



**Epping Forest Online Public Meeting**  
**16<sup>th</sup> July 2020 at 19:00**

**Panel Members**

**Roger Hirst**

**Jane Gardner**

**Ch/Insp Anthony Alcock**

**ECFRS Manager Justin Benson-Ryal**

**Cllr Holly Whitbread**

**Jane Gardner** – Introductions

**Roger Hirst** – Thanked residents of Essex and EF for doing amazing job looking after each other and staying home. Many have lost friends through crisis. Lockdown and social distancing effective. Down to public, emergency services and NHS. The challenge continues, including vaccine. Reminded of current guidelines.

Lockdown had impact on crime: shoplifting and burglaries down. Domestic abuse up. Been cracking down on national crime and policing the lockdown. High Beach and Epping Forrest hot spot re. Covid breaches. Fire service assisting with driving ambulances – 4,500 call answered for health service. Public sectors throughout county co-ordinated.

**Q – High Beach – ASB, littering and illegal gatherings – what reassurance can police give public that this will not continue?**

**Ant Alcock** – Difficult to negotiate especially due to sunny weather. Contingency plans, delegated powers to council for littering enforcements. Red lions around Epping Forrest enforced by North Essex parking partnership. More officers available to divert to High Beach – working with the keepers of the forest from City of London to issue tickets. Enforcing by-laws of no-one in forest after dark and if there will be removed.

**Q – Closed Station at Waltham Abbey– Littering and fly-tipping there. As still owned by police, are they not still responsible for this?**

**Roger Hirst** – admitted didn't know about this fly-tipping. Police no longer own Waltham Abbey but doesn't mean we will not look at this. Will work with local council to deal this. If on private land it is responsibility of the land owner.

**Holly Whitbread** – Don't know about it specifically but will take up with team here and see what action will be taken.

**Q – Increase use of on-call personnel. Any plans to locate an off-road light fire at Epping in the spare bay?**

**Justin Benson-Ryal** - We have two fire off road appliances already in service, one at Billericay and one at standard. Location is based on risk based. Epping felt to be ok with current appliances. We'd love to have more but at this time no.

**Roger Hirst** - Integrated Risk Management Plan for ECFRS will look at what appliances needed in different areas as it's not always 'one size fits all'. If we can get more, we'll look at it.

**Q – 101 – ongoing issue re. time spent there trying to report incidents.**

**Roger Hirst** – It was a disgrace when I came here four years ago. Average wait times of 30mins, maximum of four hours. Accept it's for non-urgent calls. If urgent call 999 and you'll get an amazing response.

101 now has more people, we've invested in new technology. We got down to 11mins average wait and an hour max at really busy times. But the increase in demand has meant we've only just caught up with this demand. These figures still need to improve and we're investing more in that area again. Demand gone down due to Covid but this will increase again.

Use on-line reporting and also a live chat line now too. If you can do it, it'll free up the 101 service for those that cant use on-line.

**Q – Best way to report unlicensed motor bikes in Riding Valley Nature Reserve?**

**Jane Gardener** – As Roger said please report it as gives intelligence and allows police to take action.

**Roger Hirst** – Added more frequent for police to make arrests on back of intelligence.

**Ant Alcock** – We can't police effectively in the absence of public. Need everyone to play their part, contribute to intelligence picture, let us know what crimes occurring and what issues. Allows for community safety engagement team and beat teams to police these areas. If public want to report anonymously, they can use crime stoppers.

**Q – Broken windows at Epping Forest police station and vandals in area causing concern. Can Roger look into that as well as Waltham Abbey?**

**Roger Hirst** – Yes.

**Q – Dispersal Orders – why in some places and not others?**

**Roger Hirst** - Public Space Protection Orders are a very powerful instrument and it's fair to say the courts are loath to grant them unless we have a robust evidence base. We work closely with local council and have to base a PSPO on intelligence and a belief something is going to happen in advance.

Four in place across county and got it about right in terms of level of intervention. Other incidents demand a response but a PSPO is for more serious incidents.

**Ant Alcock** – There have been points at which lawfully we could have imposed dispersal orders however we have to base that on the current picture across Essex because there's little point in granting a dispersal order if you don't have the resources to follow

through with it. With large gathering this is difficult as it is high risk and potentially cause violence so we have to weigh that up against other things reported like littering and low level ASB which in the main aren't matters that are solely the responsibility of the police but something that can be dealt with in partnership and in the longer term. So where we have disposal orders it's on the back of risk, harm, sensible resourcing and a really serious disturbance to public health and public well-being.

**Q – Illegal raves in Epping – What can residents do if they know one is taking place and how can they help to prevent them?**

**Holly Whitbread** - Recent success with closure order at Hill House. Report noise – out of hours and in-hours. Collate evidence – lots of hearsay and stories on social media – take screen shot and share with police and ourselves.

**Ant Alcock** – Legal details unique around house parties as covered by legislation in the 90s which we are using again for these raves and gives us quite a lot of powers alongside the ASB powers. Thanked Holly and council re. Hill House. Same message, report it, screen shots, we can then contact organisers to ask them to stop the party. If they still go ahead, we can use ASB and Rave powers to close them down.

**Q – Speed watch. When will people be able to see these back in their area? Not operating since lockdown.**

**Roger Hirst** – If a volunteer, get in touch with your co-ordinator. Can comply with Covid rules. Less traffic and therefore fewer RTAs. Disappointing some people chose to use the emptier roads for speeding. Police intervened.

**Justin Benson-Ryal** – RTC reduced. Message is drive carefully, adhering to speed limits, wear seatbelts.

Increase issue re. parking and difficulty fire appliances trying to get past poorly parked cars. Please make sure not blocking road as every second counts when getting to a house fire or RTC.

**Q – ASB – Royden and other areas. Right use of available resources to fight ASB – cars torched, drug taking, drug dealing, fly-tipping hot spot.**

**Any Alcock** – Re. off road bikes and ASB, a lot of work goes into that already. You'll see on twitter and FB, we're issuing s.59 notices. We have patrols, beat officers responsible for individual areas, partnership working with district council on how we can enforce and issue community protection warnings and notices and exploit other powers to combat these issues. Keep reporting, take photos.

**Holly Alcock** - Community safety team, youth council Outreach for those affected by ASB. Crucial crew in school year 6 and 9, those most at risk at being targeted for ASB.

**Roger Hirst** – Collaborative and partnership work has been successful. ASB coming down. Real achievement compared to what happening before.

**Jane Gardner introduced Steve Wintrip - Station Manager for Epping Forrest ECFRS service who was off camera and mike.**

**Q – When will the Fire Service resume their home safety visits?**

**Justin Benson-Ryal** – We already have. The home fire safety technicians have continued to provide this advice through the pandemic. We never stopped, however prioritising the most vulnerable.

Q – Offroad bikes. What action can police against those riding anti-socially.

**Ant Alcock** – As stated earlier. Also seize uninsured vehicles and give ASN notices. Education to young people with council.

**Jane Gardner - Merridian Park have had several incidents. These will be forwarded to Ant and Holly so they can make contact.**

**Q – Double yellow lines outside Royden Village General stores. Line's repainted but being totally ignored.**

**Roger Hirst** – Parking enforcement NE parking partnership between county council and districts and boroughs. Needs to be escalated to them.

**Q – Recruiting on call firefighters for Waltham Abbey – what are they up to?**

**Roger Hirst** – Waltham Abbey, South Woodham Ferrers, Great Baddow, Dovercourt going well. People are being inspired by what public service have done and want to join them.

**Justin Benson-Ryal** – always going to have problems with transition from day crew station (at station at day and pager at night) to a full on call station where people respond from home or places of work. The position we're in, we're able to crew the appliances at Waltham Abbey with both day crew and on-call crew. We're in that transition stage but it's going well and not too far away from being able to deliver a fully On Call station. Recruitment week running this week until Friday at Waltham. Gave website.

**Jane Gardener** – gave websites for Fire, Police, Council and thanked the Police cadets and fire and rescue cadets and the youth council and NHW.

**Q – Increasing number of police over last few years – will this continue.**

**Roger Hirst** – Thanked public for understanding the increases in council tax which has paid for 400 more police officers over last few years. Boris Johnson commitment to 20,000 extra cops throughout country. Committed to getting our share in Essex = 400 from central government funding. Halfway through recruitment drive this year. Meeting with Home Secretary and Policing Minister recently and the government are committed to these 20,000 cops. By the end we'll have more in Essex. Invested heavily in new technology which allows officers more time on patrol.



**Ant Alcock** – The technology is good; it works and officer like it. More time on street, nearer to community and incidents as they occur. We can already feel the benefits of increases. It has its teething problems as young in service and a lot to learn but it's a huge benefit.

**Holly Whitbread** – Hire three police officers in Epping Forest Council hub team. Successful schemes and specific work exclusively in the district.

**Q – When will coffee with cops start up again and can it be done virtually?**

**Ant Alcock** – We have had FB Q&A sessions recently. Community officer reaching out to arrange more of these.

**Q – PFCC elections postponed due to pandemic and will now take place next May. What are your priorities during this period?**

**Roger Hirst** – Anticipating one-year extension. Original plan four years. Most areas successful, aside from drug driven violence and domestic abuse. We've done a lot, especially DA – more partners and charitable organisations to support victims and encouraged more people to come forward resulted in better picture of the scale of DA. Good but not enough. Need to deal with stopping perpetrators – pilot programme in Colchester called DRIVE. This was successful, had big impact in that area. Rebranded COLUNBUS and rolled out across county – one of the two key priorities for this one-year extension plan.

The other is drug related violence. Violence and vulnerability framework, getting partners across county working together on how to deal with it. Made some good plans. Government and Home Office were impressed with the progress and put together their

violence reduction unit funding which we've received. Also funding from ECC and our own funding. V&V unit – three-pronged attack – Police working with other major forces with county lines. Essex police on ground – stop & search up five-fold, taking weapon off street. PFCC job to make sure this is done proportionately – Essex doing it on basis of behaviour and not on ethnicity. Third strand working with vulnerable young people. Gangs target them. Fire and rescue help with this training problem kids doing something useful in society – working well. A&E mentoring those already stabbed. We've stopped the increase in stabbings, but we need to bring it down. More ambition if re-elected.

**Jane Gardner – Thanked panel. Further questions not answered will be answered online. Thanked public for continuing support during pandemic. Sympathy to those personally effective.**