

**Minutes of the KEW Police Liaison Group Meeting  
Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2011**

**Attending:**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Judi Braddock	Chair / Kew Youth Club
Anne Stoddart	Secretary / Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator, The Avenue
Sgt Mick Coughlan	Kew SNT
PC Chris Morton	Kew SNT
J-F Burford	Councillor, London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
Nick Hutchings	Pensford Field
Pam Ibrahima	Youth Worker
Valmai Smail	Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator, Layton Place
Judith Evans	Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator, Alexandra Road
Sue Gorman	Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator, Taylor Avenue
Suzanne Sheffer	Rotary Club

**Residents** Chris Winn, Sue and Keith Britto

**Visitor**

Bob Mitchell	Richmond Counter Terrorism Team
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**Apologies from:**

PCSO Heather Busby	Kew SNT
Peter Burrows-Smith	Community Police Partnership, London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames
David Linnette	Councillor, Borough of Richmond upon Thames
Lyn Earl	Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator, Cumberland Road and Leyborne Park
Leanore Copeland	Resident

**1. Welcome**

The Chair welcomed the members of the PLG, residents and the Safer Neighbourhood Team. Introductions were made together with declarations of the groups represented.

**2. Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting**

**Umbrellas set on fire at station**

Sgt Coughlan reported that council CCTV at the station had shown 5 males in the area at 3am on the night of the incident. The picture was not however clear enough for identification and did not show any illegal activity. The pub had not been able to provide coverage from its own CCTV because of technical difficulties. A cigarette butt found in the area had been sent to forensics but no useful information had been retrieved.

**3. Presentation on Counter Terrorism**

Bob Mitchell runs the Twickenham counter terrorism desk, supported by Sgt Tom Knox. He explained that each London Borough had a counter terrorism unit. In view of the major events being held in London in 2012 they were keen to raise awareness of the issue and explain how residents could help. With the help of visual aids he showed that the threat from terrorism to the UK and UK assets worldwide was currently rated as Substantial, downgraded from Severe (i.e. highly likely) in July. This was the highest threat level in

Western Europe although 14<sup>th</sup> worldwide because the threat was higher in the US and several Middle Eastern and Asian countries. It was a mistake to think that Richmond could not be a target. Terrorists looked for soft targets in crowded places, including nightclubs, restaurants and commuter trains. In terms of the world media any attack in Richmond would be seen as an attack on London. Richmond had many crowded places including the town centre (where in summer there can be 7,000 people including 3,000 on the river terraces) and Twickenham RFU stadium (82,000 people) and several iconic venues, not least Hampton Court Palace which would have a role in next year's Olympic Games. It also had important road and rail links as well as being on the river (where there were no checkpoints on boats from the sea before Teddington).

The media tends to concentrate on the threat from suicide bombers but there are also still threats from any extremist individual or group e.g. Irish dissidents, animal rights, Fathers 4 Justice etc. In some cases individuals resorted to violence because of a grudge against a business or a person (e.g. a judge). Terrorists could come from all sections of society.

The police could not be everywhere and relied on residents to keep their eyes open. The following points were stressed:

1. Make sure you know your local tradesmen. Is there anyone who could be using facilities such as lock-up garages for the wrong purpose?
2. Be aware of the possibility of hostile reconnaissance of targets, especially photography of CCTV cameras, security guards and exits and entrances (Bob Mitchell stressed that the police did not want to stop tourists who were taking standard views of iconic buildings);
3. Keep your computer secure so that terrorists cannot log in to enhance the power of their own computer;
4. Be careful in disposing of papers to prevent terrorists from gaining enough information to create a false identity.
5. Note any unusual or suspicious behaviour by individuals e.g. a sudden change in habits, withdrawal from socialising or particularly forceful views.

Bob Mitchell showed a DVD composed of mobile phone videos taken by terrorist suspects in repeated visits to a number of sites, including Mornington Crescent tube station, the Broadgate Centre, Liverpool Street Station (which is used by 26,000 people per hour plus 30,000 people per hour on the tube trains that pass through it) and Oxford Circus Underground (used by 230,000 people daily). These illustrated how security features and means of access, including lifts, were photographed and included shots taken with the camera on its side (possibly as a code to identify a target) or pointing at the photographer perhaps to show the background, prove who took the video, or film CCTV cameras on the ceiling.

It was important to report any suspicions. They would be passed for evaluation to colleagues who had access to intelligence sources to check if the person had reason to be investigated further. Even if 99 reports led nowhere, one might be vital.

Urgent reports of suspicious activity should be passed to the **Confidential Anti-Terrorist Hotline on 0800 789 321**. This is manned 24 hours a day.

Where the concern was not immediate, suspicions should be reported to the local Counter Terrorism desk on **020 8247 7163**.

#### **4. Update on SNT and on Kew Priorities**

Sgt Coughlan noted that there had only been 2 cases of **burglary** in September and October. Unfortunately there had then been a spike at the beginning of November with 10 cases in 10 days. These happened overnight through insecure entrances to the backs of houses. It was important for residents to remember that high fences were not necessarily a deterrent to a professional and that back windows and doors should be properly secured. The Kew team had a suspect but no direct evidence. However the person concerned was

arrested for an offence elsewhere and since they had been in prison there had been no further burglaries of this type and only one or two cases of any kind. There had been a sudden surge of burglaries at the end of last year but the suspect in those cases was still in prison. **Non-residential burglary** remained at much the same level (2 or 3 a month) and again included the theft of bikes from the Mellis Avenue underground car park.

**Theft from motor vehicles** was still a problem at 10 to 12 a month and occurred at various locations, including Mortlake Cemetery. While a few vehicles had been insecure most had windows smashed. This underlined the need to ensure that nothing of interest was left visible in the vehicle.

**Theft of Pedal Cycles** had become less of a problem, probably because of the time of year, but, as noted above, some had been stolen from the underground car park.

**Violent crime** was up but these were mainly domestic incidents which were probably now being reported more readily. Kew did not have violent street crime or punch-ups. The pubs were very well run. Sgt Coughlan was however concerned about the rise in **General Theft** i.e. thefts from handbags, stealing of mobile phones and even plants and patio chairs. This was a trend throughout the borough and was not specific to one part of Kew. It was not clear whether it was simply that it was now easier to report such incidents but residents needed to be reminded to keep their belongings secure.

In reply to a resident's question Sgt Coughlan confirmed that there were regular exchanges of information with neighbouring boroughs. In the case of the burglary suspect information had been sent to Wandsworth and Kingston as the suspect did not live in Richmond.

Sue Britto complained about **pavement cycling** in Mortlake Road, particularly on the narrow pavement between Burlington Avenue and the railway bridge. Cyclists, usually young men and often on their mobile phones, rushed round the corner from Burlington Avenue at speed regardless of pedestrians (including the many who used the National Archives). They cycle on the pavement even when the road was quite clear. She had never seen any sign of action against this dangerous behaviour. In reply to this and similar comments Sgt Coughlan confirmed that cycling on the pavement was generally illegal except where the Council had approved arrangements in particular roads. The police did patrol, particularly in the rush hour, and do give verbal warnings or fines. There were Home Office guidelines on issuing fines that required the police to take into account factors such as the degree of danger, speed and age of the cyclist. The police did issue tickets (and those concerned complained loudly). They could not fine anyone under 14 (but this did not seem to be relevant to the situation in Mortlake Road).

Pam Ibrahima raised the question of **dog mess**, especially in North Road. Sgt Coughlan explained that it was difficult to deal with, as a witness was needed. The police did however pass complaints on to the Council dog wardens.

## **5. Priorities for next quarter**

The Chair conducted a vote by Panel Members on the priorities for the next quarter in the light of Sgt Coughlan's report and the subsequent discussion. The voting showed a tie for third place between Theft from Motor Vehicles and Violent Crime but Sgt Coughlan pointed out that the Safer Neighbourhood Team referred domestic incidents - the main element in the violent crime statistics - to a specialised unit in Richmond and could therefore do little itself apart from increasing awareness. He also stressed that the police did not ignore problems just because they were not listed as priorities. It was therefore agreed that the priorities for the next quarter would be:

- 1) Burglary
- 2) Cycling on Pavements
- 3) Theft from Motor Vehicles

## **6. Any other business**

No items were raised.

## **6. Next meeting**

The date of the next meeting is **Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2012 at 11am** at the **Coach and Horses**, 8 Kew Green, Kew TW9 3BH.

Further meetings in 2012 are Thursday 11th October 2012 at 1930 and Thursday 31st January 2013 at 1930.

The Chair thanked the SNT, Bob Mitchell and residents for attending and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

## **Appendix**

### **101 - the new number to call to contact your local police**

You can call 101 to report a crime that has already happened, seek crime prevention advice or make police aware of any policing issues in your local area.

For example:

- if your car, bicycle or mobile phone have been stolen
- if your garden shed has been broken into
- if your property has been damaged
- if you want to report a minor traffic collision, or
- if you want to provide the police with information about a crime in your area.

**Call 101 for situations that do not require an immediate police response** (such as those outlined above). This helps keep 999 available for when there is an emergency.

**Call 999 in an emergency** such as when a crime is happening, someone suspected of a crime is nearby, or if someone is injured, being threatened or in danger.