

Nevill Residents Association Open meeting, 23rd September 2024, St Mary's Church Hall

Chaired by Suzy Nelson, minuted by Lesley Healey. For those present and apologies, please see below the minutes.

- 1) **Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising** There were no matters arising. Suzy took the opportunity to thank Jane Jackson, who has left the NRA committee, for everything she has done, especially for securing the defibrillator and for her organisation of the Festive Fair last year and this. Jane continues to be the defibrillator 'guardian' for now. See later in the minutes.

2) Neighbourhood safety

PCSO James Pollock (email James.Pollock@sussex.police.uk) attended to tell us about PCSOs and the neighbourhood safety issues people should be particularly aware of.

James started last October and is based in Lewes in a team of three PCSOs. PCSOs have very wide responsibilities with two main differences from warranted officers: PCSOs cannot make an arrest, and cannot put blue lights on their vehicle. They can attend the full range of crime reports, including higher level crimes, but will usually focus on lower level crimes.

On the Sussex Police main website (<https://www.sussex.police.uk>) you can look up crimes reported in our area. Issues across the whole area include a lot of cold callers and people cruising the area in white vans. Peacehaven seems to be the main target area just now but it is spread all over the area. If you see vans driving around apparently looking for opportunities to steal items (like bikes, metal etc), please take the registration number and report it. Again with cold callers that you suspect are scammers, please report them with any vehicle registration number that you see.

The Police have a list of all scams notified and there are around five new ones per week. Investment fraud seems to be the newest one. We are advised not to give personal information unless we are confident that they are who they say they are. Better to hang up and seek advice than feel you have to provide answers to questions.

- June 2024, reports of antisocial behaviour, especially dirt bikes and especially stolen bikes. Please report 101 if spotted.
- July 2024, thefts of bikes, public order offences like arguments etc.
- August 2024, teenagers causing nuisance (again report 101 even if low level incident).
- September 2024, lots of speeding reports and a local car crash. The Police are doing more speed checks plus using unmarked cars to reduce speeding.

James answered questions from the floor:

Cold callers - people that put pressure on you at the door or over the phone should be reported to the Police as rogue traders.

If you are suspicious, please report it. 101 for non-urgent, but 999 if you need quick help. You can report online (<https://www.sussex.police.uk>) rather than ringing if you prefer, especially if it isn't urgent. You can also send a message on Sussex Police's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/sussexpoliceforce>)

Wendy commented that bikes are being picked up and dropped off at certain locations, eg, Winterbourne Mews, waiting for a van to pick them up. So if you notice a bike being left somewhere, do try Lewes Present Facebook notification etc. to help someone to regain their bike. Mike Fisk mentioned that on his way back from town he had noticed three pushbikes on The Gallops. James said he'd check them out after he left the meeting.

3) Neighbourhood Watch - Carolyn Blayney

Carolyn has been a Neighbourhood Watch (NW) coordinator since November 2008. She started it because had to retire early and knew she'd miss the communication with people she worked with. Her work in the prison meant she learned a lot about burglary practices - what put potential burglars

off, or attracted them to a property. NW is nothing to do with peeking through net curtains! The group is very sociable, meetings are assisted with wine, and the participants get along together well. The NW group usually covers between 30 and 40 households. The area is the whole of Hawkenbury Way and the junction with South Way. Everybody's house overlooks someone else's at the back or the front, so neighbours work together in small groups. The group gets great support from the Police and from the national NW organisation. The latter has worked hard to get things more online, especially during Covid, and there are now three ways to join.

- Join as an individual online. You will get information like police and NW alerts
- Join as a group with a coordinator
- Or join as an affiliated organisation, when you will get alerts and the same information as NW groups. A side benefit is that members or affiliates have free Public Liability Insurance when having a NW-related meeting.

People who need NW most are neighbours who aren't online - the more frail and vulnerable - and the majority of frauds are targeted at 75 years and over. So having a group meeting enables them to be more protected. For example, the group is encouraged to put down the phone on someone who doesn't sound quite right. Carolyn's husband, Derek, has also helped with online scams and sorting things out. The Group watches each other's properties. Recently someone photographed a van and stopped men trying to pick up tools from the parking area. Carolyn wanted to highlight that the PCSOs have responded well to a person being threatened by daily phone calls.

Carolyn encourages us to have a go at setting up a NW Group. She has gained more from being part of NW than it has cost her in work.

A neighbour in the room thanked Carolyn publicly for all her hard work and support.

Suzy suggested that it would be interesting to investigate becoming an affiliated group. The meeting agreed. Nevill Good Neighbours might also want to look at becoming affiliated.

4) Speedwatch - report back, what happens when we've recorded people speeding, and request for new people to participate. Suzy

Suzy reported that a small group of people do a one-hour Speedwatch session twice per month. It has to be from the agreed set place, which is on Nevill Road looking uphill. We have noted a surprising number of people breaking the speed limit by a significant amount. We note down their details and report online for the Police to take action.

We would love others to join us. Please talk to Suzy or Lesley.

5) Road safety - reason for concern, request for grant and outcome

Concerns about speeding around corners without visibility, and onto the estate from Nevill Road onto Nevill Crescent. There are particular concerns for cyclists and pedestrians particularly on the corner with Nevill crescent / South Way. Work is already being done on traffic and pedestrian movements around the town, and we are hoping to be able to get a specific piece of work for our estate. Suzy has secured a quote from the consultant undertaking the town-wide work and we have submitted an application to the Town Council for a grant to pay for it. We haven't yet heard the result of the application. The Councillors present confirmed that the results of grant applications aren't yet public. If we do get the money, people from the estate will be able to get involved in briefing the consultant. It was suggested that Jared, at the bottom of South Way, could be interested.

6) Bench outside the shop and by the bus stop

The bench outside the shop has been repaired twice by the Men's Shed and seems to be far more robust now. It has to face the shop owing to the size and placement of the plinth. Lots of people said they would like a bench by the bus stop, or at least a bench allowing a view of the bus coming onto the estate. Wendy has been chasing up whether, or how this could be achieved. She reported that ESCC will charge to inspect the area and determine whether a bench is a possibility, and the charge is likely to be very significant.

Vicki made the comment that we can't provide a bench by every bus stop (there is no room in most cases) and actually very few people get on the bus at the shops.

A discussion highlighted that although ESCC is the Transport authority, and there are guidelines on seating at intervals along pavements, there is no duty to provide seating at bus stops.

Suzy asked that anyone with ideas about how to improve seating and cover at bus stops around the estate please contact the committee. We'll continue to work with Wendy.

7) Defibrillator matters: Guardian (volunteer request) and first aid courses

Lesley explained that we were entitled to have 10 people trained in use of the defibrillator, but there was some jeopardy for NRA as we would be charged £10 for each person who didn't turn up. We could also work with Sussex Heart Charity to get a broader first aid / emergency aid course. She asked for people to indicate their preferences and far more people indicated that they would prefer a broader emergency first aid course than one just for the use of the defibrillator, although people would like the use of the defib to be included in the course.

Lesley will talk to Sussex Heart Charity about a broader first aid course.

Jane reported that the defibrillator has been collected once in connection with a health incident. It wasn't needed as the ambulance arrived quickly.

Jane has offered to remain as the defib 'guardian' until next May but would like to hand it over to someone else then. Ideally it will be someone who lives close to St Mary's Church Hall or who regularly walks past on a dog walk, for example. The time commitment is low.

The guardian needs to check that the box light is on each week, and do a test each month.

8) Street weeding report back

Lesley talked about the limitations of responsibility for work along the pavements (i.e., we are only looking to keep pavements clear enough of weeds/growth to prevent trip hazards for pedestrians and enable pushchairs and wheelchairs etc to use the paths. ESCC's agreed work specifically excludes work on the highway, though vegetation in the road gullies is a bigger issue. The last street weeding session of the year will, for most streets, be the morning of Sunday 29th September. Nick Tigg is arranging to have a weeders' get together from midday at St Mary's supporters' club on Christie Road.

Wendy added that Nevill has inspired other places in Lewes. Castle Banks, Malling etc are also starting to weed their own streets.

The meeting discussed the issue of wide hedges that make it impossible to use the pavement. Wide hedges that obstruct pedestrians can be reported to the County Council who will ask resident to cut it back. You can report it anonymously. Wendy said that a hedge would usually have to overhang half of the pavement before ESCC will take action.

The issue of cars parking on the pavement and making it impassable for pedestrians was also raised.

Mike Fisk talked about the problem of three blocked drains around Nevill Crescent, a notorious flooding spot, which are completely covered by debris and silt. Despite the photos clearly showing the problem, response to the reports has been that there is no immediate risk of flooding so these drains are being left to the usual 6 monthly check. Mike asked whether we can get a copy of what is looked

at by the inspector. Wendy said she'd chase with the Highway Steward as it's obviously already a notorious flooding spot and she believes is inspected more frequently than 6 monthly.

Mike asked whether a resident could accompany Wendy and the Highway Steward when they do a joint inspection. Wendy will see whether she can invite a NRA committee member to come along.

9) Festive fair, 23rd November, 12.30 to 4.30 at St Mary's social centre, Christie Road

Jane Jackson talked about the arrangements.

There will be around 20 stalls of arts and crafts downstairs and produce (jams etc) stalls upstairs, along with refreshments. It was suggested that Matt Bird might like to sell his ketchup, and Nick Tigg their honey. Refreshment sale proceeds will go to the NRA. The raffle is being run by NJBS to help with their funds.

Children's Bonfire Art Exhibition: There will be no art contest this year, but children aged 16 and under are being invited to submit art on the theme of Bonfire to be exhibited at the Fair.

If you know anyone who might like to sell their produce or their crafts at the Fair, please encourage them to contact Jane Jackson (spiggs9@gmail.com)

10) Welcome pack for new residents

A small group (Robert Massey, Fiona Griffin and Kevin West) will be meeting to look at inclusion of items. Robert suggested that people let him know of anything they think could be included. Email Robert (robert_mark_massey@hotmail.com).

On discussion, it was generally felt that new residents are likely to be online. The Welcome Pack will be on the NRA website so people can download what interests them. Suggestion made that Estate Agents should be encouraged to download and print for anyone buying a home on the Nevill.

11) More opportunities to get involved

A) The Committee is asking for someone to help with our website by maintaining it, uploading items as required and getting it a bit more lively. We will also ask via the WhatsApp groups.

B) Speedwatch is a low commitment - we usually do one session each per month - but it would be really helpful to have more people involved.

C) Can you become the Defib Guardian? This only requires a once-weekly quick visual check and monthly tests - all very quick.

11) Newsletter - articles due by Monday 30th September. Please email to Carole Kirby (carole.kirby@talktalk.net). Already listed:

- Rainwater planters (and a reference to drive surfacing)
- Speedwatch
- Festive Fair poster with children's art exhibition
- Guide on climate mitigation for your home available via the Climate Hub's website
- Road safety study (provided we know the result of our grant application)

11) AOB

Surfacing an area for car parking: please be aware that any impermeable area of surfacing over 5m² in front gardens requires planning permission unless it drains to a permeable area or soak away.

Old bin collection: please let Cllr. Wendy Maples know if your outdated refuse bin still awaits collection (cllr.wendy.maples@eastsussex.gov.uk).

Noisy vehicles: Cllr. Nick Tigg messaged that there is a SENSE campaign (Stop Excessive Noise Speed and Emissions) targeted at noisy vehicles. Please complete the survey here: www.bit.ly/sense-

survey-2024 before the end of October. If enough people report problems, a Public Space Protection Order can be issued and noise and licence plate detection can be installed.

Buses being stopped by parked cars: Robert and Suzy have done a walk around the bus route to see where the pinch points are. The sub-station triangle on Crossway/ Middle Way junction, and a couple of other places, including alongside the access to Landport Bottom on Firle Crescent could do with double yellow lines to stop the bus being unable to pass. Wendy suggested that we put in an application for double yellow lines to be applied at pinch points. Needs to be done very soon to meet a deadline for Highways. Easiest way is to send Wendy an email with the requests. There was a discussion about whether a single yellow line would prevent the problem during working hours (which is when the bus runs), while not preventing people from parking near their home.

Cllr. Kevin West is currently liaising with Chris at Compass about the buses navigating the estate and he will feed back to Suzy by the end of the month. Wendy said the parking warden does sometimes go round on the bus and will give a ticket if the bus is obstructed. It was also noted that the bus stop by the shops is often parked up so the bus has to stop in the middle of the road.

The next meeting will be in February 2025 - 10th February, 7.30pm at St Mary's Church Hall, Highdown Road

Present: Suzy Nelson (Chair), Lesley Healey (minutes), PCSO James Pollock, Carolyn Blayney, Derek Blayney, Vicki Trenhaile, Mike Fisk, Robert Massey, Jane Jackson, Carole Kirby, Brian Kirby, David Smith, Simmy Viinikka, Jacky Chester, Ann Holmes, Alison Barnes, Ann Link, Sarah O'Kane, Cllr. Kevin West, Cllr. Wendy Maples

Apologies: Paul Keene, Sally Attwood, Kia, Fiona Griffin, Nick Tigg, Matthew Bird