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# *Frinton Residents' Association*

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## **NOTES of a Half-Yearly Meeting held in the McGrigor Hall on 22 October 2016 at 10:00 AM**

Present: The President, Chairman, Vice Chairman, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and 7 other Committee members, 2 speakers, 8 other guests including 5 Councillors and 2 members of Essex Constabulary, together with 74 Association members, 17 Non-Members/Friends making a total of 114 attendees.

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Prior to the formal meeting, the Chairman (NC) introduced Amber Abrahams (AA), Chairman of Frinton Businesses, who spoke about the Christmas event in Connaught Avenue that would be taking place on Saturday, 26 November 2016, between 2.00 pm and 7.00 pm. She reported that this year there would be a Choir Competition organised by the Free Church and the stage would be on the back of a lorry. There would be similar stalls and attractions as previously, plus sports performances and the St John's Ambulance Service would be providing demonstrations. If anyone wanted to help, ie by wearing a high-vis jacket on the day, directing people, etc, they were asked to contact her at Spinning Strawberry in Connaught Avenue beforehand. Brochures were being produced and would be given out free of charge. More stall holders were needed and she asked if anyone working from home wanted a stall, they could obtain a form from her; the cost would be £10 per stall, but charity stalls were free of charge. No hot food would be served from stalls this year as restaurants would be open.

NC welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the guest speakers: Roger Hirst, Police & Crime Commissioner for Essex, and David Foster, Frinton in Bloom. He explained that unfortunately, Tammy Diles, from the Patient Liaison Service at Colchester Hospital, had found at the last minute that she was unable to attend

He also introduced the Councillors present: Nick Turner, Giles Watling, Iris Johnson and Anne Davis.

NC reviewed the Committee's activities, and reported that since producing the Chairman's Message in The Frinton Resident, a number of replies had been received on the Consultation on Connaught Avenue; this would be covered later in the meeting under Residents' Issues. The aim of this exercise was to try and get a consensus of residents' opinions. He added that more copies of the questionnaire were available on the reception desk and the deadline for their return was 31 October 2016.

He then reported that a reply had now been received from Eddie Johnson, ECC Portfolio Holder for Highways, with regard to dangerous pavements/pot holes, street lighting inconsistencies and the removal of trees. This was obtained with assistance from Councillor Mick Page. He added that it had been a long process to get this far, but behind the scenes the FRA were trying to address these issues.

However, the request to ECC for road markings such as those in Ashlyns Road, to be reinstated had still not been actioned by ECC.

### 2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Douglas Carswell MP, Councillors Mick Page, Jack & Fiona Robertson, Mark Platt and Vanda Watling, and Committee Member Jane Northover.

Secretary's Note: The following Councillors had also been invited to the meeting: Laurie Gray, Terry & Linda Allen, and Mark Cossens.

NC announced that there had been three resignations from the Committee since the last meeting: Brenda Robson, and co-opted members, Mel Gardner (Newsletter Editor) and Neil Shafto (IT Support). NC pointed out that although Mel Gardner had dealt with all the sponsors, it had been left to the Honorary Secretary, Jeanette Phillips, to put The Frinton Resident together. She was thanked for all her hard work and received a round of applause.

### 3 POLICING

NC then introduced Roger Hirst (RH), Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Essex, who would be speaking on "Current Policing Priorities for Essex".

RH thanked the FRA for the opportunity to speak to residents and was glad to see such a crowd attending the meeting. He also thanked all those who had voted for him and stated that his main aims were those contained in his manifesto. He explained that the role of PCC came into being in 2012/13 and that the PCC had three key statutory powers:

- 1) To hold the Chief Constable to account on behalf of the people of Essex, and find a replacement Chief Constable if the current holder of the post chooses to move on. However, it was essentially about working with the Chief Constable to monitor the performance of Essex Police.
- 2) To set the policing budget and to set the Council Tax precept. He added that he had to work with the police to ensure resources available were being used in the right way, and work out whether more resources were needed, negotiating with National Government in order to get a fair share, if necessary. Essex was a very tightly funded force with spending per day amounting to only 42p whereas the average spending per person per day was 52p. Essex has a low level of crime and it was about having the right resources to fund the police. RH added that he would need to know what more money would be spent on before it could be applied for.
- 3) To set the policing structure for Essex by writing a Police & Crime Plan. He added that in addition to the police, the PCC was also responsible for other areas across the Criminal Justice System. To ensure good community safety, he was in close consultation with the County Council, and he also had to take the views of other parties into account. At present, he was consulting on the Police & Crime Plan, and a survey could be completed on his website. By the end of October, a plan would be available into which all the feedback would have been fed. Then it would need to be approved.

RH explained that his Police & Crime Plan was based on the five pledges contained in his manifesto, plus two more: protecting vulnerable people and children, and improving road safety. He believed that the key problem was the standard of driving. He pointed out that more people were being killed on the roads than by all other crimes put together. Four things contributed to this: drink, drugs, speeding and using a mobile 'phone at the wheel. He wanted to try and halve the level of unnecessary death. RH stated that he would like to move more towards crime prevention rather than detection and detention, with more visible policing and cracking down on anti-social behaviour. The focus in the last four years has been on the high crime rate and bringing more criminals to justice, ie being more successful in nicking people, but the level of crime has risen.

The plan now is to tilt more towards community policing and crime prevention work. What this means in local terms is that Chief Inspector Russ Cole has to put together a community policing team comprising one local policing and partnerships inspector, two sergeants, eight constables, one dedicated youth officer and six PCSOs. Priorities would be set by the partnership hosted by TDC. There would be a Community Safety Hub based in Clacton Police Station, and information would be shared between trading standards, police forces, social services, etc. RH stated that some real successes had been achieved by the local

commander, and that the size of the constabulary would be doubled by training Special Constables; the rate of recruitment of Specials had doubled in the current year.

RH thanked the people of the Frinton & Walton Town Council area for sponsoring (paying for) their own PCSOs. He was trying to make the police get out more and look at the way technology could be used more effectively. He had been horrified at the level of technology used by the Police, and had found that technology is causing the most frustrations for Officers who would prefer to be out rather than sitting at a computer. Constables were now being issued with SMART phones and already differences were apparent on quite a few shifts.

RH then described how he had accompanied Police Officers recently, and he described what they had done during an incident. He stated that the way they dealt with a crisis had proved to him that people were in very safe hands. The Police have to deal with domestic violence, serious violence on the streets, gang crime, and organised crime. Criminals prey on the vulnerable. They target boys between 12-15 years of age and recruit them. RH felt that things needed to be done to stop this by having good, diversification activities.

RH then repeated his seven priorities over the next four years as: being tough on anti-social behaviour, for Essex Police to be more local, visible and accessible, focusing on tackling domestic abuse early, reversing the trend in serious violence, tackling gangs and organised crime, protecting children and vulnerable people, and improving safety on the roads. He stated that a draft of the Police and Crime Plan was available on his website:  
[www.essex.pcc.police.uk/police-and-crime-plan-2016-engagement-and-online-survey/](http://www.essex.pcc.police.uk/police-and-crime-plan-2016-engagement-and-online-survey/)

RH then answered (A) questions (Q) as follows:

Q: Fraud is a big issue, especially when it involves exploitation of the elderly. People should be made aware of online scams. What are you doing about this? Do you have a joined up strategy?

A: It is a problem across the County. We use Essex Community Messaging (ECM), which gives out alerts and helps people to understand how to avoid scams. Please do pass these messages on to those who do not have a computer. Cyber crime is a massive growth crime and we work closely with the City of London Police and other forces in the country. The City of London Commissioner is the lead on this. It is very scary. A high tech centre deals with this and they monitor cyber crime. We need to get on top of that sort of thing.

Q: Two questions. (i) What is the definition of anti-social behaviour; (ii) Will the increased police presence be during the night?

A: The answer to (ii) is yes. With regard to (i), if damage is involved it is a crime. We are not looking at cycling on the pavements as a crime, only if people feel threatened on the streets.

Q: With regard to anti-social behaviour, we did have a crisis ten years ago and one of our Councillors decided the way to go was to get the PCSOs in. Unfortunately, that has changed and we are now paying over £200,000 to fund six PCSOs in the area. You have only just thought about anti-social behaviour, but the funding has been reduced. They have been a godsend to this area, and we are not getting the same situation now.

A: It is unfair to say that we have only just thought about anti-social behaviour. Difficult decisions have had to be made over the last few years with police funding being cut. The choice was between rising inflation and dropping standards. I remain convinced that we have kept the most essential services, protecting the vulnerable in our society. I think what we have done is the right thing. We have lost 160 of our 260 PCSOs, which was upsetting for them and for us. This is why I want to recruit Specials who will have more powers, and not cut below 8,250 police officers.

Q: With regard to the powers of the Specials, why can't you give more powers to PCSOs. What has been said is that they have to deal with more paperwork.

A: PCSOs can apply to become Specials. They would have to do more training, but they are supposed to be different to Constables.

Q: PCSOs do a wonderful job. There is the issue of anti-social behaviour and gatherings of kids on Friday nights. We took control of that as a community and met with all of them – sixty on one occasion. It was intimidating because there were a lot of them there. We are threatened because we do not engage with them. There was also an incident near the golf club and within minutes we had four police cars turn up. Please be reassured that although we do not see the man on the beat, the police are available.

A: The response is there. With the new SMART phones they will be able to deal with crime on the spot. The good news is that they will be out and about more.

Q: I have heard that some police forces are refusing to investigate crime where people have not locked their doors, etc.

A: This is a crime prevention message, but all occurrences of crime should be looked at. The matrix used is not whether or not it is your own fault, it is whether it is worth further action, ie the likelihood of whether it is possible to solve the crime, or not, or if there is nothing they can do about it. I really want to see the Police using the resources where we can get results - focus on whether we can solve crimes. However, he added, that he did not want people to use this information to stop them reporting crime, as these accounts assisted in building up a picture. Using the basis of good reporting from the community in Basildon, twenty-five persistent burglars had been caught.

Q: You have mentioned seven priorities, and the difference between the intention and the impact. Can this be measured? Some things seem to be disappearing.

A: Specific measures have already been taken since I have been in office. We are looking at the outcomes. Over the period of the development of the Crime Plan, it has to be decided what matrix to use to see how we are succeeding. The aim should be safer communities, building on success and well being for everyone in our society. The business of the Police is not maximising the number of criminals in prison, but rather about less crime. It should be about measuring public confidence in policing rather than the level of anti-social behaviour. It should be about keeping the public safe. We need to make sure that we work better with partners. In this respect, I have the benefit of my previous experience of being a Councillor, and I also now Chair the Essex Criminal Justice Board and the Re-offending Board - both partnership boards dealing with how we can maximise our services. Partnership working is the only way forward for the crime prevention agenda.

Q: I am an ex policeman who has dealt with fraud, and now I have Speedwatch involvement. What I regret is that I do not now hold a Police Warrant Card. I think it is appalling that Essex do not fund PCSOs all over the County. We are fortunate, in this area, that we can fund six PCSOs. I feel for these blokes. They have a uniform, but they cannot feel collars. We want PCSOs to have powers to arrest people. The PCSOs do cost money and we would like better value for that money. I would like to push for more powers for PCSOs.

A: No (with regard to more powers for PCSOs). PCSOs fulfil a very specific role and they are the Community Safety Officers. They do a great job, but they have not joined up to be Constables. I do believe Specials work very well as they are volunteers from the community. Clearly there is a benefit to having volunteers, but there is a benefit to having people from the community. If we give PCSOs the powers, it then makes it very hard for a District Manager not to take them away. Frinton is quite exceptional in having six here - over 180 are financed by the Police. You have a great community that we value. Chief Inspector Cole is here to support you, and PCSOs are a valuable part of the place.

NC thanked RH for the information he had provided.

#### 4 HEALTH

As Tammy Diles, Head of Patient Experience (PALS), Colchester Hospital, was not able to

attend, NC explained that there had been a problem with letters not being received. Colchester Hospital had now admitted that some departments had dropped off the reminder system and they were looking into it. Also, the issue that in Outpatients, people were sitting in a room and could not hear when their names were being shouted out. NC reported that a system was being installed whereby you could register yourself and this would save everyone's time.

## 5 FRINTON IN BLOOM

David Foster (DF) explained that Frinton in Bloom were involved with a lot of organisations as well as the Frinton Residents' Association, the Town and District Councils. He was showing a screen show today in the hope that it would be more exciting than him talking. The first two slides showed areas being planted out around the level crossing on the Frinton and Walton Roads.

As the Station Cottage Gardens appeared onscreen, DF explained that the Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust were very involved with Frinton in Bloom's Anglia in Bloom entry. The next slide showed planters outside shops being looked after by volunteers from the shops, and then as two slides appeared, David explained how the railway station was enhanced by gardens next to "The Gates". In addition, station adopters, Mr & Mrs Cobb worked with Abellio to look after the redundant station platform. Slides showed planters, one being a train made out of barrels, and murals painted by a local graffiti artist.

He then continued on his route around Frinton, explaining that on judging day, the judges had visited Frinton County Primary School Gardening Club with whom Frinton in Bloom had worked for 24 years. Involvement had grown over the years and it was now enjoyed by one third of the school pupils.

DF pointed out that via Tendring Technology College (TTC) older children were involved and a slide showed them in the gardens displaying Eco-friendly items they had made. Then it was on to Tom Philpot working on the green-power, Eco-car, that had been entered in the Shell Marathon. He reported that Tom Philpot was now going on to race in his own name, and that TTC now also had an all girls team.

Next the Frinton & Kirby Beavers appeared onscreen on the allotment where they achieved educational badges, which was a serious side to the work of Frinton in Bloom (FiB).

As the slide showed St Mary's Old Church, David explained that FiB, working with the churches and the FRA, had repaired the front railings and the seats. They were also working with the Royal Horticultural Society to make Britain greener by distributing bulbs.

Then it was onto Gun Gardens where TDC helped out with the weeding and paying attention to detail, and the Jubilee Gardens with the restored Jubilee fountain.

With pictures of Crescent Gardens onscreen, DF pointed out how the gardens had evolved over the years, and he was hopeful that they would be there for many years for people to enjoy. He added that the RSPB Bird Watch brought the children in and for a change they had put in an edible garden - he was happy for the public to eat the produce. Crescent Gardens had been awarded the Green Flag seven years running and this confirmed that it ranked in the top 2% of parks and gardens in the country.

These slides were followed by those covering Judging Day in Crescent Gardens, at the Triangle Shopping Centre (where he has worked with traders for many years and where they have made a tremendous effort) and at Parkers who have supplied plants for 24 years (albeit paid for); DF explained that the Triangle had exceeded expectations and FiB tried to involve people who worked with them.

The next slide showed how planters improved the level crossing area, and then it was onto the Rock Garden. DF thanked Councillor Nick Turner for obtaining the architectural input from Beth Chatto and the funding.

There were then slides showing the TTC Eco Pond Project for which the FRA had donated trees. The students had drawn up plans and then a landscape gardener had helped with the final design. There was more work to be done there, but the students were adamant that anything that ended up living in the pond had to arrive naturally.

Whilst showing pictures taken at the Award Ceremony held in Gorleston, DF named those present. He explained that last year FiB had not done so well, but this year they had been nominated for three awards and had won them all - Best Small Town in the six counties that make up the Anglia Region, plus Golds for Biodiversity (the Railway Gardens) and for the Rock Garden as a Drought/Sustainable Garden.

Finally, there were pictures of Eco-cars and a trophy. DF reported that Tom Philpot's car No 65 had managed to come 3rd at Dunton. He had then raced at Rockingham where unfortunately he had suffered a mechanical failure. However, the Renault Formula 1 Team had invited him to work with them for a week. DF wished Tom Philpot and TTC good luck in the future.

DF concluded by saying that during the last 13 years Frinton had been named as Best Small Town and everyone wanted to keep that high standard. He then displayed this year's trophy, which FiB would be allowed to keep.

DF and his team were thanked for all their hard work.

## 6 RESIDENTS' ISSUES

NC reported that a resident (Terry Broomhall) had raised concerns with regard to speeding traffic in and around Queens Road, Old Road and Connaught Avenue, together with boy racers in cars and motorcycles using the Esplanade, speeding and making handbrake turns. He felt that more signs were required stating 30 mph, but he would like the speed limit to be reduced to 20 mph.

NC believed that speeding issues had been covered by Roger Hirst under item 4, and that the results of the Connaught Avenue Consultation would help solve other problems. He stated that during the FRA meeting with an ECC Highways Officer (in August) it had been agreed that signage would be improved and Councillor Mick Page had agreed to include funding for this in next year's budget.

With regard to the Connaught Avenue Consultation, NC explained that the weight limit of over 7.5 tons for delivery vehicles had been suggested instead of a width limit, because weight could be judged more easily by the number and size of a vehicle's wheels. He added that he was aware of problems in Old Way with regard to vehicles accessing the rear of premises from that road.

He then stated that 192 replies had been received so far and an interim analysis had shown the results as being:

Question No:

1. To be a one-way street. Yes = 78.13% No = 20.31%
2. To have herringbone parking on both sides instead of the current parallel parking. Yes = 32.29% No = 63.02%
3. To have a 20 mph speed limit. Yes = 92.19% No = 6.77%
4. To have speed bumps/raised areas for pedestrians to use to cross the road at the pinch points. Yes = 40.10% No = 55.73%

5. To retain the 2-hour parking limit with no return within one hour to ensure there is a constant flow of shoppers and the street is not filled with those who would want to park there all day (bearing in mind that there is a lot of free parking in nearby streets that could be used by those working in Connaught Avenue, as well as in the service roads). Yes = 96.88% No = 2.60%
6. To allow small commercial vehicles (vans) smaller or the same size as some 4x4s to park for a maximum of two hours. Yes = 72.92% No = 26.04%
7. To ban large delivery vehicles over 7.5 tons from entering this area between 10.00 am and 4.00 pm (to avoid the congestion at busy times). Yes = 93.75% No = 5.73%
8. To encourage as many businesses as possible to instruct their suppliers to use the service roads (Old Way and Harold Way) for deliveries. Yes = 98.44% No = 1.04%
9. To ban coaches from entering at any time and to be directed to the seafront via Queens Road. Yes = 97.92% No = 1.56%
10. To have new signage at the junction of Queens Road/Hadleigh Road with Connaught Avenue directing cars as well as coaches to the seafront. Yes = 95.31% No = 3.65%
11. To have new signage directing delivery vehicles to the service roads. Yes = 98.96% No = 1.04%

NC added that the following questions had been designed to help businesses in Connaught Avenue assess how parking problems and delivery vehicles were affecting trade.

12. Would you wait to purchase something while the store owner/staff were dealing with a delivery and completely ignoring you? Yes = 15.63% No = 79.69%
13. Do you currently shop elsewhere because of the difficulties in Connaught Avenue with regard to parking and the road regularly being blocked at busy times of the day? Yes = 42.19% No = 54.17%
14. Would you use the shops more if accessibility and parking were easier? Yes = 61.46% No = 31.25%
15. Do you believe that those shops that have back entrances on the service roads, but do not currently use them for deliveries, should take all possible steps to ensure deliveries are taken in at the rear in future? Yes = 98.96% No = 1.04%

A bar chart was displayed onscreen whilst the results were being read out, showing the percentages graphically.

NC encouraged all those who had not yet completed questionnaires to do so.

Q: It is really becoming very disgraceful that we have these pot holes and dangerous kerb stones.

A (NC): I agree entirely. The ECC system appears to be odd - it is saying certain pot holes have been done when they have not. Some Committee members have walked round the streets and a full report has been submitted to ECC. Each time an issue is reported, we obtain a reference number. This information has been submitted to Officers in Chelmsford. At our meeting in February, we thought we were really making progress, but we could not get a reply to subsequent communications with ECC Portfolio Holders for Highways, even when we sent a recorded delivery letter. However, eventually Councillor Mick Page obtained a reply on our behalf, and we are following this up.

NC added that what he would like to do was to go down to Chelmsford with Councillors so that a good response could be obtained at District and Town level. He felt that County Councillors appeared to be in a different world.

John Smock added that Douglas Carswell MP had suggested using a mobile phone to send photographs to him. He pointed out that having a 20 mph speed limit in Connaught Avenue would be difficult as it was a through road - side roads could have 20 mph limits. He suggested that road signs would be more advantageous than yellow lines.

NC pointed out that the FRA had talked to ECC about road markings and the FRA had a list of registered pot holes (and dangerous pavements) if members of the public wished to use this information to sue the Council.

Alan Eldret (FRA Committee Member) added that the FRA list was sent to the Council regularly and kept updated, but they were not taking any notice of reminders.

Q: Could ECC be asked about their long-term plans for Frinton? Have we arrived at the time when Frinton is sliding into the sea? The roots of trees are responsible for the problems with the pavements, and trees are dying. We have patchwork pavements now (some slabbed and some with tarmac). Is this acceptable? Bad pot holes should be filled as soon as possible, but perhaps we should accept resurfacing of pavements. The problem with the trees is that they were re-planted incorrectly.

NC queried why we should accept anything and Councillor Robert Bucke added that many of the horse chestnut trees were diseased.

Councillor Nick Turner stated that TDC were doing everything they could. He reported that he and Councillor Mick Page had bearded Councillor Ray Howard who could not believe what they were saying. He had spoken to two men surveying Second Avenue, Ashlyns, Hadleigh, Eton and Raglan Roads, and directed them to look at the pot holes in Third, Fourth and Upper Third Avenues.

Councillor Giles Watling added that one of the excuses he had been given in the past was that we had had a terrible winter (the cause of pot holes was frost getting under the surface), but that excuse was no longer valid as we had no frost last year. Therefore, pot holes should be repaired.

AE asked Chief Inspector Russ Cole what would happen if he put an obstruction similar to a pot hole in a road, and received the reply that he would be prosecuted.

Q: In Third Avenue, the problems could be the result of the gas main repairs. Do the people undertaking this work talk to the County?

A (NC): Our perception is that ECC lose control of contractors. One of our Committee members has suggested that a paragraph be included with all planning application approvals stipulating that when work is carried out it is the responsibility of the developer to reinstate roads, pavements and grass verges, etc. It costs £200 per square metre to repair a pavement.

John Smock pointed out that utility companies were responsible for making good, but Alan Eldret stated that it was not about dealing with utilities. It was necessary to deal with anyone who causes damage. The suggested paragraph had been submitted to Essex County Council and to TDC, with the recommendation that this relate to all Districts.

Catriona Miller stated that originally her remit (as Committee Member with special responsibility for street lighting) had been to ensure consistency of coronet-style lighting in the Conservation Area. However, the situation had now exploded, as there was now a mixture of not only lamp styles, but also different light bulbs (yellow and white), and different lamp posts (concrete and metal) throughout Frinton, including many not working. She suggested that residents report street lighting problems directly to ECC on their fault reporting website (details available on page 21 of The Frinton Resident and on the FRA website: [www.frintonresidents.co.uk](http://www.frintonresidents.co.uk)). (NB It is the same address as for reporting pot holes and dangerous pavements). Then residents could report problems to her, quoting the ECC reference number.

Q: With regard to driveway access, where paving slabs are broken and moving, whose responsibility is this?



A: ECC

Q: In London, builders have to obtain a licence from the local Council and lodge a refundable deposit if they were undertaking work that could damage pavements, etc. If they cause damage, deposits are not refunded. I believe this is covered by the Highways Act. Why isn't that the same situation here?

A (NC): I do not know. There is currently nothing in the documentation we have seen, but we will look into it.

## 7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman pointed out the Committee Members to be approached on specific issues (all of which were seated around the room): Jenny on Health Issues, Claire on Membership, Alan on Planning Applications/Local Plan, Ken on Dangerous Pavements, Potholes, overgrown bushes, Catriona on street lights, and Elaine on trees. He added that Jane would be dealing with seafront issues, but unfortunately, she was not present today. He was dealing with Connaught Avenue, and other issues could be reported to Jeanette.

He then thanked Helen, Linda and Angela who had provided the refreshments, and everyone for attending.

## 8 DATE OF NEXT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would be the AGM to be held on 8 April 2017 in the McGrigor Hall, Fourth Avenue, Frinton-on-Sea, from 10.00 am.