

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Notes from the Clacton Public Meeting

SAMs Community Centre, Rosemary Road, Clacton

On Thursday 16th March 2017 at 6.30pm

**Panel Members**

Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner, Jane Gardner

Clacton Ch/Insp, Russ Cole

Clacton Community Safety Partnership Manager, Leanne Thornton

The Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner presented the priorities in the Police and Crime Plan to outline the strategic vision for policing in Essex over the next four years.

Chief Insp Russ Cole – talked about the type of crimes taking place in the area including car damage/theft, beach hut vandalism and dwelling burglaries. He focussed on ASB having a detrimental impact on people’s lives.

He went on to talk about PREVENT – a law enforcement strategy about how to plan for the prevention of and actively prevent crime.

Lads Need Dads was presented by founder Sonia Saljean – About how adult men give up their time to act as an active role model to boys whose fathers are absent and the transformational difference this makes.

Chief Insp Russ Cole talked about community policing – about how times have changed, saying that a large number of crimes are being carried about by a core group, through organised crime – he talked about a recent crackdown in Harwich and the prosecutions that subsequently followed.

**Questions**

Q. When are we actually going to see the police in Clacton town centre?  
Ch Insp Russ Cole responded by saying *I know as a bobby that walked the beat for 15 years, the chances of catching someone red-handed is very slim.*

Question – but isn’t it also about capturing intelligence and speaking to the public   
Ch Insp Russ Cole responded by saying: *We need to work smarter. We don’t get that much intelligence from the public from walking the streets. Technology is key. We have a much better website now. ECM is a great facility and we want to develop it as even that might have had its day in its current form. I think we should be doing more on Snapchat and on Facebook. We get a deal of intelligence through social media groups. We post stolen goods, jewellery, handbags and so on. However, I do have 12 PCSOs, I lobby personally to try and get more funding and resource. The financial envelope restraints won’t stop me from looking for more resource, but equally I have to operate in that envelope and deploy resource based on intelligence available to me.*

Deputy PCC also responded. *People want to see more visible policing. How do you make a very finite resource stretch far? We need to see start seeing things more holistically through the works of the hubs of which Clacton has one of the best in Essex. We are actively working with parishes and towns to try and fund more PSCOs and recruit more Specials. A police officer doesn’t join the force to sit in a station. We need the intelligence to be reported to be able to follow up.*

Q. Shouldn’t residents and the elderly protect themselves better? People in London seem to be more streetwise and know how to keep their homes and property safe. Are they informed?

Ch Isp Russ Cole – talked about the local meetings which advise people to help protect themselves and to discuss tackling rural crime. At these meetings victims are asked to attend and share experiences.   
Police volunteer cadets will possibly knock on doors in the future and offer advice. We also have insight circles – to share burglaries intelligence. Driving instructors are asked to use their dash cameras and to report anything they see; they act as eyes and ears.

She went onto raise the street drinkers that hover around the Woollen Mill shop.

Ch Insp Russ Cole – He agreed that this is an understandable concern and said that street drinkers can be intimidating and talked about public spaces protection orders whereby the police can seize alcohol. In the summer crime and demand goes up by 40%.

Phoenix alcohol support group – talked about the work they do with street drinkers. It’s not just about alcohol, it’s about drugs and mental health, trafficking. We work with Open Road and other agencies. You might not see us, we are in plain clothes.

Q. In the last 6 months, I have experienced three incidents of crime. None of them have been handled well.

For Ch. Insp Russ Cole.

A street fight at 2am called 999, 14 drunk men fighting in the street. Police didn’t arrive in time. It broke up and the police never arrived.

My car was vandalised – still waiting to hear and get a response, I will take up with Ch. Insp Russ Cole.

A neighbour recently called the 101 system, as a speeding car had car hit her wall. She was just asked ‘did you get the number plate?’  
There is CCTV in the area and yet nothing has been done to follow it up.

Ch. Insp Russ Cole talked about attendance times, meeting targets and the HMIC inspection and the work they’ve done to improve Domestic Violence, vulnerable members of the community. The challenge for us is to meet the current challenge of Domestic Violence, emergency attendance times. I’m asking for an additional 40K, I’m looking to get more resources.

For the PCC – the tackling street drinking strategy came out, you’re not listed as a contributor, is your office aware?

And the Local Business Case for joint governance of police and fire – not enough people know about it or understand it.

*Ch. Insp will speak to the man who raised these concerns.*

*Deputy PCC Jane Gardner explained that we are aware of the street drinking strategy, an Essex wide conference was held to discuss this very issue and what more could be done in this space.*

*Deputy PCC Jane Gardner also explained that a great deal of communication has taken place to share the local business case consultation materials through various channels including, parish noticeboards, leaflets, an animation, social media and TV and radio interviews.*

The resident went on to say *‘I was able to help the police, providing information and put it online and contacted 101 and have since as a citizen not had a response from the police. So now I don’t see the point in reporting it, my faith is lost.*

*Ch. Insp – we want to get it right and we don’t get it right every time.*

*Jane Gardner – apologised to the resident and said we will follow up. Also that 101 will be getting some additional money and more resource to take the calls and asked people to keep reporting crime, explaining why it was so important.*

Q. When people travel to Clacton and getting a train ticket from London is anyone informed or is this too intrusive?

A. *Ch. Insp Russ Cole advised that they do get prison release information and intelligence is shared so we know when people are coming into the area in terms of people being released from prison and covert operations.*

Q. Over two years we witnessed various crimes and you phone up 101 and don’t get a response. Do we have to wait for my wife to get attacked before you actually come out?

A. Deputy PCC advised *‘It is difficult to deal with specific incidents in a forum. So please speak to one of the officers here this evening to discuss your concerns.’*

Q. I live in an old people’s home and I witness different crime and drunks. There isn’t enough done, we never see police. I know where all the drugs are in the town.

A. Deputy PCC said ‘*We want to hear from you, please talk to the CSP Manager Leanne Thornton. We need to better understand your concerns and intervene where appropriate to do so to help put these things right.’*

Question: what are you going to do if they close the casualty unit – the traffic will be chaos with ambulances trying to get out of town.

A. Deputy PCC advised that CSP priorities include serious driving injuries. I work with the Clinical Commissioning Group and talk with health. Common sense says you take away the local health unit, where is that bulge going to impact and it’s likely to impact the police and is a good point. A local Cllr here, Linda Williams will take this back to Essex County Council. Local Cllrs are together on this and want to protect the resources in Tendring.

Cllr Williams talked about the solidarity and response to the CCG to protect the casualty and the detrimental impact on traffic if is taken away.

Q. Drugs – I’ve been told by someone in Harlow that drug dealers are coming to Clacton and staying in caravan parks and dealing this way. Are you aware?

And a cab driver has told me that they drive the dealers around to deal. They don’t report it because they are scared because the dealers know who they are.

A. *Ch. Insp Russ Cole advised stated that it is vital to cut off the supply into the county. A drug paper has been written about coastal towns being penetrated by drug gangs. Operation Raptor originated in Clacton. It’s a drug gangs operation. It has been a success and this operates Essex-wide. Today, we arrested a drug dealer from Leeds, seized a weapon and a considerable of amount of drugs. Dealers are also using young local children as an expendable resource.*

*We want to do more with young people to protect and educate them about drugs and gangs recruitment.*

*PCC has invested 200,000 over two years to support young people through Gangsline.*

Q. Is there a free landline 101 number because you get charged if you call from a mobile.

A. Deputy PCC advised that a call will cost 15p no matter how long the call takes, but that additional mobile network charges maybe charged.

Sharon Alexander spoke. She runs the community centre. She stated: *‘There are pockets of help around the town. The church provides breakfast and showers and a range of help to anyone who needs it. Salvation Army and CAB and so on. There’s a huge amount of help around the town. I want to thank the police force, when I was in the police there was a lot more money available and I was bored. Things have changed. It’s a different world. The responsibility is now on the individual that in London you would take as normal. Residents need to realise they have to take responsibility and put simple things in place to put criminals off. Gangs who come to Clacton won’t target those with CCTV whose children who receive regular calls from their parents.’*

Q. New housing – will police resource grow with the increase of new housing.

A. *Deputy PCC advised that currently and in part, it’s the number of reported crimes that increases the funding, not more housing whilst acknowledging that the money does need to follow crimes. The PCC is working at a national level to review the current funding formula for policing to make this more equitable, to reflect the distinct uniqueness of Essex and to recognise population growth and the potential that this has to increase crime.*

Q. What are you doing to track people moving around the count who commit crime?

A. Ch. Insp Russ Cole advised we are using Facewatch – shop owners share images to keep people known. Times have moved on and we can share information in this way now.