



NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH ASSOCIATION



Annual General Meeting

held at Woolpit Village Hall, 7th April 2017

Tony Spall, Chairman, opened the meeting at 7.15pm by welcoming members to the meeting. After safety announcements he introduced the speaker Alan Osborne, Community Safety Manager for Suffolk Constabulary.

Alan introduced his talk with a short video and then spoke about the changes that had occurred and in particular about the necessity for the public to take on responsibility for their own personal safety and that of their property and valued work taken on by NHW in promoting this. He took questions from members. He encouraged members to sign up to Police Connect as a way of getting messages from the police to the public. Members expressed concern regarding the lack of details about crimes that had been committed and the slowness of requesting help from the public when a crime had been committed. Alan said that this was a matter for investigating officers and also the priority the matter was given by the I.T. unit. This was now run as a joint venture with Norfolk Constabulary. Alan said that there he understood the concerns of the public regarding some response times when using the 101 system. He understood further staff had been employed and efforts were being made to address the problem.

The Chairman thanked Alan for his talk.

8pm. A.G.M. opened. Attendance

1. **Apologies for absence.** 11 apologies had been received.
2. **Minutes of AGM 2016.** Matters arising from the Minutes would be dealt with in the Agenda. The Minutes were passed unanimously.
3. **Matters arising. These would be dealt with within the Chairman's report.**
4. **Chairman's Report.** Tony Spall summarised the changes that had taken place since our last AGM. Direct handover of the police database had not been possible due to the wording of the original police data protection statement and the re-registration of Schemes had taken much longer than expected. Many reminders had to be sent out and it was some months before the Association could be confident in having an up to date list of Schemes in the County. The delay caused uncertainty among members and had created a feeling of being abandoned by the police.

Whilst true that there were no longer police staff directly connected with NHW as in the past, this did not mean that the police had withdrawn its support. On the contrary, the Executive Officers of the Association have had meetings with the Constabulary, including the Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner. These had been very positive and support was being given in other ways. The role we play is considered important within the community with us supporting the police and them us. Nonetheless the Association must stand on its own feet and run itself.

It was important for the future development of the Association that members encouraged friends and contacts to take an interest in NHW and to encourage the formation of new Schemes in their communities. The Association is keen to re-establish old Networks and establish new ones around the County as a form of local self-support. These networks would also be a basis for members to engage with NHW. It was hoped that the lead coordinator/chairman of such groups would then participate in Committee meetings and thereby widen the scope of the work of the Association. It was hoped that we would be able to arrange open meetings in each of the three police areas during the coming year.

The Association also wants to encourage members to sign up to Police Connect, the Constabularies free messaging service. There had already been comments about the slow rate at which police requested information on crimes and also the lack of detail of crimes locally when committed. The Police U.K. site was not considered appropriate for the needs of Coordinators always being at least two months out of date. Though Alan Osborne had touched on this it was an area of concern that the Association would be pursue. Contact about such information with local SN Teams might be a way of solving, or at least improving the issue.

The main area of the handover that was still causing a problem related to obtaining and fixing of NHW street signs. This was an ongoing issue which was being pursued both with the police and Suffolk County Council Highways Department.

5. **Treasurer's Report.** Bob Gooch reported that we had received a small amount of income from the sale of Patlock, the residue of funds from a group that had closed and a payment from Community Care Commission for the distribution of leaflets. He estimated that at the current rate of expenditure, mainly on expenses the Association had funds to survive about two years unless there was regular form of income.

Currently our funds stood at £2,300.20. He reported that there were several unrepresented cheques outstanding which would reduce this figure. There were no questions from the floor.

6. **Election of Officers.** The Secretary reported that no nominations had been received for any of the posts. The current post holders were prepared to continue and were re-elected unanimously. Proposed by Sue Strutt and seconded by Tony Allen. Tony Spall reiterated the need for support not only increases the knowledge

work base of the Committee but also to ensure its survival. The Committee was as small as it could be within the current constitution. While this may well be the result of how SNWA was run in the past with so much done by the police it could not continue indefinitely. NHW had a lot to offer but the lack of personnel was hampering progress. He encouraged all members to consider whether they could offer their time. A question from the floor suggested that if specific tasks could be outlined members might feel more able to take on such tasks. The Chairman said the committee would give the idea serious consideration.

7. **Changes to Constitution.** Some members commented that they had not received any paper copy of the new constitution. The Chairman pointed out that such a circulation would have been very expensive. A link had been provided in the Suffolk NWA newsletter in March and a link to the relevant documents was also on our website. He outlined the reason for the changes to the Constitution. These were passed unanimously without further comment.

8. **Any Other Business.**

- a) There were further comments regarding the perceived lack of support from the police and the lack of details regarding local crimes. It was pointed out that coordinators could contact their local SNT to see further information was available. As mentioned elsewhere the Committee would pursue this further to see if matters could be improved.
- b) Concern was expressed about the lack of attendance by police at Ipswich NHW meetings. It was pointed out that the police had withdrawn from attending many community based meetings due to pressure of time on personnel. Again it was something Network chair/coordinators could take up locally.
- c) The chairman raised the matter of a data protection issue with a particular Scheme who were refusing to sign the declaration. Despite many attempts to answer and or explain the various questions raised by correspondent. The matter was now at stalemate. The Associations procedures followed very closely those of the Constabulary and had been checked out by them. The Chairman requested permission to discontinue any further correspondence with the scheme in question, after his last email sent to the scheme offered them the opportunity to amend the data protection statement so that it would satisfy their requirement and enable them to register their scheme with the association. That offer had not been accepted. The general assent from the floor was that this was an appropriate response and it was therefore up to the Coordinator to make a final decision regarding whether to accept the situation and sign or not register.

9. **Date of next meeting.** To be announced.

The meeting was closed at 9.5pm

Brian Sivyer

Secretary, Suffolk Neighbourhood Watch Association. 15th April 2017