

HARWICH TOWN COUNCIL
Guildhall, Church Street, Harwich CO12 3DS

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF
HARWICH TOWN COUNCIL
HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, CHURCH STREET, HARWICH
on
TUESDAY 22nd APRIL 2025 at 7.00pm**

Present: Cllrs Calver, Davidson, Fay, Fowler, I Henderson, J Henderson,
McLeod, Powell, Richardson, Smith, Todd and Wade

Clerk: Ms Lucy Ballard

Chairman: Cllr Morrison

Also present: 0 members of the public, 0 members of the press and Insp. Aaron
Homatopoulos from Tendring Community Policing Team

The Chairman welcomed guest speaker Insp. Homatopoulos.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs Armstrong, Chable and Saunders.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

With no public present, the chairman asked members if they were content for the minutes to be signed as a true record.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on 23rd April 2024 (previously circulated) be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

**BRIEFING FROM INSP. AARON HOMATOPOULOS AND PC LATCHFORD,
TENDRING COMMUNITY POLICING TEAM**

Cllr Morrison welcomed Insp. Homatopoulos (AH) to the meeting who commenced by giving some crime statistics. He confirmed the numbers included the outer lying villages of Ramsey, Parkeston and Little Oakley. Whilst crime across Tendring is up, Harwich has seen a decrease of 4.8%, which equates to some 99 crimes less than in the previous year. Violent crime is down 16.8% which is a reduction of 174 crimes. Drug offenses are down 50% and burglary is down 28.6%. Business burglaries are on the increase however (by 157%) and shoplifting is up 100% but AH felt this was owing to over reporting of the most minor value thefts. Vehicle crime is also up with 35 more crimes over the year. Many of these crimes are reported to be committed by the same perpetrators and there are 3 in particular who have committed the majority of these. One in particular had already served time but upon release from prison reoffended. He has now been convicted and is back to prison having been responsible for around 50 offenses alone.

Cllr J Henderson asked whether the increased police presence at the caravan camp were due to incidents being on the rise. AH said people use them to hide as only one individual is required to register to rent them and for those that are living there permanently, there is no requirement to register for council tax and they can easily fall below the radar, so they conduct a number of patrols. AH added that they'll be working with social care providers

to makes visits to the camp to help support those with children. Some offences are on the increase during the summer, such as domestic violence.

Cllr S Fay asked whether certain crimes were seasonal. AH said summer is always busier for the police. There is additional budget so extra patrols are deployed but Harwich doesn't feel it as much as in other parts of the district, such as Clacton.

Cllr I Henderson asked about the Speed Watch initiative and whether more operations could be organised. AH said speeding is a problem everywhere and enforcement is only a sticking plaster and doesn't cure the problem. Surveys are the only way to demonstrate the evidence needed to have the speed limit reduced, but they are looking into more operations as the TruCam they use is very effective.

Cllr Wade asked for a 20mph limit along Wick Lane. AH said this wasn't within the remit of his team and would be down to the County Council but they may be able to include that area in any future Speed Watch operations.

Cllr Powell referred to the red 'no stopping' lines upon the entrance to Lidl, which aren't being enforced. AH said this fell under the remit of Parking Partnership but was aware that camera cars were being used to monitor this, which are quite effective.

Cllr Fowler asked about the application to the court for a banning order for a local prolific thief and whether it was successful. AH said the outcome is not yet known but was positive for a successful one.

Cllr McLeod asked whether the policing team had any links with Verisure. AH said they didn't and they prefer not to work with private security companies and this couldn't guarantee a successful conviction.

AH informed members that owing to a restructure, the Community Policing Team had been rebranded the Neighbourhood Policing Team. This covers Harwich, Mistley and Manningtree and is a government initiative to look at specific criminal activity such as business crime, vehicle crime, shoplifters and street robbery etc. which is pretty much what the team covers already. The added benefit for Harwich is there are 2 additional officers for the team, so more visibility on the streets. All telephone contacts will remain unchanged although there may be a slight amendment to the email address.

AH reported that from 27th May until 1st June, 'Operation Stronghold' will run and members are welcome to join patrols.

Members voiced their gratitude to Insp. Homatopoulos and his team for their hard work and dedication and with no further questions, the chairman thanked Insp. Homatopoulos for his time.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present.

Cllr Morrison thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.30pm

CHAIRMAN

DATE