

The Frinton Residents' Association

REPORT on the Open Meeting held after the AGM on Saturday, 23 April 2016

The Chairman introduced Karen Soanes (KS), Community Safety Officer, Essex Fire & Rescue Service, who would be covering "Fire Safety in the Home".

KS thanked the FRA for the invitation to speak. She had joined Essex Fire Service (EFS), in 1985, and explained that her job now involved going out into the community and working with other agencies. She wanted to give the following advice.

(i) Smoke Alarms

- ❖ The importance of having smoke alarms fitted on the ceiling on each level of your home as it could increase the possibility of getting out of the building safely.
- ❖ EFS provide and fit smoke alarms free of charge to anyone who does not have a working alarm.
- ❖ Batteries should be changed once a year - if you find this difficult, EFS would replace these for you with a 10-year alarm so that you would not have to change the battery.
- ❖ Alarms should be tested once a week, as it is very important that they are working.
- ❖ Do not climb on chairs and tables to test them - use a walking stick or an umbrella.
- ❖ The alarms themselves should be changed every 10 years to make sure they are up-to-date.
- ❖ For those who have hearing problems, EFS will assess suitability, and if appropriate, will supply and fit sensory alarms free of charge. A unit would be placed next to the bed, and when the alarm goes off a sensor vibrates under the pillow. EFS will also supply and fit these totally free.

(ii) Home Fire Safety Visits

- ❖ Again free of charge, EFS would look at the layout of your home, provide recommendations and discuss an escape plan with you.

(iii) Escape Plan

- ❖ Make sure that everyone living in your home is aware of the Escape Plan.
- ❖ Decide on a second route out of the home if the front door is blocked. In fact, having at least three possible exits is good.
- ❖ Make sure keys to window locks are accessible.
- ❖ Decide on what would be a safe room in the event you are unable to get out, ie one with a door, a telephone and a window that can be opened – put bedding/clothing across the door, go to the open window for fresh air, or possible escape if on the ground floor and call 999.
- ❖ Closed doors prevent fire spread for 15-20 minutes. By closing kitchen and living room doors you are delaying fire spread, giving you more time to get out safely.
- ❖ Have a key near the doors so that you can get out.
- ❖ Have a torch next to your bed with a spare door key attached to the end of it.

(iv) Recommendations in the event of a fire

- ❖ Do not look for the fire.
- ❖ Get the whole family out together.
- ❖ Do not stop to collect anything.
- ❖ Do not go back into the home even if the smoke alarm stops going off.
- ❖ Call the Fire Service on 999.

(v) Kitchen Fires

In Essex, these are on the increase.

- ❖ If you have an oven with a large build up of fat and grease, and are unable to clean it yourself, EFS could come round, assess it, and arrange for someone to clean it for you, if necessary - we are there to make sure you are safe.
- ❖ Currently, 75% of fires attended start in the kitchen and one of the main reasons for this is distraction.
- ❖ If you are cooking, please remain in the kitchen for the duration. We recommend that you stay with whatever you are cooking, especially if you use hot oil or shallow fry. If the oil starts to smoke, turn off the appliance as it is getting too hot. If you have a fire involving oil, do not put water on it. Turn off the cooker if it is safe to do so. **Get out, stay out and call out EFS.**
- ❖ Ensure your toaster is clean. Kettles and toasters should be switched off at the socket and unplugged when not in use.
- ❖ Only use dishwashers, washing machines and tumble dryers when you are up and about in the home.
- ❖ Do not leave tea towels, or cloths, near the oven. Prevention is the name of the game.

(vi) Electrics

- ❖ Make sure you do not overload plug sockets and extension leads.
- ❖ Items that have a motor, or heating element generally draw a lot of current. Make sure they are plugged in separately, especially fires, kettles, toasters, etc.
- ❖ Always ensure electrical items comply with British, or European standards, and read the instructions. Do not be tempted by cheap alternatives, especially mobile telephone and e-cigarette chargers.
- ❖ Always make sure you charge such items before you go to bed.
- ❖ Do not leave 'phones plugged in during the night.
- ❖ Keep laptop air vents clear and unplug them before you go to bed.

(vii) At night

When you go to bed,

- ❖ ensure everything is out, ie cigarettes and candles
- ❖ turn off all electrical items that do not need to remain on
- ❖ ensure your escape routes are clear and there are no trip hazards
- ❖ close doors.

(viii) At all times

- ❖ Make sure cigarettes are extinguished correctly.
- ❖ Tea lights can get very hot - use proper candleholders.
- ❖ Never be afraid to call out the Fire Service. Do not hesitate as smoke could render you unconscious.
- ❖ Let the Fire Service deal with the incident.

KS then repeated the above advice, and stated that she had leaflets explaining the services available.

Q: I understand that EFS have gone into 80% of Essex Schools in order to provide education on fires. Is this the correct figure?

A: I am not in the Education Department and therefore cannot quote figures. The Education Team do go around to schools; I believe they visit years 3, 6 and 9, but I will find out percentages for you.

Q: Where do we find the contact number for the free services you have mentioned?

A: It is on the forms that I can distribute. The number is 0300 3030088. Do please take information sheets today to share with family and friends. The free service is available to everybody living in Essex.

The Chairman introduced Dennis Hoad (DH), a serving member of Clacton Lifeboats, together with his two colleagues, Richard Wigley (RW) and Stephen Beardsley (SB) who provided information on "The Role of the RNLI" as follows.

RW started off by saying that if people get into trouble at sea they should not be frightened to call out the Lifeboats as they would rather go out to a false alarm than have anyone in danger of drowning. With the changes to national call centres, it was important that those who called gave more information than they had to do previously to explain exactly where the incident was located, ie the nearest road name, so that those in danger could be found quickly. Instead of the old sirens, all Lifeboat volunteers were now provided with electronic pagers.

He apologised that their presentation was aimed at children rather than adults which was why it started off with what RNLI stood for, ie Royal National Lifeboat Institution, the main role of which was to save lives at sea. Currently, there were 237 Lifeboat Stations in the UK, using 340 different crafts. He explained that a Lifeboat Station had been based at Clacton for 50 years.

A video overview of the vessels used at various Lifeboat Stations was then provided, during which the different styles of lifeboats were explained, with all being designed to self-right automatically if they capsize.

RW explained that the RNLI provided a ring of safety up to 100 miles out to sea and new arrangements were in place for call outs. He pointed out that Clacton had two in-shore boats using the colour scheme for all lifeboats around the world, as well as specialist flood rescue teams, adding that they also went out for dogs rather than having their owners going in to rescue them.

At the RNLI College in Poole, one example of every type of lifeboat craft was available. All crewmembers received training in casualty care, ie first responder training, and practised capsizing. He stated that Southend was one of the busiest coastal stations in the country, and Tower Coastguard Station (located next to Waterloo in the heart of London) was the largest coastguard station in the UK.

SB then spoke about a recent incident where a vessel had been stuck in the mud for over two hours before calling out the Life Guard. At the time, the crew had been out at sea undertaking a capsize drill. Three crew members went out to provide assistance on a "D" class vessel and found two rowing boats with six people on board stranded in Crag Creek, near Brightlingsea, as the tide was on its way out. One Lifeboat crewmember managed to get over to the boats, which were 80 metres away from the nearest Lifeboat, by walking in the mud. SB tried to reach the stricken vessels, but had to return to the Lifeboat because he was sinking dangerously further into the mud as he progressed. On this occasion, it was about casualty care; one lady was diabetic, another was suffering from shock, and a third was wet from the waist down.

This was an example of where the Lifeboat should have been called out straightaway, not after a wait of two hours, during which time the situation had deteriorated.

After a quick assessment of the area, it had been found that there was no way of getting the boats back into the water. Therefore, it was necessary to call the Coastguard for a helicopter, and all those stranded got safely to shore.

RW then explained that nationally the RNLI received approximately 8,000 call outs last year, and had rescued around 7,900 people, saving 349 lives.

He concluded by saying that they would rather come out even when people were embarrassed to call them.

Q: Do you get involved with incidents at the Wind Farm?

A: We have done several exercises with Dong and have gone through their rescue procedures. The benefit of the Wind Farm is that it highlights where the sand bank is located. In 1978, it took 1½ hours to get to that location, but now it takes only approximately seven minutes.

The next speaker was Chris Estal (CE) who volunteered to speak about his experiences when his wife died recently and how the fact that they had access to the 'My Care Choices Register' offered by the St Helena Hospice had helped them.

CE explained that the Register was a centralised computer system for people who were in the last twelve months of their life, allowing them to choose where they would like to be treated. If people's wishes were recorded in this way, they could then be acted upon at the appropriate time.

He stated that his wife who was dying of cancer, did not want to die in a general hospital, and because of the My Care Choices Register, it was one less problem for them to worry about. He stressed how much easier it had made a very difficult time, so much better for both of them.

The Chairman introduced Dr Karen Chumbley (KC), Clinical Director, St Helena Hospice, who also spoke about the advantages of the 'My Care Choices Register'.

First of all, however, she wanted to thank those involved in supporting the St Helena Hospice, which was celebrating its 30th Anniversary.

She explained that she had been a local GP for 15 years, working in Colchester and at Great Bentley surgery. She was now a Director of St Helena Hospice and her aim was to promote the register of health care choices. Because of the difficulties being experienced by surgeries locally she felt that many patients in the area might not have been made aware the options available.

Then she reviewed why she had gone into hospice care. In the past, some years ago, she had observed overcrowding problems in hospitals, particularly in A & E Departments when there were no beds in hospitals to transfer chronically ill patients to; there had been occasions when patients were left in corridors to die. However, now it was not as bad as it had been. An important improvement in end of life care had been achieved, but it was not perfect yet. At the St Helena Hospice, there were 15 beds available, and high quality care was provided by experienced nurses. However, the majority of patients preferred to remain at home, and therefore, teams of nurses were available to provide support in the community. Friendship groups, etc, had been set up, and the St Helena Hospice worked with others in order to help control patients' pain and symptoms.

With the permission of his family, KC then told the story of a man who had realised the benefits of the 'My Care Choices Register'.

She explained that the 'My Care Choices Register' had been designed as a co-ordinator of service that can be accessed by paramedics 24 hours a day. It was a single point of contact service that they were continually working to improve. Nearly 4.5 thousand people had been able to record their choices, but it was not enough. Only about 50% of people who needed the care were being reached.

KC explained that they wanted doctors who knew their patients to ask them what kind of care they needed and these conversations were best held in General Practice. There was support within the new ACE project, but she was aware that in Frinton that choice had not been offered previously. She had leaflets available for people to take away, enabling them to talk to their local doctor, and by raising the profile, it would be possible to find out what was available. It was possible for patients to enter their choices on the register even if they were not at risk of end of life, and advice was available 24 hours a day for those at risk.

KC asked those present to speak about the 'My Care Choices Register' at church, book clubs, etc. She was ambitious for the Hospice and was trying to increase the number of hospice beds available in Tendring. She wanted to hear people's views on what services they would like the Hospice to provide, and explained that there was an Open Day on Friday, 13 May 2016, that she invited people to come along to.

KC then asked for questions from residents, but there weren't any.

The FRA Chairman, Neil Churcher (NC), explained that he was also the Chairman of the Frinton Patient Participation Group (PPG), and then proceeded to report on the current situation at Caradoc Surgery as follows.

Dr Mann was currently off sick, and although Dr Knorr had delayed taking his leave, he was now on holiday. At present, there were four permanent locums based at the surgery, and same day appointments appeared to be working well. However, some of the administration had suffered as a result of the low number of staff. He pointed out that ACE had only held the contract on a proper basis from 1 April 2016, and they were planning to make changes. Recent redecoration of the waiting room had been paid for by NHS England, but problems were still experiencing with the telephone system. As 30-40 people a week were not turning up for their appointments, many of whom had made one for the same-day, an answer phone system for people to cancel appointments is being considered. The surgery had hosted Dementia Support Sessions. They had interviewed a new Practice Matron, but they were still trying to recruit another Nurse Practitioner.

NC then reported that the next meeting of Frinton PPG would be taking place in Soken House, Triangle Shopping Centre, on Thursday, 26 May 2016, from 7.00 pm.

Q: What are they doing at Caradoc about people who do not turn up for appointments?

A: They are planning to write to them. The PPG have offered to help by providing volunteers, but it is a very difficult situation as some people may have valid reasons for not attending.

Q: How long is the ACE contract for?

A: Ten years with the possibility of a further five years on top of that.

Q: I would like to refer to the recent case reported in the Gazette this week; it concerned my wife who was suffering from chronic neuralgia. We were terribly let down by the surgery and have not received an apology to this day. Over a period of five weeks, we were given a bad diagnosis, blood test results did not arrive, and when we went to the surgery for a second opinion, the only action taken was to input information into the computer. They were not able to make a diagnosis and an urgent referral took over two weeks. The excuse given was that the Secretary was off sick. I believe that Caradoc Surgery is in a state of terminal decline and as a result we had to go for private treatment.

A: Unfortunately, I cannot comment on individual cases being dealt with by the surgery, and I feel that this matter would be better raised at a PPG meeting rather than at a Residents' Association meeting. However, I will try to sort out this situation with ACE.

Q: I thought the new choose and book system would have helped in this instance, but the earliest date available was in eight weeks' time.

A: The system only allows people to choose the location of where they would like to be treated. Within the NHS, the referral limit is two weeks for cancer, but sixteen weeks for non-urgent referrals.

The Chairman (NC) then introduced Residents' Issues by answering the first question received, ie

Q: What's happening about the dentist's application to move to the old Spar shop?

NC explained that the NHS dentist currently situated above the premises previously occupied by Franck's Restaurant in Connaught Avenue, was due to be demolished as part of Phase II of the Sainsbury's project. The NHS Dentist had applied for change of use of 18 Connaught Avenue (the larger part of the old Spar supermarket) so that they could move to this ground floor accommodation, and he understood that interest had been received for use of the smaller section (20 Connaught Avenue) as a shop. However, TDC Officers have decided that they want both premises to remain as shops, even though there are currently six or seven other empty shops in Connaught Avenue. He thought that the Officers should be working in the interests of the community, as this would be an ideal location for a dentist being on the ground floor with disabled parking outside. Therefore, he had spoken to Councillor Giles Watling who had agreed to call this application in, ie to ensure that it would be discussed by a TDC Committee rather than be an Officer decision. He was hopeful that common sense would prevail, particularly because the advertising for these units had not been consistent.

Q: Is it likely that the dentist will have to move? Isn't there any other suitable accommodation locally?

A: The dentist will have to move as the building is to be demolished. I understand there is nowhere else suitable locally. The empty shop that used to be a Budgen store is too big. A plan for changing 18 Connaught Avenue is already in place and this has been specifically designed to accommodate wheelchairs.

Councillor Robert Bucke stated that the Frinton & Walton Town Council would support the application for a dentist in that location.

A resident thanked the FRA for trying to maintain standards in Frinton, but she felt that more residents needed to play their part by asking questions locally and at County level, such as

Q: Why are trees being cut down and not re-planted? Five have been cut down in Frinton Playing Field recently. There is a rumour that trees are to be cut down (at the top of the zigzag path behind the toilet block at the bottom of Connaught Avenue) to open up that area for sea views. Why is the Conservation Area being ignored? This has been a matter for over three years, but nothing has happened. County are being awkward. Where is the enforcement to stop cars parking all day on the Promenade? Maybe it is time for pressure groups from residents who could pester the powers that be asking that they deal with these issues until they are dealt with. We are not being listened to. If you would like to play your part, please come and see me after the meeting.

The Chairman replied that he had spoken about several of these issues with ECC and he was really disappointed with their lack of response as not one of the four Officers present at a recent meeting had come back. They were quoting a number of budgets and it was very frustrating. He felt that NE Essex suffered short shrift.

Councillor Nick Turner stated that demolition work on the shelter and the deck chair station at the bottom of the zigzag path would start on 9 June 2016. Paving and handrails were to be tidied up and the work should take two weeks.

Q: Will the trees be protected?

A (Councillor Nick Turner): We will be looking at a scheme for that whole area. This will be brought before the Town Council and will be for public consultation. I will look into the tree situation in Frinton Playing Fields.

John Smock (Chairman of ONTRACK Rail Users' Association) announced that their AGM would be taking place on 21 May 2016. He stated that the Department of Transport planned to demolish unused station properties, and that unless something could be done to restore them, then some historic buildings would be lost. He felt that the care and maintenance of our architecture and legacy should be looked at by Councillors as short-term management was not ideal.

Q: We were attracted to move here because of the environment, but we have now discovered that there is a planning application for Pole Barn Lane (to build a block of forty flats backing onto the railway on the site of the former Anna Victoria Nursing Home). I have contacted the local Council and we have objected along with twelve other residents because the skyline is going to change with the height of the new proposals being an increase on what was there previously. I notice that there is no end date for this development, and I have not received a response from the Council. I am concerned that they will be allowed to build up higher than surrounding properties.

A: The FRA has already objected to this application. The developers have to build within 3 years of receiving planning permission (then the planning application lapses and a new application is required). (NB: A development would be deemed under way once footings were in place and concrete poured. As to an end date for a development, that would be down to the Local Authority and enforcement, and it could be many years before completion.) Unfortunately, residents have no right to light (and therefore it is not possible to object on those grounds).

Councillor Nick Turner replied that Councillors were on the case. Brochures regarding the proposals within this development had been distributed prior to the application for planning permission being submitted. He assured those present that the application would go before the TDC Planning Committee (rather than via Officers). He stated that he was not against the principle of development, but a quality build was required.

Q: I have discovered that it is very hard for individuals to deal with the bureaucracy within the Council. I thought that with this being charitable land it should not have been sold for a profit. How did the development on the edge of Pedlars Wood (the old Masonic Hall) obtain planning permission?

Councillor Nick Turner replied that this development was not in the Frinton Ward.

A resident expressed an interest in joining the FRA Committee and the Chairman encouraged her to do so.

Another resident stated that when he had walked along Connaught Avenue today he had thought that it was a sad day because not one St George's flag was being displayed, and someone else queried whether TDC had banned St George's Day.

The Chairman replied that St George's Day was being celebrated by local clubs, but he had not seen any flags. He felt that the town of Frinton did not appear to celebrate such occasions.

Q: What is happening with the Frinton Manor development (opposite the cemetery at Kirby Cross)?

A (Councillor Robert Bucke): I understand that several parties concerned with the development have fallen out. There are financial difficulties and the developers have built more properties than originally envisaged. The required sewage connection would put a strain on the current system and nobody is able to fund the necessary work. A footpath and two bus stops would need to be positioned outside the site, and the expectation is that the developers will foreclose.

A past Chairman congratulated the FRA on the recent Newsletter and stated "Well done to all of you".

A resident reported that Heather McGrigor (Past President of the FRA) had celebrated her 90th Birthday on 16 April and passed on her kind regards. GS confirmed that the FRA had sent flowers to Heather on the day and she had spoken to her on the telephone.

The Chairman stated that a WEA Course entitled Essex Gardens and Gardeners was being held in the Methodist Church Hall on Friday 17 June, 10.00 a.m. for 10.30 start, finishing at 3.30, with the cost being £10 per person. Bookings could be made in advance with Katie Andrews who was in the hall and would be available at the end of the meeting.

The Chairman also pointed out that the Picnic in the Park would be taking place in Glebe Field, Kirby Le Soken, on 2 July 2016, and that the FRA had further details available.

He then thanked the speakers and residents for attending before he closed the meeting.