

Meeting East Sheen PLG

3 December 2011

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM

Changes to the SNT

The main purpose of the meeting was to acquaint the PLG with the imminent changes to the Safer Neighbourhood Team while reporting on the crime in the area.

Sgt Barinder Gill gave the crime report noting that East Sheen was one of the safest places in the country, although it does obviously have crime. He told the PLG that the team numbers were being cut and that Sgt Martin Walkerdine had been reassigned. Whether the SNT would be merged with another group and remain independent but with its own Sgt remained to be seen

He noted that the size of the new team should not be a cause for concern as the team had already demonstrated its ability to do more with less through research and targeting. As an example he gave the sales of alcohol in East Sheen. He informed the group that East Sheen has no all night pubs but he had identified sales to underage buyers and lack of security in some stores that sell alcohol as a problem. The stores were being tested by police cadets who are underage and “bought” alcohol. In addition, undercover officers watched the wine sections of stores, identified problems and had held meetings with store managers. The PLG was told that managers who did not rapidly improve security could lose their licenses.

Another example was the issue of street robberies which is a problem particularly for children and young people who are surrounded by a larger group and told to hand over their phones and cycles. Effective deployment of the police following information sessions for young people was helping to put pressure on street criminals even with a smaller team.

The PLG membership expressed their appreciation for a job well done and praised the officers for their diligence and practical assessments.

Car Crime

Car crime was again discussed with the officers noting that an obviously empty car was less likely to sustain damage. They also clarified the matter of when to call police. 999 is for a crime in progress and suspicious behaviour such as someone testing car doors. 101 is for a discovered break in or theft. The SNT emphasized that the shift system means that calling the SNT 8 digit phone number will not be as effective as the three digit emergency numbers as the officers may not yet be on duty.

There was a question about ‘citizen arrests.’ The officers said that it was not a good idea to try and tackle (literally) a suspect or criminal by oneself frustrating as that might be. The best thing was still to call the police.

Meeting Times

Members of the PLG asked whether meetings could be held on a weekday evening? The SNT and Chair responded that finding the right meeting times has been challenging. The idea is to get maximum attendance. The previous meeting was held on a weekday evening but there were very few people there. Parents of younger children, when asked, said they preferred weekends yet mostly failed to turn up. Equally, the Chair indicated that Saturday afternoons were easier for her but this would be less of an issue once she had a small committee or even a secretary to share the preparation workload. However it was important to try and accommodate different lifestyles so a resolution was made to hold the meeting on weekdays as well as on Saturdays. The Chair noted that she and the SNT had discussed changing venues to a different part of East Sheen to be more convenient as well but that the Sheen Lane Centre for example was far too expensive at £400!

Communications

The final item was on communication of meetings and leafleting. The SNT brought leaflets on preventing crime over the holiday period. Just received, they said there was pressure to get these delivered quickly. The PLG members were concerned that the SNT not be distributing leaflets when they could be out patrolling. The group noted that Christmas newsletters from the churches would be going out the next day and that the leaflets could be inserted in these. It was suggested in general that the Chair and SNT meet to make a list of local publications that could carry meeting announcements and distribute leaflets for the SNT. Promoting the website was also seen as a major adjunct to the communications strategy. The Chair noted that a new website called East Sheen Village will be going live soon and that the person behind the scheme is happy to promote the PLG and have links between the sites.

Finally, the officers noted the Open House at the SNT office the next week which they hoped would elicit interest in the PLG and in their activities.

The meeting was adjourned at 6PM