

WESTBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**AT A MEETING OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD AT THE
LAVERTON, BRATTON ROAD, WESTBURY ON MONDAY, 3rd AUGUST 2009
AT 7.00 PM.**

PRESENT: Cllr M Hawkins (Chairman).
Cllrs M Cuthbert-Murray, Mrs G Denison-Pender, Mrs S Ezra,
C Finbow, D Jones, Mrs C Mitchell and W D Tout.
Also in attendance: Cllr P Brown
Police Inspector D Minty
Four members of the public

G.1444 PUBLIC FORUM.

Mr C Stevens – Market Place:

- Anti-social behaviour
- Drunken behaviour
- Noise
- Illegal parking on paved areas

Rev J Burke –All Saints Churchyard:

- Alcohol Exclusion Zones.
- Drunken behaviour of people passing through and also gathering in the Churchyard.
- Intimidation of people attending church services, functions etc by persistent drinkers and beggars.
- Displacement of these problems to other parts of Westbury.
- Resolution by multi-agency approach, including Westbury Churches Together.

G.1445 APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE. Cllr S Andrews – Personal.

G.1446 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. Cllr D Jones: Item 8 (Personal) – procurement of grains from third world countries. Cllr W D Tout: Item 7. (Personal) – customer of licensed premises in the town.

G.1447 MINUTES. The Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on the 1st June 2009 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

G.1448 MATTERS ARISING. Nil.

Members Matters Arising. Nil.

G.1449 CHAIRMAN’S MATTERS FOR REPORT. Nil.

G.1450 CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU (CAB). Cllr Mrs S Ezra reported on a meeting she had attended, when the CAB announced its initiative whereby it was encouraging one or two solicitors in each town to join a scheme to assist people in need with personal and financial problems. The CAB also

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announced its plan to open an office in Westbury commencing with four hours a weeks from September, or later. Police Inspector Minty confirmed that the Police Station has been offered as a venue, but there are no details available at the moment.

G.1451 **ALCOHOL EXCLUSION ZONE.** A previous application by Westbury Town Council for an alcohol exclusion zone in the town centre had failed due to lack of evidence. Cllr Mrs Mitchell felt consideration should also be given to other areas in the town, such as Penleigh Playing Field, Grassacres Park, and Queen Square.

G.1452 It was agreed to suspend standing orders to allow Police Inspector Minty to address the meeting and answer questions from members.

The police will support an application for designated zones, but there are different problems:

1. Town drunks – it is unlikely the Market Place licensed premises are selling drink to these individuals. All are reasonably well run, and except for two are fully engaged in Pub Watch.

The habitual drunks are now getting out of hand, and are increasing in number, making life miserable for local people. These individuals are alcoholics, and are not just a police concern. One individual has been arrested over a hundred times, but will not be given a prison sentence as this is an illness and an addiction, which will need a long term solution. The police could put in more robust policing with a zero tolerance approach, but this will have a short term impact only. Addicts need to want to be helped for a solution to be found. These are very difficult problems to solve, and the police will continue to work with the Anti-Social Behaviour Team.

2. Late night anti-social behaviour. Central government encourage longer licensing hours and “café culture”. However, the police will support designated zones, but need evidence to support any application. The police now give fixed penalty notices, but probably not in cases of swearing, shouting, etc. Police have powers to remove alcohol from under 18’s, or from anyone supplying them.

Alcohol Exclusion Zones. Within these zones, the police can remove alcohol from adults without the need for them to be drunk. However, under the order there will probably be the stipulation that cans etc must be open, as this could unfairly penalise members of the public, who have purchased alcohol and are walking through a designated area on their way home.

In answer to concerns raised regarding the willingness of the multi-agencies to work with Town Councils on these problems, Inspector Minty assured members that for both the police and local authorities, the main performance indicator for the future now is “community confidence”, which is obviously affected by these issues, and working relations between agencies have now improved.

Inspector Minty urged members of the public to report incidents through the police website, in order to build up evidence to support an application. However, there are different problems in the town centre, and such an order would not help with the alcoholics, although it could affect the anti-social behaviour on Friday and Saturday nights, and also with the youngsters. With regard to the problem of the group of alcoholics begging and the alleged associated soliciting by a female member of the group, the police can use Section 27 of the Reduction of Violet Crime Act to remove such people from an area for up to 48 hours. They can be arrested, but after 48 hours, they can then return to that area.

The Clerk outlined the history of this problem, which started with just one individual from Westbury, who is now attracting others of a more worrying nature. Inspector Minty felt this individual typifies the traditional idea of a 'town drunk': mainly harmless and generally tolerated. Unfortunately, other similar individuals home in on him, because, it is alleged, they find it easy to abuse his friendship and relieve him of his benefits when he is drunk.

Inspector Minty agreed to report back, and the matter has been deferred to the next Town Council meeting.

G.1453 It was agreed to reinstate Standing Orders.

G.1454 **TO CONSIDER ENDORSING THE FAIRTRADE PROPOSAL FOR WESTBURY.** This item was deferred to a later date, as this project has not been progressed sufficiently.

G.1455 **CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE:**

Letters of appreciation were noted from Matravers School for the grant towards their sculpture project, and from Westbury Infants School for the grant to cover transport costs for their less able children to be taken to the Warminster Barracks for horse riding lessons.

G.1456 **WORKING PARTY CHAIRMEN/REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS:-**

- a. **Christmas Lights.** The Working Group will be meeting shortly.
- b. **Westbury Community Safety Group.** Nothing to report, but the Group will obviously be paying close attention to the current anti-social problems in the town centre.
- c. **West Wilts Show 2009.** The Westbury Marquee was as good as ever. However, the future of this show depends on how much physical and monetary support the new Wiltshire Council will be prepared to give.

G.1457 **ACCOUNTS.**

- a. **Monthly Statement.** Agreed.
- b. **List of Payments.** Agreed.

8.15 pm
Signed on behalf of the Meeting
this fifth day of October 2009

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Chairman

