

Buxton Area Forum, Wednesday 28th September 2005
Notes; Questions and Answers

Reference: **01BXN 28/09/05 Teenagers in Harpur Hill**

Question: With regards to the police stopping gangs of teenagers from congregating near the Harpur Hill school, all this has done has moved them further into the estate. I now have to put up with not only teenagers on Berwick Road but also gangs of small children all under 11 throwing things at the houses, climbing in and out of peoples gardens, and generally being a nuisance. When are the police going to do something about their behaviour? Every evening I have to listen the noise they make and continually have to shout at them for climbing my fence and entering my garden to retrieve things that they have deliberately thrown in. Its about time people were made to take responsibility for their children. Why are small children allowed to roam the streets after dark? Where are the police patrols that are supposed to stop this from happening? I am now looking to move again because of this continual nuisance, it comes to something when respectable adults have to move house because of childrens behaviour that don't even live there.

Answer: In 2004 problems on Fernedale Avenue made life difficult for residents. Police worked with the school and residents and brought in a Dispersal Order under Section 30 which ran from June 2004 – January 2005. This enabled the police to move on any young people suspected of committing anti-social behaviour. The area was defined on a map as the Harpur Hill Council Estate. Anti-social behaviour problems moved away from the school, but some of the problems moved to other nearby areas e.g. Berwick Road. The Police monitored this and tried to move youths on. Since January 2005 there has been no dispersal order in place.

Comment: Residents say the problem was not as bad during the summer but worse now that nights are getting dark. Any chance of a youth club? Particularly now college moving away from Harpur Hill.

Comment: Resident says former youth club caused problems.

Answer: Young people are part of our community, we cannot shun them. We need to educate them as to what is acceptable behaviour.

Comment: Must recognise that this is a community responsibility.

Reference: **02BXN 28/09/05 ASBOs**

Question: I am concerned that, although there is plenty of media attention attached to ASBOs, is there any 'user-friendly' information which states in everyday language what everyone's responsibilities are to prevent Anti-social

behaviour ~ i.e. A Charter that can be implemented in this area and that can be acted upon in a responsible democratic way. I think there is a need to raise awareness of ASB and ensure that everyone has a reasonable idea of what it entails rather than have a catchy acronym that everyone "thinks" they know about.

Answer: The definition of anti-social behaviour ranges from graffiti and abandoned cars to public order offences and drug dealing. Anti-social behaviour can be criminal and non-criminal. Last year, there were 12 million incidents in the country. A reduction in incidents will make a saving that can be reinvested in services in the community. High Peak Community Safety Partnership is committed to reducing crime within the High Peak Community Safety Strategy 2005-8, this includes targets to reduce anti-social behaviour. People have different thoughts on what is acceptable behaviour. People are concerned with 16 –19 yr olds drinking alcohol in parks and public areas – where are they getting it? More than half of them bring the alcohol from home. Anti-social behaviour can also make young people vulnerable. We adopt a partnership approach with a number of agencies and organisations including the Youth Service, Police, High Peak Borough Council and others.

The High Peak Community Safety Partnership has produced an excellent booklet providing an easy to understand guide on how to address anti-social behaviour, check www.highpeak.go.uk. Please report incidents to the police on **0854 123 3333** If you have any problems or questions regarding anti-social behaviour, ring High Peak Borough Council Customer Services on **0845 129 7777** who will provide information and advice. Multi-agency Area groups consider specific incidents and hot spot areas and respond accordingly. ASB Order (ASBO), if breached, becomes an arrestable offence therefore it does have a calming effect on the individual. ASBOs are a last resort and are for persistent anti-social behaviour. An ASBO will not be given to young people just hanging around in the park. The 6 people who have ASBOs have caused a high percentage of the incidents in the High Peak.

Question: Not all young people cause trouble. Young people say that there is nothing for them to do. No cinema, bowling alley, ice rink. It is no good saying these options were not available when we were young. We need to respond to the youth of today and what they want. Could money spent to address anti-social behaviour be redirected to provide options?

Answer: Some funding from the High Peak Community Safety Partnership is spent on diversionary activity such as youth clubs, free swims etc.

Comment: Not satisfying 16 – 19 yr olds.

Comment: There is a lot for young people to do, some of it funded by authorities. Over the past 6 months we have raised £3,000 to buy a digital camera, DVD machine etc to show films – first showing in Methodist Church hall last night and was very popular. The equipment is available to hire to the community to provide some cinema opportunities.

Reference: 03BXN 28/09/05 Engaging young people

Question: Spring Gardens, a few months ago, carried notices advising that it was an area where curfews could be imposed on young people. If this is the case, why does the council feel that it is appropriate to criminalise young people, and restrict their human rights and what (apart from skate board parks) is the council doing to actively engage with all young people and provide them with adequate facilities for leisure and recreation at times appropriate for the young people? In this respect it would also be useful to know why, for instance, the county council closes facilities like Fairfield Community Centre during the school holidays - when demand for youth support is likely to be high?

Answer: The Police do not have any issues with young people hanging around. Curfews or Dispersal Orders are a last option. The Pavilion Gardens dispersal order was in response to long-term repeat problems and complaints after trying many other options. Criminal damage was getting expensive. School liaison and discussions with partners such as the youth service and probation has taken place and evidence is being compiled. Establishing a Dispersal Order seems to be the only option but this would be relevant to those causing anti-social behaviour or those associating with them. Any groups of 2 or more people can be asked to move on – only if causing nuisance. Not a step taken lightly – it was effective. Any application for a Dispersal Order has to be approved by a senior officer at High Peak Borough Council and the Superintendent of the police.

Derbyshire County Council response – we are attempting to deliver what young people want. Trying to consult young people and will continue to do so in order that the services provided are at the times and of the type that young people want. Fairfield Centre was not closed during the summer holidays – was closed for a couple of weeks for repairs but many other activities were laid on such as football, barbeque etc.

Comment: May not be addressing the needs of older teenagers.

Youth Service High Peak Team – some centre sessions closed during summer in order to provide other services more appropriate to summer activities. Used the mobile unit, climbing wall, Buxton for Youth saw 660 young people during the Carnival. The Youth Service have young people up to the age of 19 on their books. Can speak to Pam Wilson later if you wish.

Comment: Harpur Hill has some lovely young people we are proud of. Lots of good work going on with young people in the town e.g. athletics club. High Peak is 80% rural with the National Park so greater pressure on the urban areas. Lots of good work is going on with young people but limited resources. Need transport, supportive parents etc. Pressures of life on families. Sure Start is an excellent scheme. Can Partnership working provide what young people need?

Would it make a difference if we had an alcohol ban in the town centre?

Reference: 04BXN 28/09/05 Licensing and Anti-social behaviour

Question: It is reported in the Buxton Advertiser that there has been a 24% increase in assaults and a 16% rise in criminal damage between April and August this year "often drink related" (Inspector Corton.)

It is my personal experience that the behaviour of people moving between the public houses in and around the Square (The Club House and The George) and the pubs and clubs on the Market Place has deteriorated significantly over the last twelve months. Incidents of people urinating in Hall Bank and the Crescent and noisy and violent behaviour late at night has been noted.

a) Under the terms of the Licensing Act, Councils are empowered to insist on "special conditions for the control of noise and nuisance" Can you tell us what, if any, special conditions will be imposed as part of the licenses now being granted and when will they be implemented?

b) What additional measures will the police be taking to control any anti social behaviour which is likely to occur up until 3.am across the town?

Answer: HPBC is the licensing authority. New legislation live from 24th Nov. Restrictions we can apply include opening hours, hours of entertainment, areas where specific activities can take place, noise limitations, closed windows & doors during music, look after customers when leaving.

Question: Pubs can not control movement of people between lower and higher Buxton. How can that be controlled, particularly late at night?

Answer: Local Authority looking at 100yd radius as control area. Wider area needs to be considered. Policing issues will be dealt with as market place is now – positive high visibility policing – it is effective.

Comment: Police can only respond to incidents that happen. Residents will suffer first. Preventative initiatives?

Answer: Concerns over what will happen come November are shared by police, not just in Buxton. Fears may be unfounded – we have to wait and see. Disorder will be policed.

Question: Drink free zone?

Answer: From experience, most disorder is due to juveniles drinking alcohol. Police have existing powers, especially regarding underage drinking. Local Authority can declare drink free areas. Not seen as appropriate for Buxton.

Comment: High strength alco-pops dangerous and cheap on special offer.

Answer: An issue at a national level to be passed onto MP.

Reference: **05BXN 28/09/05 Working with young people**

Question: In difficult area of Nottinghamshire youth clubs recognised as not what all young people want. Could Fair Aware scheme be extended?

Answer: We already do it – lots – to the extent that our resources allow e.g. Friday nights in Pavilion Gardens and mobile units in Spring Gardens and Cote Heath Recreation ground. Lots of well behaved and enthusiastic young people. Youth Service working with schools and police to address Harpur Hill problems. (DCC)

ASB is a high priority – regular meetings involving wide range of partners. The issue of things for young people to do always crops up. Some individuals not benefiting from what is on offer – how can we provide for them? There are fantastic facilities but is there sufficient for young people in Buxton? Multi-agency approach required and young people will have to be involved as well – no quick fix. Harpur head teacher wants to open the school up to the community out of school hours – in consultation with local young people. Interested people here please speak to Inspector Paul Corton to help him. (Police)

Comment: Pavilion.Gardens operates a programme to suit community – evening programme under discussion. People need to tell us what they need / want. Should we light up the gardens? Local Authority wants to be responsive. We don't have all the answers – tell us what you want. No guarantees we can provide them but we want your ideas.

Reference: **06BXN 28/09/05 ASBOs – do they work?**

Question: Do ASBOs work? They have only been going 2 years, they are costly. Young people are not the problem, the issue is we are all getting older.

Answer: Yes ASBOs work – lots of evidence e.g. a local family out of High Peak for 5 yrs. Other ASBOs are also working. Before ASBOs there was nothing similar available to police to deal with ASB and their hands were tied in taking action against problem people. This new power for police was in response to public feedback. Police never have enough resources.

Reference: **07BXN 28/09/05 Special Constables**

Question: What hours do specials and Police Community Support Officers work?

Answer: Hours worked by Special Constables at Buxton

August 216 hrs
July 335 hrs
June 244 hrs

There is a team of ten officers for Buxton section:

1 Section officer
3 Special Constables attached to beat teams
5 Special Constables for patrol of the policing section
1 probationer Special Constable

Fairfield – 2 full time 40hr weeks working shifts + with other agencies e.g. housing

Town Ctr – 1 Police Constable 40 hrs + 1 Police Community Support Officer 40 hrs + 6 specials.

Buxton Specials team most dedicated in the county. 1000 hrs April to August 05.

Specials 6pm to 3am
PCs 7am to 3am

Reference: **08BXN 29/09/05 CCTV**

Question: Is CCTV effective on ASB?

Answer: 36 cameras in High Peak. They are value for money. Costs the Borough council approx £100K pa, 2% of Borough element of Council Tax. 20 arrests direct result. They create a sense of security particularly in retail areas and are preventative. Car break-ins almost eliminated in CCTV areas. CCTV helps direct police resources but the system has limits. Civil liberties issues as you need a good reason for looking at individuals.

Mobile CCTV van very effective on ASB as can target areas not covered by fixed cameras. Offenders see the van and run away.

Reference: **09BXN 29/09/05 Skateboarders**

Question: Why are skateboarders allowed to abuse the walls in the town centre?

Answer: They are not causing criminal damage. Skateboarders are encouraged to use dedicated areas. Police are responsive to calls.

Comment: Problem solving approach is mentioned– the parents are the problem – educate the parents and the parents of tomorrow – perhaps outside remit of this meeting but perhaps it should be within the remit of the meeting. Buxton has many facilities including drama groups, go-karting, cyber café, swimming pool , cadet schemes etc. Parents need to focus their children towards these activities.

Answer: HPBC is considering collecting information about all these things and more with partners and making the information available on web sites and through schools and school website. Please provide us with more information as to what is going on.

Comment: In the 60s Church youth clubs, YMCM, County Youth Clubs, 2 cinemas, 2 theatres in the area and parents have authority over children that state has taken away from them. We have created the problem – our hands are tied. Very few young people are here tonight.

Reference: **10BXN 29/09/05 Sylvan car park**

Question: Sylvan car park is very unpleasant with boy racers etc. Police have been contacted but no real progress. Dangerous speeds etc. Not getting any better. Been going on for 15 years. Disco at 2am in the car park. Can we have a dispersal order?

Answer: Sylvan car park is a gathering point for lots of teenagers – police are aware and trying to deal with it – lots of police attention including prosecutions. Some improvement have been made but still much to be addressed. Some have moved from Pavilion Gardens car park where the covered area amplified the noise. Police need significant scale of reports from range of people to justify dispersal order. Will continue to monitor the situation.

Additional question: Will the influx of students and halls near Sylvan cause probs?

Answer: Police are aware of potential conflict – OK so far – working with students union.

Students Union keen to work with police and others, resolving issues as they arise. Want support from the community to integrate students into the community to aid positive impact.

Reference: **11BXN 28/09/05 Fairholmes Woodlands car park**

Question: Fairholmes Woodlands car park in Derwent has similar problems – national park rangers finish at 4pm – need more patrols.

Answer: National Park Authority – that car park owned by Severn Trent – will take back this comment to the relevant people.

Additional Question: Can there be barriers to close car parks at night?

Answer: Pavilion Gardens tried that – barrier damaged repeatedly. Transfers activity to streets and other possibly more dangerous areas. Need to educate offenders and the public to prevent the problem, not just move it around.

Reference: 12BXN 28/09/05 Disabled access to public toilets.

Question: Disabled access to public toilets. Lady in wheelchair locked in by broken lock and door frame – rescued by fire service. What is being done?

Answer: Thanks for giving an opportunity to apologise publicly. Apologies to the lady who got locked in – very sorry. High Peak BC recognise the need to do more on disabled facilities. No additional resources provided by central government to respond to the Disability Discrimination Act without raising Council Tax and people do not want that. Conversions of facilities are good news for everyone. The speed of progress is not entirely satisfactory. Need help from disabled groups to prioritise the right actions. HPBC spent £6000K on DDA facilities in 3yrs. £40K is 1% on council tax. Public toilet provision can be overwhelming for a small local authority. In tourist areas we need excellent conveniences. Vandalism is expensive and a repeated problem. As a result, ours are often closed in the evening because of the threat of vandalism. One refurbishment per year is being planned. Is there one too few in Buxton? Needs more than resources. Need support to get design right. Want to work very closely with local access group.

Comment: What is good for disabled people is good for everybody.

Comment: Night time economy becoming more important. More drinking means need for night time toilets. Glossop & Hope Valley won Loo of the year. Sylvan car park toilets to be refurbished this year. 24 hr economy gives rise to clash between those who want those facilities and those who don't. Safer Pubs & Clubs scheme to ensure enjoyment without ASB. Best toilets have attendant, music etc but it costs – dilemma re constraint on council tax spending priorities. Hope to have new Spring Gardens facilities in the future. Planned programme of toilet provision now in place.

Next Area Forum Wed 21st December, Pavilion Gardens. Topic will be Budget priorities.