

# Diggle Community Association Open Meeting

17 March 2016 at Diggle Band Club

**Present:** Mark Brooks (Chair), Glenise Eason (Treasurer), Nick Cox (Secretary)

Committee: Julie Johnson, Ken McWatt, Stuart Coleman, Charlotte Coleman, Barbara Barnes

Present: Kathleen Lambert, Lynda Barlow, David Barlow, Dawn Boulton, Marlene Maclean, Bernard Holden, Pat Cliffe, Brian Cliffe, Keith Lucas, Val Carter, Peter Carter, Margaret Gregory, M. Payne, Rosalind Gartside, Valerie Leach, Liz O'Driscoll, Phil Smith (Canal and River Trust), PC Mark Clough (GM Police)

Apologies: Nikki Kirkham, Margaret Hardy, Duncan Rhodes, Glynis Wilkinson

## **1. Minutes of the last meeting**

Accepted as a true record

## **2. Police Report**

Mark Clough brought along some crime reduction materials (including leaflets and booklets on protecting the home, etc).

### **Crime Figures**

In the 57 days since the last DCA meeting 62 crimes had been committed in Saddleworth North. In the same period 67 in Saddleworth South. In Saddleworth and Lees area a total of 94 crimes.

These crime figures were higher because of an increase in burglaries involving commercial premises (businesses and – in particular – social clubs). A team of people appeared to be involved in these crimes. Their modus operandum was to empty the fruit machines in social clubs.

### **Crime Figures for Diggle**

In Diggle in this period there had been 6 crimes: 1 involving a vehicle, 1 burglary of a house, 3 thefts from vehicles, 1 act of criminal damage. The burglary had been of a dwelling on Huddersfield Road in which there had been interference with the lock but the intending perpetrators were disturbed by the alarm. Thefts from vehicles had occurred on Clydesdale Rise, Sam Road and Huddersfield Road. These incidents involved a group of 3 people trying car door handles. In one case they had gained access to an unlocked car. Thefts had taken place at night. Items had been visible within the cars

and in some instances the car was unlocked – in this case the victims would be uninsured.

The post-box had been unlawfully removed at Lee Side for unknown reason: scrap or to recover the contents.

### **Police deployment and restructuring**

Extra police had been deployed in an attempt to deal with the thefts from commercial premises. As a consequence around 20 people have been arrested. Surveillance, including by police on horse-back and during daylight hours had been used to dissuade the perpetrators from assessing potential targets during the day-time.

The monthly Home Watch meeting had been held at Uppermill Conservative Club (Royce Franklin Chair) at which the Divisional Commander had been present. The Police had also run a ‘Sergeant for a Day’ session at the Drop-in Centre to make victims of crimes against commercial premises aware of the work of the police.

Mark Clough appealed for the public to report incidents so that the extent of crime was accurately represented and policing levels maintained or increased as appropriate. The current establishment in the area is 9. From the 9<sup>th</sup> of May there will be a restructuring of the police service. All police officers will be on duty at the same time but there will be a period of 3 days when the area will be covered by officers from other areas. Uppermill police station will remain closed because staffing this is not cost effective.

Stuart Coleman asked if recent crimes were a ‘one-off’. MC indicated that the spate of burglaries were the product of ‘specialist’ groups. A number of arrests had been made and some of the suspects were well-known to the police. The victims of these crimes were hard-working and not in a position to be able to afford the losses ensuing. Media and social media had been used to identify those suspects who had been charged.

### **Reporting Crime**

If reporting crime indicate if you are a member of Home Watch or of the Community Association and indicate an awareness of the context of crime in the area, this will give greater weight to reporting. Telephone numbers to call:

0161 856 8825 – Oldham Police

0161 856 4525 – Mark Clough’s extension

In emergency ring 999, otherwise 101 as MC is not always available.

### **3. Canal and River Trust**

Phil Smith attended the meeting as a representative of CRT and Valerie Leach as a representative of Uppermill/Dobcross volunteers. Phil and Valerie are part of a team working on a stretch of the canal which has already been adopted and were present to offer advice about canal adoption.

PS felt that Diggle is a stretch of the canal that is worthy of adoption because it is particularly attractive. At present the concern was to involve volunteers in adopting a stretch of the canal because CRT staff numbers are limited. CRT benefits through contact with groups of volunteers.

#### **Community Adoption**

A process by which a local group becomes more actively involved in maintaining a stretch of canal and to help improve the area that waterway flows through. There is no need for the group to be formally constituted. Typically groups are involved in vegetation clearance, litter picking, painting lock gates and oiling gear. CRT provide the necessary equipment, materials, tools and guidance.

VL indicated a willingness to act as co-ordinator. Uppermill has approximately 25 volunteers usually deployed in two groups meeting on a weekday and at weekends.

SC suggested that the Clean for Diggle event might be a good point for launching a Community Adoption scheme. There was general support for this and for the idea of Community Adoption by the meeting.

16 April would be the date for the Canal Clean-up and it was hoped subsequent sessions would be organised in due course.

### **4. Newsletter**

It was agreed that a newsletter was needed to make the community in Diggle aware of the existence and work of the DCA. SC suggested that advice could be sought from Dobcross Residents' Association, who produce a very good newsletter. Pat Cliffe suggested utilising social media more effectively. Rosalind Gartside suggested an article in Saddleworth monthly.

Brian Cliffes suggested that a form of newsletter could be included in the magazine produced by the Whit Friday committee - the deadline would be the end of March. It was agreed that a brief statement of the DCA's recent

work and an indication of its role in the community should be produced for the Whit Friday programme.

#### **5. Greening Diggle/DCA Gardening Group**

SC had secured agreement from Environmental Services for the first site for a planter at Wool Road. The second site would be the area of land at the top Huddersfield Road. The third site where the Christmas tree is now located. The fourth, the entrance to the tip from Sam Road. The group was to meet again on Thursday at Keith and Joy Lucas's house.

#### **6. Toads**

NC indicated that the annual migration of toads which takes place at Kiln Green was imminent. He explained that toads cross the road in front of Kiln Green church on-route to the large pond where they spawn on milder early-Spring nights. Last year a successful patrol had managed to move the largest recorded number of toads safely and he hoped that volunteers would be willing to help again this year.

#### **7. Whit Friday Band Contest**

Brian Cliffe made a request for volunteers to help with the event. Diggle is now a 'go to' venue for bands. Last year 63 bands came to the Diggle contest. Whit Friday committee would welcome help from anyone who is willing to help out between 4 and 10.30. In previous years Guides had helped with the sign and collection. The contest costs £4000 per annum to stage, this is entirely dependent on donations and the Duck Race (to be held on Easter Monday) is a critical fund raiser.

#### **8. AOB**

i) There are concerns that the 184 service may be cancelled because of the continuing problems caused by the fact that OMBC will not invest in improvements to the road to make it possible for buses to turn around at Kiln Green.

ii) Any requests for bookings at Kiln Green Church and Hall: 01457 878 338.

iii) Lesley Brown expressed concern about the major problems with parking on Ward Lane causing an obstruction at the bridge.

iv) Glenise Eason also expressed concern about the increasing use of Spurn Lane for parking.

**Date of Next Meeting: 16 June 2016**