

Minutes of Meeting
Community Safety Working Group
Thursday 6th February 2025 3 pm – 4.30 pm

Present: Cllr Kay Wesley (Chair), Cllr Shaun Radcliffe, Cllr Glen Williams, Rachel McCarthy,
Sgt James Bell, Linda Webber, Cllr Robert Brittain, Guy Brittain, Sally Holland

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Julia Pestell Hassall, Laura Woodrow-Hirst, Cllr Richard Walton
2. **Notes of the meeting** of December 2024 were accepted as correct
3. **Draft Agenda for today was approved**
4. **Action Log**
 - a) Code of Conduct policy in the town centre. Sound is the issue with the preachers, they preach in one place, very loud, it's a breach of the peace, they could receive a warning but its not really enforceable, maybe a public space order? Vagrancy Act, put this on the beggars section, encourage food not money to professional beggars. Promote on socials and Bear Necessities leaflet for April. James seems happy with the policy but will review first to make sure he's happy with it. **RMc to send to JB**
 - b) Shaun traffic action in the town centre pedestrian area, Cheshire East, what is the situation regarding cutting through/parking **RMC Action - Richard Hibbert email** A gate could work temporarily, but ideally ANPR for continuous monitoring. Letters to offenders, possibly police letter headed, very much like the Operation Park Safe with a warning. Better signage required as a start, notify taxi firms that driving through isn't allowed, as they are repeat offenders.
 - c) Anti spiking campaign and funding – funding applied for to the PCC to obtain kits, check dates and substances on the tests, leaflet needed to go in with the kits, a QR code would work well too i.e. go to hospital, blood test etc we want this all over socials, kits in all hospitality venues, Costa Coffee and our information centre. Once these are rolled out, schools would benefit from a presentation, knowledge regarding it's an offence, and what to do if they suspect a friend/family or themselves has been spiked, show them the kit.
5. **Police update on Crime (Sergeant James Bell)**
 - 5.a Shoplifting** – 12 in October, 9 in November, 20 in December, 8 January.
 - 5.b Drug & Alcohol Abuse** – in 20 October, 20 November, 30 December, 14 January
 - 5.c Anti-social Behaviour** – market area a few reports, nothing major.
 - 5.d Domestic Violence – sexual offences** - 1 September, 1 October, 2 November
 - Violence against girls – 47 October, 52 November, 38 December, 53 January

5.e Hate Crime - 2 in October, 3 in November, 3 December, 4 January

5.f Speeding/Traffic - ****

5.g Road Safety concerns about vehicles using the pedestrian area as a cut-through mainly between 4 pm and 10 am when the barriers are not in place. This is a safety problem.

5.h Assaults & Public Order 55 October, 55 November, 1 December

5.i Residential Burglaries 7 October, 3 November

6. Police Priorities – Christmas, road safety Mondays, stopping cars, operation Jingles 20th/21st 2 am shifts into the town centre, 6 officers. Drug dogs into the premises again. David Levins new Chief Inspector for Congleton.

Total crimes – all crimes

23% positive outcomes

Burglaries

December – up

January – up

Stabbings

2 stabbings – 1 Bromley

1 Teenager

March – National day in schools to educate

Operation Street Safe – one town per weekend

7. Cheshire East Council ASB team - not able to make the meeting

8. Street Pastors Update – updates emailed over. assisted 63 in one year, the lighting at Wetherspoons is much better outside and better for ASB. They will be doing 9 Saturdays from March to May. Report below;

Congleton Street Pastor Update

Key points Annual Review 2024

Defused 9 separate situations in group sizes varying from 12 to 2.

Assisted or observed to safety 63, supported 19 with ill effects from drinking.

Emotional support/Loneliness/Bereavement/Family concerns etc. 77

Homeless 5

Removed 81 bottles/cans

Returned 30 glasses and swept up 22 lots of broken glass.

First Aid to 7

Supported door staff 23

Handed out 19 pairs flip flops, 20 bottles of water/wipes, 3 foil blankets and returned 6 supermarket trolleys. Directions given to 17

Good News

Improved lighting Wetherspoons Car Park - no-one loitering suspiciously or cannabis aroma.

Concerns

Increased number of vehicles cutting through pedestrian area. During one evening we stood in front of a Stoke Uber driver, a Stoke Taxi and a young lad in a black mini reminding them of the loading and unloading only sign. An A-Stars taxi was also about to cut through to return to taxi rank after dropping off at Swan Bank but our presence dissuaded him. Noticed 5 Stoke taxis that evening which was unusual and may be taking business away from Congleton taxi rank when hailed after dropping off.

Also inconsiderate parking on Swan Bank – After restocking at Costa, the driver in his large lorry rightly removed and replaced bollard but then couldn't turn out onto Swan Bank due to a car partly across his exit and had to reverse the entire length of the pedestrian area. On another occasion, seeing the bollard, one taxi cut up Little Street instead. Two weeks ago, we tried to put the removable bollard back in place as it does act as a deterrent, but the metal lid couldn't be lifted. *Mentioned elsewhere in the meeting that this is broken.*

Street and Prayer Pastors

Unfortunately, due to low numbers for Street and Prayer Pastors we are not yet up to pre-covid patrols every Saturday but are hopeful of covering 9 Saturdays March - May 2025.

9. CCTV Update - we are going to book a visit for the new year, Stuart not present.

10 Shop Watch Update - Rachel reported that Shop Watch was a bit quieter at the moment, fake notes are circulating.

11. Stuart's report attached above regarding CCTV

AOB: - no

Date of Next Meeting - Thursday 13th February, 3 pm – 4.30 pm