SOUTHERN RURAL AREA FORUM 14 March 2024

Meeting Started at 19:30

Attending:

Cllr Barnard (Chair)

Cllr Ralph Muncer (Vice Chair)

Cllr Claire Strong

Cllr Louis Peace

Cllr Mandi Tandi

Cllr Ian Moody

Police Inspector James Lant Claire Morgan – Community Partnerships Team Leader 4 members of public

CLLR BARNARD welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the items on the agenda.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

We have received apologies from. Cllr Lisa Nash Cllr Dominic Griffiths Cllr Faye Frost

No further apologies.

2. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members were reminded to make declarations of interest before an item they may wish to abstain from voting if they have an interest, but they are merely making recommendations and not decisions.

3. POLICE SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM UPDATE (19:35)

Police Inspector James Lant provided a presentation on the Safer Neighbourhood Team activities in the Southern Rural area outlined below in Appendix 1.

After the presentation Cllr Muncer asked about the level of Prosecutions – James Lant said he'll look into this and let him know.

Wants to improve the relationship between the Herts and Beds police to help areas such as the Cockernhoe development when that is built.

Cllr Strong suggested more police community engagement by attending the Parish Council meetings – James Lant asked for a list of all the Parish Council meetings dates. A Member of the audience suggested the Herts Association of Parish & Town Councils (HAPTC) Hertfordshire Association of Parish and Town Councils (haptc.org.uk) could provide a list.

SOUTHERN RURAL AREA FORUM 14 March 2024

Clir Barnard delivered an update from the North Herts Council Community Safety Team.

- 1. There have been 2 joint agency operations in December and January with police, NHC enforcement officers and VOSA (vehicle operators' standards agency) held in the Offley area to deter and catch potential fly tippers or unlicensed waste carriers. A few vehicles of interest were stopped, but no prosecutions.
- 2. There have been 2 court cases for fly tipping in Southern rural, since September 2023. The first resulted in a Fine of £200, £700 costs and a £90 victim surcharge. The second was a £50 fine, £100 costs, and £20 victim surcharge.
- 3. There are 3 more court cases for fly tipping in the local area due in March, with 1 offence listed at Luton Magistrates court and the other 2 at Stevenage magistrates. We are hoping for better deterrent sentences than the recent cases.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN RELATION TO GRANT APPLICATION (20:35)

Claire Morgan, the Community Partnerships Team Leader updated Members on budgets?

Community Grant budget available is £5,393. The total amount of funding requested for this meeting is £2,500.

If the application presented this evening is recommended by the Forum and subsequently approved by the Executive Member for Community & Partnerships, there would be £2,893 to carry forward into the 2024/25 budget, subject to approval from Cabinet.

To receive presentations in support of grant applications:

The Chair invited Kelly Metcalf and Esme Harvey from St Paul's Walden Nursery to present?

Kelly gave a presentation regarding the St Paul's Walden Nursery about how they work, their building urgently needs new flooring and Ofsted have asked them to rectify this. The group have been undertaking fundraising activities. Comedy night, a grant and £500 from Cllr Barnard Locality budget. If they are successful, this evening they will be £38 short which they will fund from their reserves.

There is a local need for the nursery proven by the fact that two other local nurseries have closed so it's increased the catchment area of the nursery.

Cllr Strong proposed that the forum provides the additional £38 so that the group did not have to use their reserves.

Proposed by Cllr Strong £2538
Seconded by Ian Moody
5 Members voted in favour.
Cllr Barnard did not vote as he has supported via his Herts County Council locality funding.

SOUTHERN RURAL AREA FORUM 14 March 2024

Recommended an amount of £2538 to report to the Executive Member in consultation with the Service Director for Legal and Community for final decision.

5. INFORMATION NOTE: GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE (20:45)

Claire Morgan, the Community Partnerships Team Leader presented an update on her team's activities in particular the actives of Laura Hartley who covers the Southern Rural area.

- Reaching out to village halls and community centres to gain knowledge on local community groups. Recently met with the manager at Great Ashby Community Centre and the work they do.
- Working with Ickleford Parish Clerk towards addressing loneliness in rural areas.
 Met with CDA Herts (Community Development Action Hertfordshire) to discuss how to create digital inclusion as part of addressing this and support available in the local area.
- Toured St Ippolyts with Parish Councillors to find out more about the community and local area.
- Attended a school democracy visit for year 5/6 with Cllr Barnard to Cockernhoe Primary School.

6. **OPEN DISCUSSION (20:50)**

Questions from the floor about any of the agenda items General Questions or issues anyone wishes to raise.

Discussion – around the effectiveness of Area Forums – Cllr Strong said she wants them all hybrid based at the Council Offices in Letchworth so that people can either attend in person or join via Zoom and it can be broadcast on YouTube for the Parish Councillors to view.

Question from floor about children in Whitwell not getting school places.

Cllr Barnard in his position as Herts County Councillor will set up a meeting with the parents. Cllr Moody said there was an issue in Codicote, and the Stevenage MP supported them.

7. WARD MEMBERS ACTIVITIES (21:00)

No Updates.

8. TOPICS FOR FUTURE FORUMS (21:10)

Cllr Louis Peace suggested a presentation from Citizens Advice.

MEETING CLOSE - 21.20

SOUTHERN RURAL AREA FORUM 14 March 2024

SOUTHERN RURAL AREA FORUM 14 March 2024

Appendix 1 – Presentation provided by Police Inspector James Lant

Intro

- Neighbourhood Policing Team Structure
- Local Priorities
- Crime Statistics
- Herts Connected
- Community Engagements
- Rural work

Structure

CI Treadwell Insp Lant, N Herts NPT Inspector PS Taz Gill – Hitchin Rural Sgt

Hitchin Rural Wards

Ward	PC	Contact	PCSO	Contact
Cadwell - Holwell	Calllum Ellis* *Starts 19/2/24	callum.ellis@herts.police.uk 07710 144285	Heather Burrows	heather.burrows@herts.police.uk 01438 757685 / 07740 745168
Chesfield	Greg Graham	gregory.graham@herts.police.uk 07736 482788	Stuart Stone	stuart.stone@herts.police.uk 01438 757625 / 07710 143727
Hitchwood	Natasha Redman	natasha.redman@herts.police.uk 01438 757970 / 07712 419168	Heather Burrows	heather.burrows@herts.police.uk 01438 757685 / 07740 745168
Kimpton	Natasha Redman	natasha.redman@herts.police.uk 01438 757970 / 07712 419168	Heather Burrows	heather.burrows@herts.police.uk 01438 757685 / 07740 745168
Codicote	Clare Wallace	clare.wallace@herts.police.uk 01438 757624 / 07590 441861	Stuart Stone	stuart.stone@herts.police.uk NPT Priorities 7625 / 07710 143727
Knebworth	Clare Wallace	clare.wallace@herts.police.uk 01438 757624 / 07590 441861	Stuart Stone	stuart.stone@herts.police.uk 01438 757625 / 07710 143727
Offa – Offley & Pirton	Natasha Redman	natasha.redman@herts.police.uk 01438 757970 / 07712 419168	Heather Burrows	heather.burrows@herts.police.uk 01438 757685 / 07740 745168
Hoo - Breachwood Green/Tea Green/Preston/Kings Walden/Lilley	Natasha Redman	natasha.redman@herts.police.uk 01438 757970 / 07712 419168	Heather Burrows	heather.burrows@herts.police.uk 01438 757685 / 07740 745168
Great Ashby	Greg Graham	gregory.graham@herts.police.uk 07736 482788	Stuart Stone	stuart.stone@herts.police.uk 01438 757625 / 07710 143727

GOOD NEWS – Southern Rural PC numbers increased from 3 to 5(66% increase) – only part of North Herts NPT that has been increased. Permanent change. Currently 1 vacancy which is expected to be filled via a recruitment process running right now – that will give us our 5.

SOUTHERN RURAL AREA FORUM 14 March 2024

CURRENT PRIORTY SETTING FORUM (PSF) PRIORITIES

1. ASB/DRUG USE ACROSS HITCHIN RURAL

Increased hi-vis patrols in KIMPTON/ KNEBWORTH and other locations. Use of ASB legislation against persistent offenders (Op Panther letters, CPW, CPN etc.)

Drug possession offences down in G1 rural by 55% (stats to follow). ASB also down (see stats) so we are seeing positive results.

Specific example (from Media release):

 A derelict building in Hitchin Rural which became an anti-social hotspot has been secured after the intervention of the North Herts Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT).

The former Offley Oriental building was attracting people who were using the outbuildings situated on the land as places to engage in anti-social behaviour by causing damage to the buildings, smoking cannabis there and dangerously climbing on the roof.

Members of the public reported the issues to NPT officers PC Natasha Redman and PCSO Heather Burrows who worked in partnership with the owners, the parish council and North Herts Council to provide a solution.

PC Redman said: "Every area in Hertfordshire has a locally-based NPT and we focus on local crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) issues.

"When this ASB was reported we worked with various partners, including the property owners and council, to identify ways to resolve the situation.

"Thanks to the owner having taken action, including securing the main building and taking down the outbuildings, we have not had any further issues reported."

2. FLY TIPPING

Proactive-

Rural op in January (OP OUTWARD), aimed at tackling rogue traders and suspected fly tippers using road network through the village of Lilley. Joint operation with NHC Community Safety, Trading Standards, Motor Insurance Bureau, DVLA, Beds Safer NPT and Herts Rural Operational Support Team. See media release on North Herts Police Facebook page.

More Op Outward operations being planned in Hitchin Rural.

Targeted patrols on various dates across Hitchin Rural including Knebworth and Kimpton.

SOUTHERN RURAL AREA FORUM 14 March 2024

Plans in hand to run more days of action with NHC as lead agency for fly tipping both at fixed locations (Op Outward) and mobile following intel provided by NHC (hot spot maps).

We will also be running Op Agrarian days of action with ROST and other partners in near future. Details of op from East Herts gives an idea of what it will look like:

Operation Agrarian - Targeting Users Of East Herts Roads | East Herts District Council

Police currently attend all reports of Fly Tipping IN PROGRESS on an immediate response. We have recorded 7 such fly tips over the past year. Of those 7, 6 filed and 1 under investigation.

Monthly fly tip report maps (needed to direct our patrol plans) not currently provided by NHC as lead agency as staff member responsible is absent from office. Hoping this can re-start soon so that increased joint days of action can be arranged with NHC and ROST + Beds NPT as a significant number originate from Luton (cannabis farm rubbish).

3. SPEEDING

Various speeding enforcement ops published on our social media page – promote this. Recent activity to give an idea.:

Holwell op 20th February

Ickleford – 2/2

Luton Road, Offley Feb

St Ippolyts – March (yesterday)

Kimpton – March (yesterday)

All of our activites promoted on our social media pages so worth signing up to follow if not already.

PCC Drivesafe van + volunteers scheme open to all members of the public.

Community Drivesafe (hertscommissioner.org)

CRIME STATS

Compares 1/4/23 – 06/03/24. 1/4/22 – 06/03/23

Year	This Year	Last Year	% Change
G1 Rural	731	755	-3%
North Herts	5964	6094	-6%
County	69655	70738	-2

SOUTHERN RURAL AREA FORUM 14 March 2024

North Herts

Crimes per 1000 of Population – 38.20

Ave Daily Crimes – 17

■ • HITCHIN RURAL	731	755	-24	-3.2%
 (GA1) Hitchwood Offa And Hoo Ward 	206	221	-15	-6.8%
(GA2) Chesfield	210	204	6	2.9%
(GA3) Kimpton Ward	41	59	-18	-30.5%
(GA4) Knebworth Ward	206	200	6	3.0%
(GA5) Codicote Ward	68	71	-3	-4.2%

Remember Chesfield covers Gt Ashby (Stevenage)

Burglary Residential - Dwelling

Year	This Year	Last Year	% C	hange		
G1 Rural	31	24	+29	%		
North Herts	151	125	+21	%		
County	1810	1703	+6%	0		
■ • HITCHIN RURAL			31	24	7	29.2%
 (GA1) Hitchwood Offa 	And Hoo Ward		8	4	4	100.0%
 (GA2) Chesfield 			4	1	3	300.0%
 (GA3) Kimpton Ward 			5	6	-1	-16.7%
 (GA4) Knebworth War 	rd		10	10	0	0.0%
 (GA5) Codicote Ward 			4	3	1	33.3%

Owl messaging used to improve awareness. Addresses around burgled premises are cocooned. 20 page Op Guardian crime prevention / target hardening pack given to every resident and neighbouring addresses as well. OWL message sent out to residents for every burglary reported giving relevant advice.

G1 rural only have less than 2 per cent of all Herts burglaries but this is an absolutely priority given the increase (albeit from a low number).

Burglary Res - Non-Dwelling (sheds / outbuildings etc)

Year	This Year	Last Year	% Change
G1 Rural	9	18	-50%
North Herts	46	68	-32%
County	712	629	+13%

North Herts (both types of Burglary)

Crimes per 1000 of Population – 1.96

Ave Daily Burglaries - 1

HITCHIN RURAL	9	18	-9	-50.0%
 (GA1) Hitchwood Offa And Hoo Ward 	2	4	-2	-50.0%
(GA2) Chesfield	1	1	0	0.0%
(GA3) Kimpton Ward	3	6	-3	-50.0%
(GA4) Knebworth Ward	3	3	0	0.0%
(GA5) Codicote Ward	0	4	-4	-100.0%

SOUTHERN RURAL AREA FORUM 14 March 2024

Burglary Business & Community

Year	This Year	Last Year	% Change
G1 Rural	13	18	-28%
North Herts	99	139	-29%
County	1123	1164	-4%

North Herts

Crimes per 1000 of Population - 0.65

Ave Daily Crimes - 0

HITCHIN RURAL	13	18	-5	-27.8%
 (GA1) Hitchwood Offa And Hoo Ward 	5	8	-3	-37.5%
(GA2) Chesfield	0	4	-4	-100.0%
(GA3) Kimpton Ward	3	0	3	
(GA4) Knebworth Ward	3	4	-1	-25.0%
(GA5) Codicote Ward	2	2	0	0.0%

Theft From Motor Vehicle

Year	This Year	Last Year	% Change
G1 Rural	31	30	-3%
North Herts	207	278	-26%
County	3158	3869	-18%

North Herts

Crimes per 1000 of Population - 1.41

Ave Daily Crimes - 1

HITCHIN RURAL	31	30	1	3.3%
 (GA1) Hitchwood Offa And Hoo Ward 	6	7	-1	-14.3%
(GA2) Chesfield	7	1	6	600.0%
(GA3) Kimpton Ward	4	8	-4	-50.0%
(GA4) Knebworth Ward	7	9	-2	-22.2%
 (GA5) Codicote Ward 	7	5	2	40.0%

Robbery Personal

Year	This Year	Last Year	% Change
G1 Rural	2	4	-50%
North Herts	25	27	-7%
County	636	560	+14%

North Herts

Crimes per 1000 of Population - 0.15

Ave Daily Crimes - 0

SOUTHERN RURAL AREA FORUM 14 March 2024

HITCHIN RURAL	2	4	-2	-50.0%
 (GA1) Hitchwood Offa And Hoo Ward 	0	1	-1	-100.0%
(GA2) Chesfield	0	1	-1	-100.0%
(GA4) Knebworth Ward	2	0	2	
(GA5) Codicote Ward	0	2	-2	-100.0%

Violence Against the Person (Victim Based)

Includes all victim based – assaults, stalking & harassment, mal comms, etc.

Year	This Year	Last Year	% Change
G1 Rural	299	287	+4%
North Herts	2254	2249	+0.2%
County	24159	24948	-3%

Assaults without Injury = 122 this year. 129 last year.

Assaults with Injury = 88 this year. 79 last year.

Above likely to be driven by higher reporting levels – increased victim confidence

North Herts

Crimes per 1000 of Population – 14.99

Ave Daily Crimes - 7

HITCHIN RURAL	299	287	12	4.2%
(GA1) Hitchwood Offa And Hoo Ward	94	76	18	23.7%
(GA2) Chesfield	110	87	23	26.4%
 (GA3) Kimpton Ward 	9	17	-8	-47.1%
(GA4) Knebworth Ward	58	80	-22	-27.5%
(GA5) Codicote Ward	28	27	1	3.7%

Criminal Damage/Arson

Year	This Year	Last Year	% Change
G1 Rural	86	90	-4%
North Herts	702	787	-11%
County	6951	6958	-5%

North Herts

Crimes per 1000 of Population – 4.76

Ave Daily Crimes - 2

SOUTHERN RURAL AREA FORUM 14 March 2024

HITCHIN RURAL	86	90	-4	-4.4%
 (GA1) Hitchwood Offa And Hoo Ward 	31	37	-6	-16.2%
(GA2) Chesfield	17	26	-9	-34.6%
(GA3) Kimpton Ward	4	6	-2	-33.3%
(GA4) Knebworth Ward	29	17	12	70.6%
(GA5) Codicote Ward	5	4	1	25.0%

Domestic Abuse Related Crimes

(All DA crime)

Year	This Year	Last Year	% Change
G1 Rural	167	180	-7%
North Herts	1027	1137	-10%
County	10560	11539	-8%

DA crime accounts for:

- 23% of all G1 Rural crime.
- 18% of all North Herts Crime
- 15.2% of all Herts Crime

Sexual Offences (incl. Rape)

Year	This Year	Last Year	% Change
G1 Rural	42	50	-16%
North Herts	320	332	-4%
County	3041	3184	-4%

A significant element will be historic

Shoplifting

Year	This Year	Last Year	% Change
G1 Rural	45	38	+18%
North Herts	506	430	+18%
County	8219	6510	+26%

Increase driven by a single retail location in Knebworth primarily. Shoplifting about to be placed on Herts Constabulary's Control Strategy which will result in greater focus on this crime type.

North Herts

Crimes per 1000 of Population – 3.55

Ave Daily Crimes - 2

HITCHIN RURAL	45	38	7	18.4%
(GA1) Hitchwood Offa And Hoo Ward	0	1	-1	-100.0%
(GA2) Chesfield	5	19	-14	-73.7%
(GA4) Knebworth Ward	40	18	22	122.2%

Drugs Possession

SOUTHERN RURAL AREA FORUM 14 March 2024

Year	This Year	Last Year	% Change
G1 Rural	9	20	-55%
North Herts	127	152	-16%
County	1668	1748	-5%

North Herts

Crimes per 1000 of Population – 0.85

Ave Daily Crimes - 0

HITCHIN RURAL	9	20	-11	-55.0%
(GA1) Hitchwood Offa And Hoo Ward	2	5	-3	-60.0%
(GA2) Chesfield	2	6	-4	-66.7%
(GA3) Kimpton Ward	0	1	-1	-100.0%
(GA4) Knebworth Ward	4	4	0	0.0%
(GA5) Codicote Ward	1	4	-3	-75.0%

Public Order

Year	This Year	Last Year	% Change
G1 Rural	42	43	-2%
North Herts	313	373	-16%
County	3570	4392	-19%

North Herts

Crimes per 1000 of Population - 2.13

Ave Daily Crimes - 1

HITCHIN RURAL	42	43	-1	-2.3%
(GA1) Hitchwood Offa And Hoo Ward	10	11	-1	-9.1%
(GA2) Chesfield	11	10	1	10.0%
 (GA3) Kimpton Ward 	0	2	-2	-100.0%
 (GA4) Knebworth Ward 	15	16	-1	-6.3%
(GA5) Codicote Ward	6	4	2	50.0%

Possession of Weapons

Year	This Year	Last Year	% Change
G1 Rural	8	4	+100%
North Herts	40	39	+3%
County	530	511	+4%

North Herts

Crimes per 1000 of Population – 0.21

Ave Daily Crimes - 0

SOUTHERN RURAL AREA FORUM 14 March 2024

HITCHIN RURAL		4	4	100.0%
 (GA1) Hitchwood Offa And Hoo Ward 	2	2	0	0.0%
(GA2) Chesfield	5	0	5	
(GA3) Kimpton Ward	1	0	1	
(GA4) Knebworth Ward	0	2	-2	-100.0%
(GA5) Codicote Ward	0	0		

To reassure, Chesfield covers Gt Ashby in Stevenage and we have had several reports involving large groups fighting at a particular venue in Chesfield which explains this increase. No indication of a wider increase elsewhere in the district.

ASB

Year		This Year	Last	Year		% Cha	nge
G1 Rura	I	235	290			-19%	
North He	erts	2141	2298			-7%	
County		23694	23168	23168		+2%	
	⊞G1E (Cadw	ell)	62	32	30	93.8%	
	⊞G1F (Grave	ely & Wymondley)	19	46	-27	-58.7%	
	⊞G1H (Hitch	wood)	35	52	-17	-32.7%	
	⊞G1J (Offa)		12	21	-9	-42.9%	
	⊞G1K (Hoo)		18	24	-6	-25.0%	
	⊞G1M (Kimp	ton)	8	9	-1	-11.1%	
	⊞G1N (Codio	ote)	10	22	-12	-54.5%	
	⊞G1P (Kneb	worth)	71	84	-13	-15.5%	

Overall reduction but working with local officers to understand why Cadwell is an outlier as they have seen a significant increase. This ward will be the priority for the time being.

Hate Crime

Only have data for each CSP - not broken down further

Year	This Year	Last Year	% Change
G1 Rural	108	100	+8%
County	1410	1362	+4%

Worthy of note is the fact that since October (Israel/Palestine conflict), North Herts has seen 2 less offences than same period last year (-5%).

HERTS CONNECTED – GOING LIVE 1/4/24

https://www.hertsconnected.co.uk/

From media release:

SOUTHERN RURAL AREA FORUM 14 March 2024

Herts Connected is a free interactive messaging service from Hertfordshire Constabulary which will replace our OWL system which is no longer fit for purpose.

You will also be able to choose who you would like to receive messages from – including the Police and Crime Commissioner, Neighbourhood Watch and Action Fraud. Your preferences will make your messages bespoke and not just related to your postcode.

It's quick and easy to sign up.

<u>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS – SMALL SELECTION</u>

Regular community engagement opportunities taken in rural villages across North Herts in the likes of Preston, Pirton, Hexton, Ickleford, Offley, Kimpton to name a few. PCSOs and PCs attend coffee mornings, food banks, garden centres and other community events to engage with members of the rural community, listen to concerns they may have and give crime prevention advice.

The role of our NPTs was highlighted as part of Neighbourhood Policing Week (22-28 January). From media release - Part of our work encompasses working alongside partners from the rural community, in conjunction with the constabulary's own Rural Operation Support Team. This week PCSO Heather Burrows visited Lawtons Farm #Holwell where she caught up with the farmers and discussed any concerns they had in the local rural community.

Mini Police at Knebworth Primary School ongoing.

Cup of soup with a cop events – e.g. Pirton Chapel.

Coffee mornings at The Chapel, Breachwood Green & Codicote

Police surgeries at Whitwell, Kimpton, Offley

Visits to the Vicarage in St Ippolyts by local officer

Local officer visiting 60+ group at St Katherine's Church, Ickleford

Pirton warm up hub attended by PCSO Burrows

CRIME PREVENTION ACTIVITIES – SMALL SELECTION

Various Bike marking events completed.

SOUTHERN RURAL AREA FORUM 14 March 2024

Fraud prevention advice in Whitwell (surgery)

Coffee morning – personal safety advice to local residents

Safer streets initiatives district wide e.g. Ickleford and Lloyd Way Kimpton