

Meeting of the ASB Task Group on 27th March 2008 – Lancaster Town Hall

Number 1

- The first comment from the audience was of the lack of respect amongst modern youth but accepted that they also had very little to do with their time.
 - Councillor Woodruff felt there was a big problem in the amount of time it took to put restraints on troublemakers. i.e. in response to noise disturbance you may need to make 2 years of record before any kind of positive action is taken.
 - Some workers from Marsh CC felt that the perceptions of the problems of ASB were perpetuated by the press in particular.
 - Jude Towers noted that the use of residents parking spaces by commuters was perceived as ASB.
 - The no-entry to parks for over 14s was looked upon negatively by young people as they didn't know where else they were supposed to go! The signs were deemed to be pointless.
 - Yakub Patel thought the perception of young people's behaviour in contrast with those in the past was vastly exaggerated. Kids are still kids.
 - The good work carried out at Marsh CC was not happening all over the district and this needed to be addressed by County and City Councils.
- In particular, EVENING PROVISIONS needed to be extended.
- Young people need to be kept busy as pften the victims of ASB are other children. They need to be given things to do.
 - The work of PCSOs was praised by some attendees.
 - It was felt that far money should be spent on children aged between 12 and 18 and more support should be given to the community centres.
- Need to look more at prevention – would like to see a Need to look more at prevention – would like to see a YOUTH CAFÉ in the centre of town for young people to go to and 'hang out', perhaps run by other young people.
- Skate Parks are great but dog fouling and adults assaulting one another were big problems. A lot of kids didn't want to join in adult-run youth groups (often the ones who do cause trouble) so maybe they should be encouraged to run them themselves.
 - Marsh CC thought even more money needed to get on prevention aimed at under-12s as kids on estates were witnessing bad things from a very early age.

- Inter agency working needed to be improved so they worked more cohesively.
- Lobby social services to put more work into youth activities in the district.

Number 2

- Children should have areas to build bike track and do free running etc.
- Perception that many people were less tolerant of others and that better lines of communication between age groups and communities needed to be established.
- Kids “were told where they couldn’t go but not where they could”.
- The CROSSOVER programme had been extremely successful in bringing a number of agencies and young people from all backgrounds together for an event that took place in the middle of town.
- Wanted the press to be more supportive of the good work taking place in the district and to raise the profile of youth events taking place.
- **LIZ NEAT** spoke of the ‘TERRITORIAL TENSIONS’ dance event that took place to raise awareness on the subject. She also wanted:
 - An analysis of ASBO hotspots across the district.
 - Extend the Marsh model to Ryelands and/or Skerton and ensure that it is sustainable and consistent.
 - **An anti-poverty strategy should exist.**
 - More proactive work from the Council and press to publicise the “good news” stories across the district.
 - There is already a Free Running park in Morecambe and one should be established in Lancaster.
 - Would like to see a ‘Community Cohesion’ Officer.
 - Kids want ‘Youth Shelter’s’ to be established as places they can hang out and keep dry etc. Problem is in where to site these.
 - Attendees wanted to see statistics on ASBO handed out to individuals dependent on alcohol or drugs.
 - Concerns were raised that not enough young people were involved in the meeting and so:
 - **It was agreed to arrange some site visits for Members of the Task Group to Marsh Community Centre and these would be arranged with Yakub Patel etc.**

Numbers 3/4

- The DIVERSIONARY ACTIVITIES programme had proved very successful but the funding of this needed to be **mainstreamed**.
- Community groups said they regularly consult with their communities but often their requests do not meet the funding criteria of the Funding Agencies and so they can’t always best meet their needs.
- Community spirit needed to be rebuilt through excellent initiatives such as those established by the Marsh Community Centre etc.

- Also mentioned that the Council and the community need to work with the incoming migrant population and make them feel welcome in the district.
 - Also pointed out that racism and homophobia were particular problems.
 - A request for an alcohol exclusion zone around Ridge square was knocked back due to lack of backing.
 - It was agreed that Licensees should take more responsibility and their fees should be increased and the additional revenue channelled directly into young people's activities.
 - **Wyre Community Safety Officer highlighted as an example of good practice as they worked very hard to make Licensees work together.**
 - A very high proportion of complaints to ward Councillors reflected litter problems and dog mess.
 - It was noted that **Byelaws were useless without Enforcement and the resources spent on enforcement should be increased.**
 - It was felt that the Ryelands estate needed money putting into good people to get their youth facilities up and running and kickstart community initiatives there and engage young people.
 - Wyre have initiatives to reward people who clean up after their dogs etc.
 - **Also proposed to have a site visit to the Sultan Art Gallery which sought to promote community cohesion.**
- It needed to be easier for Member of the public to communicate with the Council. Perhaps some form of reporting format needed to be created whereby messages could be left on the Council's website for Community Safety Officers to be notified of incidents.
- It was reported that the Police needed byelaw notices to be up in order for them to carry out any kind of enforcement and this was why they were placed at play areas that were completely fenced off.

Meeting of the ASB Task Group on 9th April 2008 – Carnforth Railway Station

- A heavy slant on 'youths living on Council estates' cited as the main causers of ASB.
 - Blocks of Council flats were mixing pensioners and young single mothers, which many people thought was inappropriate.
 - There were a number of complaints that Council tenants were not maintaining their properties well enough and the Council should be doing more to pressure them to do so.
 - Residents of the Highfield Estate wanted to see the Estate Managers being more visible and vigilant.
 - The system of recording incidents in a log book did not appear to have any bearing on resolving issues.
- Some residents were afraid to ring the police for fear of being branded a 'grass' and being targeted more intensely.
- It was suggested that trouble-causers should have their Council properties taken from them.
 - The work of PCSOs was praised by some attendees, but there was agreement that they had limited resources.
- The Council should be more vigilant and punitive of its misbehaving tenants.
- There was very little social work done with youths in the area and there isn't much for young people to do.
 - It was older youths that were drinking alcohol causing the majority of problems, but they were also buying alcohol for the younger children.
 - It was alleged that many of the youths were carrying weapons.
 - Attendees felt that breach of ASBO conditions should be punished more severely.
 - There was agreement that the majority of problems stemmed from a small minority of residents, 'problem families' and wanted to name the main culprits.
 - Many residents were concerned that some areas of the Highfield Estate were beginning to have 'ghetto-like' feels to them.
- It was felt that the Council should carry out more inspections of Council properties and ensure their tenants have more respect for the properties and the areas in which they live.
- It was alleged that a lot of people were also making unauthorised alterations to their properties without informing the Council's planning services.

- Would it be possible for the Council to launch any kind of 'Pride and Respect' campaign for its tenants and the district-wide community as a whole?

- It was remarked that Carnforth Town Council had tried to get necessary funding to install CCTV in the market street area. This had been achieved in Garstang where the CSP contributed to CCTV installation.
- Dog fouling and litter also noted as many concern of ASB for residents.
- It was remarked that the no drinking zone in the centre of Carnforth had had a positive effect but may have moved problems elsewhere such as the estates.
- Overall, attendees agreed that there should be a heightened police presence in Carnforth to reassure residents and deter would-be offenders from displaying ASB.
- Problems were also reported from residents of the Crag Bank area but they thought the youths there were coming down to hang around from other areas of the district. Play areas were damaged etc.

Meeting of the ASB Task Group on 22nd April 2008 – Heysham High School

Number 1

- The first comment from the audience was of the lack of discipline in the home, which was causing young people to run riot.
- “It starts with the home. Parents aren’t showing enough discipline in the home.”
- “What are parents doing to stop young children being on the streets in the late hours.”
- It was felt that families were being moved into housing association accommodation that had been relocated from elsewhere for misbehaving. One gentleman had had 7 windows put through in the previous 8 months.
- Geraldine Smith had been contacted who had contacted the Community Safety Officer and slowly progress was being felt.
- Their aim was to have a pathway closed that was being used as a rat-run for youths’ getaways and a place for people to take drugs. Needles had been found, and it was covered in dog mess.
- **Would better maintenance of ginnels and pathways – trimming of foliage – help to reduce their use for mischief?**
- Footpath Number 23 behind Regent Park Caravan Park **
- It was alleged that 12-15 off Licences in the local area and some were clearly serving alcohol to underage youths, although others had become very vigilant.
- Youths congregating in big groups around shop areas were deemed to be intimidating although no-one present had actually been the victim of an attack.
- *No children were now congregating around Strawberry Gardens area and the PCSOs have done a very good job in preventing it.
- It was agreed that PCSOs and the Police had done a very good job with the limitations that were upon them. **Again agreed that more PCSOs could only benefit the district.**
- Another alleyway was cited as a trouble spot as they are used to stash alcohol or as escape routes for mischief makers from local residents or the police. Glass and needles are regularly found.

- Some attendees had launched a Residents Association and pressured the Council to trim back bushes, trees and hedges which seemed to reduce the amount of litter dropped in them.
- Loud music coming from houses was a source of nuisance, as were youths riding scooters and people allowing dogs to roam around unsupervised.
- Bushes were used by youths to hide their alcohol in case individual cans/bottles were confiscated. Trimming back of shrubs by the Council had made this more difficult.
- More enforcement officers to deal with environmental issues would be of benefit.
- Children playing football in the streets was also a nuisance and clearly a hazard, as was people cycling on the pavements.
- It was pointed out that gangs were as menacing to other young people as they were to older.
- "There isn't provision for youths in the West End"
- "Any kind of provision is for younger children and those activities are not interesting to youths who are embarking on drinking etc."
- "More Music in Morecambe, supported through the Diversionary Tactics programme was highly successful at attracting these youths on weekends but funding runs out."
- Reiterated that removal of foliage at parks had been effective in moving on groups of youths and removal of seating had helped but this was to the detriment of people that wanted to use seating during the day.
- People queried how much Section 106 money was actually being devoted to community resources and activities.
- If activities were to be introduced for youths it had to be in tune with what they actually wanted such as music production facilities, skateboarding, free running etc.
- "I was a detached youth worker in the West End and you have to provide things that they really want to engage in."
- People feel that there should be more and larger open spaces for people to socialise in. "Its clear a lot of kids just want somewhere to go to chill out."

- It was stated “there should be no more licences granted for the sale of alcohol and if any off licence is caught selling alcohol to under-18s it should be revoked immediately.”
- There was some debate on whether the price of alcohol was having an impact although it was agreed that the culture for drinking in this country would be very difficult to reverse – “we cannot legislate the problem away”
- But “it doesn’t help when supermarkets are using alcohol as loss leaders”
- Crime figures suggest crime as a whole is down but the nature of the crime that exists seems to have a higher level of violence and verbal abuse.
- “A big problem is the nanny state that we live in as you can no longer adequately discipline children.”
- Regent Road and Tesco toilets appear to be being used for drug taking.
- Radar Keys given out to disabled people for access to disabled toilets are being given to people who are misusing them i.e. for drug taking etc.
- The City Council’s Children and Young People’s Manager detailed a new system starting nationally called ‘Children Trusts’ that would seek to bring agencies closer together and meetings had already begun, but would take time to take effect.

What can be done to make things better?

- Improved lighting across the district to reduce the amount of dark areas that people find intimidating.
- More Enforcement Officers touring the streets to reduce littering, dog fouling and fly tipping.
- Remove foliage more regularly and keep pathways clean and clear to discourage littering and the potential for hiding alcohol etc.
- “All kids want is somewhere to go, preferably sheltered.”
- “They just want somewhere to chill out”
- Earth areas for youths to ride BMXs on etc.

- 'Extended Services' programme using school and other public buildings for extra-curricular activities.
- Drinking prohibition zones should be enforced better, and drunken adults on the streets dealt with more severely.
- There is "a lot on the horizon" coming from Heysham High and the Police had been working with children to keep them out of trouble.
- Would like to see PCSOs powers being increased. They had done a great job so far but many felt they could do even more. Perhaps greater powers to deal with traffic issues such as parking would be beneficial.
- Would like to see more bins around to reduce dropped litter.
- More education to take place in schools. Council officers could be more pro-active in this respect.
- Parking was again mentioned especially in respect of residents spaces being taken by the school run rush.
- Heysham High had introduced a staggered lunch hour to reduce the number of kids going out of the grounds at any one time for lunch.

**ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR
TASK GROUP**

6.00 P.M.

30TH APRIL 2008

PRESENT:- Councillors Joyce Pritchard (Chairman), Mike Greenall, Janice Hanson, Roger Plumb, Robert Redfern, Catriona Stamp, Morgwn Trolinger, Peter Williamson and Reverend Tim Horobin (Chairman of the public meetings)

Apologies for absence:-

Councillor Val Histed

Officers in attendance:-

Liz Bateson
Jon Stark

Senior Democratic Support Officer
Democratic Support Officer

22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this point.

23 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd April 2008 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

24 INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIRMAN

Councillor Pritchard welcomed all those present to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. The background to the Task Group's establishment was outlined and the Terms of Reference were read out detailing the aims of the investigation. Attendees were advised that the meeting would be administered by an independent Chairman to ensure impartiality and enable Members of the Task Group to listen to opinions, experiences and potential solutions to anti-social behaviour.

Reverend Tim Horobin of Blackburn Diocese introduced himself as the independent Chairman of the Task Group and invited Members of the Task Group and Officers to introduce themselves.

25 EVIDENCE GATHERING FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC REGARDING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Reverend Tim Horobin invited those present to share their experiences of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in their community and discuss potential measures that could be taken by the City Council in order to combat it.

It was reported that some incidents of vandalism had taken place and evidence of drinking had been found on numerous occasions. However, the Task Group were advised that youths on the streets were perceived to be causing trouble and intimidation but very few incidents had actually occurred and in the main they were merely 'hanging around'.

It was agreed that adults were the source of much of the anti-social behaviour in rural areas with fly-tipping, dog fouling and inconsiderate driving habits being particular problems. It was reported that there was a general lack of respect between walkers, cyclists, horse riders and dog walkers using pathways. It was agreed that more enforcement was required to reduce the number of these incidents occurring but the Council could not be expected to address social issues of respect etc.

A YMCA representative addressed the Task Group and said they had provided outreach work in rural areas but their work was predominantly carried out in Lancaster and Morecambe. It was reported that the YMCA had found the provision of a radio station operated by young people on their premises particularly successful in keeping young people occupied and the station had secured operation for at least another five years.

The Task Group was advised that the skate park at Halton Community Centre had been a huge success and was consistently popular, even drawing people from neighbouring towns and villages. It was reported that much of the park was maintained by the young people using it themselves and this sense of 'ownership' of the facility encouraged it to be treated with a great deal of respect. The skate park had been testament that the provision of facilities for young people greatly reduced the perpetration of anti-social behaviour by them.

26 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Anti-social Behaviour Task Group would take place at 5pm on Tuesday, 20th May 2008 at Lancaster Town Hall.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 7.30 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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