

Nailsea Neighbourhood Watch AGM

3rd July 2013

Chairman's Report

Neighbourhood Watch continues to be strong in Nailsea. We now have 166 schemes registered with the Police including one new scheme in Dunkery Close. We are trying to recruit new schemes all the time so if you know anyone who would like to start a scheme in their road then please let us know.

Our public meetings have been well attended and we were indeed fortunate to have some different guest speakers this year: Mark Poarch from the charity BRACE; John Radford from Nailsea Air Cadets; Mike Littleton from Bristol Airport and Katy Waterman from Police Crime Prevention. We were also privileged to have our new Police & Crime Commissioner Sue Mountstevens attend the March meeting. She talked about her priorities for Avon & Somerset Constabulary and praised us for the work we are doing here in Nailsea. She said that the Police need the support of the public in fighting crime. I sincerely hope the Police will continue to reciprocate by keeping us informed of relevant crime news in a timely manner. PC Adam Clarke has attended all of our meetings and my thanks go to him for his detailed reports on the local crime scene. We always try to cover different subjects so if there is a particular guest speaker you would like for a future meeting please let us know and we will do our best to comply. I hope to be able to publish a full list of guest speakers for 2014 in the September newsletter.

The Christmas Social was again a great success with an unchanged format from the previous year. My thanks go to all Committee members who helped in the preparation and running of the event.

I was invited to a meeting with several other local groups at Nailsea Police station earlier this year to contribute to a review of 'front desk' opening times. There was no suggestion of closing the front desk, but the times and days of the week when it will be open may change. This review is covering the whole of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary area and is not due to report its recommendations until later this year.

Those of you who have been looking at our new web site will notice that we have been expanding and improving the content throughout the year. We have now included relevant Police news, past Ringmaster messages and news from National Neighbourhood Watch. I am also hoping to include news from other 'watches'. So you now have two sources of information – the newsletter, and the web site which provides a single point of reference for all relevant Neighbourhood Watch news. There is also a complete list of all the streets covered by Neighbourhood Watch on the web site 'Schemes' page.

We have continued to produce the newsletter and, as always, we always welcome suggestions for new content. I would like to thank Jill Collard and her husband for collating the newsletters, and Committee member Ian Mottram for delivering them to our distributors.

There are numerous Neighbourhood Watch street signs in the town either missing, damaged or just simply faded. We have recently acquired new stock so if you notice any signs that need replacing then please let us know. Thank you to Terry Thompson (Committee) and Barry Kneebone (Police Bobby Van) for supplying and erecting our signs.

We have had a number of Contact Persons (Co-ordinators) retire this year, many of whom have given many years of support to Neighbourhood Watch in Nailsea. Unfortunately it has taken a long time to recruit replacements. We have had to spend time producing and delivering letters to households to secure replacements in order to keep schemes registered with the Police. It is a pity that on a few occasions, no-one has come forward until a crime is committed in their neighbourhood. That being said, I cannot thank enough all those who run Neighbourhood Watch schemes in the town. I would also like to thank all those people who have retired as Contact Persons. In particular, I must single out Irene Hatherall of St Mary's Grove who very kindly came forward to offer her services as temporary Contact Person to keep The Uplands operating until we recruited a permanent replacement. She has subsequently offered to be the temporary Contact Person for Whiteoak Way. Will someone please offer to be her permanent replacement?

Unfortunately we have had issues receiving Ringmaster messages from the Police since December. I raised this problem with our new Sergeant, Mark Raby. With the support of Inspector Sharon Bennett, additional members of staff at Nailsea Police station have now been trained in the use of the system so messages can be sent out without delay. I have also found that a few schemes are missing from the Police Ringmaster database. This happened during the Police audit at the end of last year. These schemes are now being added to the system. Meanwhile, all Ringmaster messages are available to view on our website.

We now have a draft Constitution for Nailsea Neighbourhood Watch, however I have not been able to publish it sufficiently early for it to be put before this Annual General Meeting. Therefore, an Extraordinary General Meeting will be held at 7:30pm immediately prior to our next public meeting on Wednesday October 2nd to agree the Constitution. Notice of this meeting will be advertised in the local Press and in the September newsletter. Copies of the draft Constitution will be posted to our website in advance and will be available at the meeting.

Our Committee numbers have declined further this year to only six members, which means that sometimes even less attend Committee meetings. This makes it very difficult to organize our programme of events, generate fresh new ideas and make decisions. We only have five meetings each year and I would welcome anyone who would like to attend and experience any Committee meeting, without obligation (the next meeting is on Tuesday 3rd September). Just having some extra people on the Committee to contribute to our discussions would be a great help.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to our Treasurer Gill, our photographer and assistant newsletter editor Mike and all the Committee for their continued support. Thanks also to all our helpers and Audrey, Margaret and Pauline for providing the refreshments at our public meetings and the Christmas Social.

I feel privileged to have chaired the Nailsea 'watch' again this year and I want to see Neighbourhood Watch continue to thrive in our town.

Peter Smith
Chairman