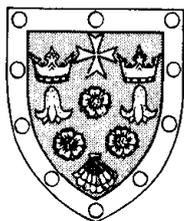


# EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

## INGATESTONE AND FRYERNING PARISH COUNCIL



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Chairman: Cllr Linda Boyce

Clerk: Penny Fordham

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD: 9 January 2014 at 6.30pm**  
**VENUE: Seymour Pavilion, New Road, Ingatestone**

<b>Present:</b>	<b>Cllrs</b>	D Abrey	L Boyce (Chair)	M Bryant	J Cloke
		P Davey	L Day	D Frost	H Hicks
		P Jeater	R Lee	P Poston	J Tench
		D Whittaker			
<b>Absent:</b>	<b>Cllrs</b>	T Williams			
<b>Also Present:</b>	P Fordham (Clerk to the Council), Borough Councillor Tony Sleep, Borough Councillor Noelle Hones, Borough Councillor Keith Sparling, Inspector Paul Wells, Acting Sergeant James Howell, PCSO Peter Kearney, 55 members of the public				

### Item No.

### Item

#### 031/14 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Williams.

#### 032/14 **Announcements and Declarations of Interest**

None.

#### 033/14 **Discussion to be held with Inspector Paul Wells, Brentwood Neighbourhood Inspector**

Inspector Wells introduced himself to the meeting and stated that he had, to the best of his ability at the short notice, brought the required statistics, although Ingatestone and Fryerning are merged with Mountnessing in police figures, so this should be borne in mind.

Thereafter the Parish Council put questions to Inspector Wells as per the below:

#### Cllr Davey

Nick Alston the Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex gave a presentation to the Essex Rural Partnership meeting on the 16 January informing us that he had appointed Stephen Kavanagh to the position of Chief Constable in May 2013. Stephen's brief was to drive up standards within the force whilst focussing on business and rural crime. He went on to say that the forces key objectives this year are, amongst others:

- Concentrate on local priorities
- Commitment to school policing
- Attend all burglaries
- To maintain the presence of PCSO's which the force is keen to keep as they are the ones with vital local knowledge

So why is that Ingatestone and Fryerning are being left with inadequate police cover on a day to day basis, proven by the spate of recent burglaries, and either non-attendance or a slow response time to reported incidents?

#### Inspector Wells

Does not feel the Parish has inadequate policing, there are officers on duty 24/7 which cover this area, working on a shift rota. There are currently 318 PCSO's in Essex Police, down from 450, but the recruitment process is ongoing. Officers from outside of Brentwood will be drafted to Ingatestone and Fryerning should the need arise, and although CID are

now based in Brentwood, they were previously at the Harlow station, which is why there is the perception officers are coming from Harlow – it is CID that investigate burglaries. A large percentage of police officers will be in plain clothes and unmarked cars, therefore their presence is not always visible even when they are in the area.

#### Cllr Poston

How many burglaries have been committed in Ingatestone in the past 4-months and what is considered the target expected or acceptable level of crime for Ingatestone and Fryerning?

#### Inspector Wells

There were 10 dwelling burglaries in January 2014 – the same number as in January 2013. In the past 3-months there has been slightly fewer than in the same period the previous year. For this area the response time for a rural emergency is 20-minutes and a force priority response is 1-hour. Currently, targets are being met 82-90% of the time, which is above force average.

#### Cllr Frost

In one particular case we have been told about, a property was targeted twice in the space of 4-days. The police were called after the first burglary but it took the second attempt and three phone calls from the resident until the police went to see them 5-days later. A few days after this incident the homeowners was informed the case had been 'closed', why is this?

#### Inspector Wells

Cannot discuss individual cases but has investigated this and it is not a correct description of what occurred. A case like this could be closed because of a lack of evidence (no CCTV, forensics, witnesses, property recovered etc), they are all individual and cannot be answered with a sweeping statement.

#### Cllr Jeater

Have there been any successful arrests or charges in relation to burglaries within the past 4-months?

#### Inspector Wells

Not for burglaries committed in this area, but burglars are being caught in other areas and charged, as are individuals that are found to be handling stolen goods.

#### Cllr Cloke

Based on the information available to Essex Police, is it believed that the village is being targeted by one gang or several? Are they considered to be 'professional' or 'chancers'?

#### Inspector Wells

Is impossible to say but in his opinion he believes it is probably one or two separate groups.

#### Cllr Hicks

Break-ins have occurred at all hours of the day, what does this tell us about the perpetrators?

#### Inspector Wells

The majority of burglaries take place between 10am and 4pm when homeowners are at work. In most cases entry is via a rear entry point. Recommendations are to double lock all doors and ensure all windows are locked and closed at all times.

#### Cllr Day

Residents feel like Essex Police are being 'reactive' rather than 'proactive' to crimes experienced locally in recent weeks and months. Could you tell us what is being done to discourage and prevent further incidents?

#### Inspector Wells

Assured that Essex Police are being proactive but obviously cannot make the public aware of some of what they are doing as it is sensitive information. Additional resources have been applied for and agreed. They are currently deployed to the area in order to increase police presence and shorten response times. A recent arrest and successful prosecution was of an individual responsible for 120 burglaries – this will prevent any further crimes being committed by this individual in the immediate future.

#### Cllr Lee

Are you aware that some residents have felt so scared in their own home there has been talk of setting up a 'vigilante' group to patrol the streets?

#### Inspector Wells

Would not encourage anybody to take matters in to their own hands in this fashion. If anything suspicious is seen, the police should be called immediately. The public will receive no support from police if they chose to patrol with weapons, as has been suggested. As always, vigilance is encouraged and residents are encouraged to remain visible in their community.

#### Cllr Tench

A statement has been made: "Burglars keep returning to an area due to the low response time of the local police." Do you feel that the lack of local policing is why we are being targeted? We are aware that officers attending recent incidents have come from as far away as Harlow and Loughton, with no knowledge of the village itself (they didn't know it had a railway station).

#### Inspector Wells

As mentioned previously, CID officers attend burglaries and until recently CID has been based in Harlow, this has now moved to Brentwood. In the instance that all local officers are already assigned to a job, officers from outside of the area will be drafted in so as not to keep victims waiting for a response. Local knowledge is important and this is constantly growing. Ingatestone and Fryerning are considered 'affluent' areas and it is likely this is encouraging criminals to target the area, especially in the month following Christmas when there are new valuables in homes.

#### Cllr Wire

We receive regular 'Hot Spot' alerts regarding burglaries in the area but these have little information on them – it would be good to know how many properties were targeted in each road, how entry was gained and what time of the day the offences occurred.

#### Inspector Wells

A system called 'cocooning' is used by the police which means that neighbours of a burgled property within a certain radius are informed of the offence and given advice and information. It is understood that the 'Hot Spot' alerts are sparse on information and Essex Police are always open to suggestions and ideas as to how to make communication between the force and the public better. There is unlikely to be an increase in information circulated in this fashion. Insp Wells encouraged residents to follow @EssexPoliceUK and @InspPaulWells on Twitter for crime related updates.

#### Cllr Bryant

How are Essex Police managing their resources for our community?

#### Inspector Wells

Additional funding and resources has been applied for from Headquarters and this was approved meaning the area currently has more officers working on the ground, not all of which will be in uniform. Any suspicious behaviour should be called in to the police, even if a resident is unsure if it's worthwhile, as the police *will* respond and would rather act upon information that resolves to be nothing than to not receive the call and for a crime to be committed. The public need to work with the police.

From this point onwards, the public addressed their questions to the Inspector:

#### Resident

It seems police only patrol the High Street, they are rarely seen in the 'back roads'.

#### Inspector Wells

Patrols take place all around the village, but if an individual works on the High Street (for example) the perception will be that they are only ever seen there. Officers cannot be in all places at all times but patrols are in place. It may be true that the majority of police cars seen in the village are passing through, but this visibility still acts as a deterrent.

#### Resident

There used to be a 'Ring Master' system in place whereby the Police would phone information through to designated contacts within the village so these individuals could spread the word about any suspicious or criminal activity and residents could remain vigilant and alert. Why does this not exist anymore?

#### Inspector Wells

The Neighbourhood Watch scheme is very similar and it is recommended one is created for this area. The contact for this is Colin Freeman at Essex Police.

#### Resident

Noticed a van driving slowly up and down the road, called 101 and a police car was there shortly afterwards.

Resident

Vehicles collecting scrap and unwanted clothing frequent the village on the day refuse is collected. Bins left outside properties are a good indicator of vacant properties. Could this be an important link and might vehicles be gathering information on which residents are home during the day?

Inspector Wells

It could well be the case but cannot comment or pass judgement on specific individuals or vehicles as they may well be genuine. Would encourage residents who are home during the day to bring in their neighbours' bins once they have been emptied and if anything suspicious or spotted, to phone 101 – no matter how small it might seem, the police would rather be aware and have the opportunity to investigate.

Resident

Police are often spotted during the day in the area but does the Parish receive policing after dark too?

Inspector Wells

Yes, there is policing after dark.

Resident

Is there anything residents can do to help protect themselves and prevent burglaries?

Inspector Wells

House alarms are an excellent deterrent. Outside lighting often prevents break-ins as if the property is surrounded by darkness it is easier to gain access without being spotted, likewise, planting should be borne in mind as large plants provide somewhere for criminals to hide. Unsure whether dogs make any real difference. Flat roofs make an easy access point. Recommends that car keys/valuables etc are left out of sight of the. It is a matter for individuals but consider not hiding car keys away as if they cannot be easily found, it may encourage burglars to move further into the property and to search harder for items of keys. Doesn't recommend expensive jewellery is kept in the bedroom with less valuable pieces. Would encourage good communication with neighbours, informing them when you're going on holiday so they can remain vigilant. If a resident wishes for bespoke advice related to their property and personal situation, this can be received by way of a visit from Crime Reduction Officer Tony Ellis of Essex Police.

Resident

Noticed door-to-door canvassers so called 101 and within 10-minutes the police were in attendance and searched the individuals.

Useful contact details:

Crime Stoppers can be called anonymously: 0800 555 111

Non-Emergency: 101

Emergency: 999

Cllr Boyce and Cllr Abrey thanked Inspector Wells, Acting Sergeant Howell and PCSO Kearney for their attendance and the information provided.

**034/14 Other Information/Items for Next Agenda (not for resolution or action)**

None.

**035/14 Date of Next Meeting**

None.

**Part 2**

**Having regard to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the meeting is not now open to the Press and Public pursuant to Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.**

**The meeting closed at 7.40pm**

**Chairman .....**