact key members for information is because so few are prepared to attend.