

**HIGHBARNES RESIDENTS GROUP MEETING  
17 MARCH 2009  
GADE ROOM, CIVIC CENTRE – 6.00 PM**

**PRESENT:**

**Dacorum Borough Council & Nash Mills Parish Council:**

John Clarke, Head of Public Protection (Dacorum Borough Council)  
Louise Manders, Senior Manager, Corporate Communications (Dacorum Borough Council)  
Jenny Young, Civil Contingencies Co-Ordinator (Dacorum Borough Council)  
Sheila Potts, Tenant Housing Officer (Dacorum Borough Council)  
Councillor Lucy Foster, (DBC Councillor Nash Mills Ward Councillor and Nash Mills Parish Councillor)  
Councillor Terry Douris, (Nash Mills Parish Councillor and DBC Councillor)  
Theresa Chalkwright, Member Support Officer (Dacorum Borough Council – Minutes)

**Others:**

Nik Pringle, Community Police Officer  
Mark Goodyear, Herts Highways

**Residents:**

Richard and Jennifer Taylor, Carly Savage, Lisa Bayley (Highbarns Residents)  
Rodney and Michelle Berkeley (Pond Close Residents)

**1. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

It was confirmed that the minutes from the last two residents group meetings are now available on the Highbarns website via the following link

<http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/DBCWeb/Default.aspx?page=5739>

Please note correction to Richard Taylor's e-mail address:

[Richard-C.taylor@myway.com](mailto:Richard-C.taylor@myway.com)

**2. UPDATE/CURRENT SITUATION**

Jenny Young, the Council's Civil Contingencies Co-Ordinator gave a brief update of where we are at present. She had been in contact with David Keeton at HCA. Good progress has been made and this work is being twin-tracked with that of the project management procurement exercise. The Council has shortlisted 8 companies to bid for a four year contact to assist the Council. The procurement process is now over half way through and it is envisaged that it will be completed by June/July.

A public meeting will be held to bring residents up to date once we are in a clear position with respect to the funding and project management.

Councillor Douris asked if work that had already been done would not need to be repeated.

John Clarke said that we are fully aware of what surveys have been carried out and that any new surveys that will be carried out should be fully risk based.

Mr Berkeley asked if they would need to tender for contractors.

John Clarke said that potentially there may need to be a further tender process but the companies may already have partners/contractors in place.

### **3. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**

Louise Manders updated on the Communications Strategy. This will be taken to the Steering Group meeting on 18 March. She will email the strategy to the residents after it has been seen by the Steering Group ready for further discussion at the next residents meeting. The strategy generally identifies external communications i.e. residents, councillors, agencies and communicating to Council staff. It also includes a timetable listing activities over the next few months and it explains how we will work with other agencies, for example Herts County Council to co-ordinate communications on this issue.

The next newsletter was due to be published on 3 April and this will be discussed at the Steering Group meeting. If there is a delay from HCA the newsletter may be delayed for a week or so to let residents know the outcome of the funding bid. Nik Pringle will be added to the circulation list. The previous newsletters are available on the Highbarns website.

Mrs Berkeley queried progress with a questionnaire for residents on previous ground conditions in the area.

Louise Manders said this could be sent out with the next newsletter.

#### **Outcome:**

Louise will draft a questionnaire which she will distribute to the residents group for their feedback.

**ACTION - LM**

Louise to ask the Website manager to put a link to the Highbarns web page on the Dacorum Borough Council's homepage and this will be added into the newsletter. **ACTION - LM**

### **4. HIGHWAYS ISSUES**

Mark Goodyear from Herts Highways told the residents that he had been brought up to date and has had discussions around the issues that had been raised.

Planters – It has been agreed that the Parish Council will pick up the maintenance of the planters e.g. soil, flowers etc. John Clarke and Mark Goodyear had met to discuss who would be paying for the planters and Herts County Council will be picking up the costs. The Borough Council have ordered these through the procurement process to ensure that they will be put in place quickly. It has not been determined where they will be placed yet but they will not be the main barrier. In order to remove some of the high barriers a quadrail will be put in place with planters in between. Work has started on this but it is not finished yet and Herts County Council are aware that vehicles can still drive round this at present but work will be ongoing and will be carried out as quickly as possible. Not all of the high barriers will be replaced but smaller barriers 3ft instead of 6ft in combination with planters behind will be put in place.

Temporary barriers will need to be moved when contractors are doing their work. Some of the footways cannot be used as they have not been resurfaced yet, there is a need to know the extent of the investigations that are needed and how long this will take before the roads can be resurfaced. This work will be carried out as soon as practicable and the barriers will be removed from Pond Close. The area opposite Pond Close will need to be reseeded. Things are progressing slowly but the high barriers will be gradually removed. As large machinery will need to be used it is not practical to put up permanent barriers as they would have to be removed so there will have to be temporary barriers while the work is carried out. This work will be progressed over several months and will be carried out as quickly as possible.

Nik Pringle said there would need to be a barrier around the grassed area as otherwise vehicles would use it as a short cut and the grass would be cut up. The barrier in East Green would have to remain as there is a void on the corner.

Lisa Bayley pointed out that there is a massive drop which has only one cone in place and that the roads around Hemel are riddled with potholes, Bunkers Lane is particularly bad and it could lead to a serious accident.

Mark Goodyear is aware of this and he said it is not as easy as it appears to rectify this and it will need a lot of engineering work done. This is a police issue as well, Nik Pringle said the problem has got worse due to the heavy rain and that traffic officers have deemed it to be extremely dangerous.

Councillor Foster asked if signing would be put up.

Mark Goodyear said that he will look into the signing. Restricted entry for large vehicles is a police matter and there would need to be full public consultation which would not be done quickly and there is an issue of where vehicles could turn around. The only place available is Chambersbury Lane. Weight restriction is enforceable and there is clearly an issue about the signing.

Nik Pringle said that the traffic police could enforce the restrictions but if they were not available a constable could deal with it but the police must be told.

Councillor Douris asked if it would be possible to look at resurfacing the pavements as soon as practical (after any necessary works have been completed) and it would be helpful to have definitive timelines.

Mark Goodyear replied that this should be possible and is hopeful it will not be any longer than 3 months (i.e. 3 months after a decision is known about the need for more ground investigations and after any further works associated with the chalk mine have been completed) and Herts Highways will endeavour to stick to this. [

Lower Road Resurfacing – This should have been done at the end of February but due to certain programming factors the work was postponed. The proposed diversion route had been a cause for concern but the carriageway resurfacing has now been done and was completed within a day.

Councillor Foster said that this had gone very well. Nik Pringle added that feedback he had received was that residents were pleased with the work and it was a very good job.

Signage – 3 Cul-de-sac signs had been put up on 17 March. Mark Goodyear apologised for the delay as Herts Highways did not have them in stock. Mark will check location of these signs as one was not appropriately placed [this has now been rectified.] Concrete bollards have also been put in and some more bollards will be considered to protect the verges. Consultation had been requested on what type of bollards were to be put in and it was pointed out that some bollards had been put in place and part of the road resurfaced.

Having regard to works on the corner of Highbarns and Chambersbury Lane which were not associated with the chalk mine investigations Mark Goodyear said that he did not know why this work had taken place but he would check and let the residents know.

**ACTION - MG**

Councillor Douris said that he was a little disappointed that the signs had been put up in the wrong place and unnecessary works had been carried out as this was not economically reasonable and value for money as funds have been spent without due care. He asked Mark Goodyear to take this back to his colleagues and try to ensure that things are done correctly first time.

Having regard to the carriageway surfacing works outside No. 38 Highbarns that were not finished in one visit, Mark Goodyear disagreed with this and said errors can be made, he said he had not been at work when these works were carried out but that he would relay the message back to whoever was involved. He added that he cannot always supervise contractors.

Councillor Douris said he appreciated this but he would like things to be done properly for the sake of the residents and their quality of life. He added that he felt the residents had been very positive and accepting of most of the issues.

Mark Goodyear said he did not disagree with this and Highways main concern was the safety of the roads.

The second half of the carriageway resurfacing works was due to be carried out in April.

The new lamp post is in place and Mark Goodyear will contact the street lighting team to get the light working. [It is understood that EDF will connect up this column at the end of April.]

Mark Goodyear said that the changeover had gone smoothly on 11 February 2009 and that there was adequate communication before it happened. Nik Pringle agreed it was an improvement.

Lisa Bayley said there was concern about the speed of vehicles and asked if speed checks could be carried out as a police presence may deter drivers from speeding.

Nik Pringle responded that he is having training on use of a new type of radar laser gun and once he had completed the training he would be quite happy to stand and zap vehicles with the gun and hoped it would have the desired effect.

Lisa Bayley also said that the road closed sign had disappeared from outside her house and she was concerned that drivers would think the road was now open.

Mark Goodyear said he would look into this and get the sign put back on the verge just beyond Lisa Bayley's house. [This action was taken soon after the meeting.]

**ACTION MG**

JY said she had spoken to Cupid Green Depot about the Green Borough road signs as there had been some confusion. She said that unfortunately there is no budget left whatsoever to put new signs in place.

Mark Goodyear suggested just standard black lettering on yellow signs. These could be put on lamp posts as soon as possible. Mark would supply a plan showing where signage will go and supply signs showing what is Chambersbury Lane and what is Highbarns to alleviate any confusion. [NB Hertfordshire Highways is not responsible for street nameplates and it was pointed out that any notices/signs provided would not be street nameplates.]

#### **Outcome:**

Mark Goodyear announced that he will not be working in the Dacorum area for much longer, he is changing his post and will be working in the Hertsmere area. Alyson Fricker will be replacing him as the Herts Highways contact with Support from Dave Bowman. Alyson is not new to the area, and is familiar with the issues that have been raised. He will ensure she is up to speed before he leaves at the beginning of April. He wished everybody well and promised to try and resolve all of the outstanding issues and will ensure that they will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

#### **4. SECURITY ISSUES**

Nik Pringle updated on the security issues that were raised. He said that Nash Mills is one of the safest places to live in respect of crimes committed. The anti-social behaviour levels are very low. He said there had been a couple of burglaries in the area but that the burglar had been caught. He also said that there had been some problems with kids playing around the site but since Christmas this had lessened and there had been no recent complaints.

For help use the non-emergency number: 0845 3300 222

- To speak to a police officer or member of police staff
- For a general police enquiry, advice and information
- To report an incident or a crime that has happened (not an incident or crime in progress as this should be a 999 call)
- In an emergency always dial 999

An emergency is when:

- There is a risk of injury to someone or a risk of serious damage to property
- You suspect a crime is in progress
- There is a serious incident which needs immediate police attendance

Nik is happy for anyone to contact him preferably by email if it is not urgent:

[nicholas.pringle@herts.pnn.police.uk](mailto:nicholas.pringle@herts.pnn.police.uk)

Nik is the only community officer on the beat at present and he covers Nash Mills, Kings Langley and Bovington but the police will always respond to security issues. There is a new PCSO starting on 14 April – Lesley Kirkpatrick. She is working in the town centre area at the moment but will be transferring to the Nash Mills area to help

Nik out. He said that he had been stretched but with Lesley now joining him the area will have more of a police presence.

John Clarke agreed that Nash Mills is a safe area to live and that the antisocial behaviour level is low. He said that Nik was always willing to help.

Councillor Foster said that extra patrols were put in place when there were problems encountered and the police do respond quickly.

Lisa Bayley added that the police presence helps to make the residents feel protected.

Richard Taylor pointed out that there had been a lot of interest in the site i.e. lots of vans driving in and around the area looking for opportunities to steal equipment etc. He asked if this could be kept an eye on especially Friday and Saturday evenings.

Nik said that if residents see anything suspicious they should report it straight away and as long as he has some information i.e. credible name and address of the person reporting the incidents they can be dealt with quickly as anonymous phone calls are not so easy to deal with. He would not reveal the informants details to anyone else. He added that even if it turned out to be innocent, residents would be grateful that the police were protecting them and their property. He added that Highways lose lots of equipment so more barriers may be required to protect the contractor's equipment.

Councillor Douris formally invited the residents to attend the Nash Mills Parish Council meetings held every other Monday at the village hall at 8.00 pm.

**Outcome:**

Louise Manders will liaise with Nik Pringle and more information will be added into the next newsletter. Nik will bring figures to the next meeting showing levels of anti-social behaviour etc.

**5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Michelle Berkeley asked about the Council Tax issue.

Mr and Mrs Berkeley are making an application to the VOA for a reduction in their Council Tax band because of the issues arising from the chalk mines and the effect on value and Jenny Young has provided details of the VOA's Customer Services Manager, who will be an ideal point of contact.

**6. CONCLUSION**

John Clarke thanked Mark Goodyear and Nik Pringle for attending the meeting and wished Mark well for the future. He thanked the residents and hoped they had found the meeting useful.

**7. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT RESIDENTS GROUP MEETING**

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 21st April in the Canteen at the Civic Centre at 6.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 7.55 pm.