

POLICING IN NEWPORT  
REPORT ON THE PUBLIC MEETING ARRANGED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL  
AND HELD IN THE MEMORIAL HALL ON THURSDAY 22nd MARCH 2007

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PRESENT: Cllr. Byron James (Chairman NTC)  
Cllrs. Patricia Foot & Paul Harries  
County Cllr. Robin Evans.  
Inspector Dave Sweet (Fishguard Police Station)  
Margaret Brooks (P.C.C. Anti-Social Behaviour Manager)

Cllr. Byron James opened the meeting by introducing Inspector Sweet, and Margaret and after they had given a short resume of their work he said he would invite questions from the audience.

Inspector Sweet told the meeting that his station received very few complaints about anti-social behaviour in Newport - 2 so far this year as against 50 in Fishguard, and much as he would like to have a policeman regularly patrolling in Newport he just did not have the manpower. There would be some improvement at the beginning of May because he would have the services of two PCSOs and one would be spending some time in Newport.

Margaret Brooks said she was part of the Community Safety Partnership with P.C.C. County Cllr. Robin Evans seemed as unaware as the Town Council that such a post existed, and felt we should have been told.

Margaret said she dealt with all types of anti-social behaviour, and usually this meant dealing with adults not young people. But unless incidents were reported nothing could be done. Both she & the Inspector said they were aware of the identity of those that cause problems in Newport, they misbehave elsewhere, and action has been taken against some of them already. Margaret urged people to report and reminded everybody that this could be done unanimously, and leaflets were available tonight with information and telephone numbers etc.

Questions raised by the audience included:

Was it bad management or lack of resources that resulted in almost the complete absence of police walking our streets. Police reply not poor management but the fact that Pembrokeshire Police have to have an armed unit of 12, family protection unit of 12 etc. and in spite of approx £160 from each Newport household (Band D) shortage of finance. Fishguard Police Station has 2 Sergeants & 14 Officers and they are out on patrol 50/60% of the time plus there would soon be 2 PCSOs.

The PCSOs would work evenings and weekends when required.

Several in the audience said people were either afraid to report anti social behaviour, or felt it was not worthwhile as no action would be taken. At least one incident was mentioned where after contacting the Police an Officer had turned up at the complainants home, and the complainant then had to endure being harassed by those who saw the Officer.

County Cllr. Robin Evans said he had tried to interest the Town Council in a Local Forum which could be contacted by worried and affected individuals, and then write to those misbehaving with a warning that should they persist the Police would be involved, but the Council felt this was not in their remit, and anti-social behaviour and worse was for the Police to deal with.

On the subject of drunkenness, and especially recent incidents in the Town, one involving a young man being found injured as a result of falling whilst drunk, the question was asked of the Police what are they doing to prevent such people being sold alcohol when they have already had too much. Inspector Sweet said they do visit both public houses and off-licences and remind them of their responsibilities.

CCTV was mentioned as a possible way to reduce anti-social behaviour and Inspector Sweet said the two cameras installed in Fishguard had been very worthwhile both in preventing trouble and identifying those when there were incidents. The cameras were monitored, and their original cost was paid for by Fishguard Council, with contributions from the Police and P.C.C.

Neighbourhood Watch Schemes were also mentioned as a further preventive crime measure.

Inspector Sweet said one of the first duties of the PCSO would be a leaflett drop to households to give them information and telephone numbers to use to report incidents, but he repeated that without information neither his force or the P.C.C. Anti-Social Behaviour Manager can take action.

On behalf of the Town Council Cllr. Paul Harries thanked both Inspector Sweet and Margaret Brooks, and Townspeople for attending this meeting, and said he hoped the result would be a more trouble free Newport.

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