

**NORTH READING SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM'S AGM 09 SEPTEMBER 2021**  
**CHAIR'S REVIEW**

Dear Residents,

As Chair it is part of my role to reflect on the issues that the North Reading Safer Neighbourhood Forum (NRSNF) has been able to help with. The Forum was created as a link between residents, the local Thames Valley Police (TVP) and Reading Borough Council (RBC) to help to solve problems within the North Reading area. Our area is defined as the area North of the Thames, but includes the residential properties, commercial businesses (following changes to the constitution), and parks that form the border on the South side of the River Thames and indeed the properties that are "in" the River Thames such as those on Fry's Island.

During this period some of the work of the NRSNF has been limited due to constraints that COVID has placed on the activities of the Forum. PC Mike Havers and his team has proactively used Have Your Say Days (HYS) as a tool to target ASB in specific locations. Clearly that has not been possible during Lockdown. However, I hope that moving the Forum to online meetings has allowed effective and efficient information flow to TVP and RBC.

The Forum has helped with the following issues during the period under review; The Committee is aware that some of the issues are still outstanding. The Committee would like to think that the issues that have been resolved are permanent solutions, however, we all know that the issues may be displaced to other areas or return to the original areas. We are, therefore, incredibly grateful to the residents who take the time to report issues to the NRSNF and/or TVP and/or RBC. The Committee know that many of these residents are already involved with organising community groups such as Neighbourhood Watch, CADRA, WADRA, EGRA, Heron's Island Resident Association, Dean's Farm, Globe, Tree Wardens, local Friends Groups etc, so we really appreciate the effort that those individuals make.

**Issues where action has been / is being taken:**

- Responding to ASB on Christchurch Meadows, Christchurch Bridge (South Side), Thames Prom, Emmer Green, Mapledurham Playing Fields, Hills Meadow Car Park and Balmore Park.
- Responding to suspected dealing at numerous locations.
- Responding to fly tipping in numerous locations.
- Responding to allegations of organised begging and certain crimes associated with a group of individuals in and around Caversham and Caversham Bridge.
- Responding to vehicles (mopeds) on RBC land in Amersham Rd area and Thames Prom.
- Responding to clean up operations post illegal encampments – numerous locations.
- Providing RBC with additional information regarding areas that need additional defence and asking for additional defences such as CCTV.
- Helping TVP to solve crimes and gain convictions via information such as CCTV and other information.
- Reporting and resolving faded road marking at Oxford Street and The Warren.
- Reporting illegal trading to RBC Trading Standards.

- Reporting dangerous parking issues to RBC.
- Ensuring that thefts from motor cars and bicycles are reported to the local police team.
- Supporting TVP at Police Have Your Say Days
- Supporting TVP/RBC in setting up the new Speed Watch protocols.
- Providing direct contact links between local Police and residents given issues with 101
- Representing the North Reading Forum's views at the Safer Reading Neighbourhood Forum (the umbrella group).
- Liaising with other groups such as the Environment Agency (EA), District Enforcement (DE), the Fire Brigade, and RBC Planning Team (on issues concerning ASB).
- Liaising with RBC regarding River Safety including excessive speeding and questioning if RBC has sufficient safety equipment on the river bank.
- Liaising with the police and the Environment Agency to highlight issue of theft of outboard engines from residents and sporting clubs.
- Liaising with RBC regarding road safety in areas where foliage is overhanging a road making the road more dangerous than it needs to be.
- Liaising with RBC and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue regarding arson and areas of concern regarding arson.
- Acting as a distribution point for TVP for its anti burglary campaigns.
- Discussing with TVP what is the number of PC & PCSOs in North Reading on the basis of crime statistics.
- Pushing for long term solutions to ASB issues through the use of Public Space Protection Orders.

The list is not exhaustive. Nor should it be taken that everything on the list has been resolved and indeed there are other items that are on our watch list where the Forum has been unable to move issues through to resolution.

It is worth considering for a moment where action has been taken that was successful and why.

**Reasons why the NRSNF has been successful:**

- Clear communication link between residents, TVP, RBC and local councillors where a common solution could be identified.
- Help from authorities creating, or often enforcing a rule that is already in place,. eg TVP, RBC ASB, RBC, EA, and DE.
- Pro-active use of Police tools such as Have Your Say Days and SpeedWatch
- Resident support of local Police allowing the Police to do its job effectively and efficiently.
- A feedback loop that allows residents to understand the underlying issues that can cause ASB and illegal activity. This is important to create solutions that will be effective.

### **Reasons why the NRSNF can struggle to find solutions in a timely manner:**

- When the relevant authority does not have the necessary powers (or man power) to help create a solution.
- When there are multi agencies that need to be involved to create a solution.
- Very occasionally a proposed solution may not be supported by differing groups of residents.

### **Thank yous:**

There are many people to say thank you to.

1. The residents who attend the NRSNF for continuing to strive for a safer community for themselves and their fellow residents.

2. The local councillors for supporting the NRSNF. The NRSNF is very lucky that we have a strong group of local councillors who regularly attend the Forum. Particular mention should be given to Adele Barnett-Ward, Jane Stanford-Beale, Ayo Sokale, Isobel Ballsdon, Paul Carnell who regularly attend the NRSNF. We are delighted that Clarence Mitchell has started to attend the forum since his election. We know how much time being a councillor takes and how many meetings you have to attend, so we appreciate you taking the time to come to the NRSNF.

3. RBC team and in particular Jo Anderson and Andy Molloy. Jo has been a huge supporter of the Safer Neighbourhood Forums. Andy has been great in getting results and we are so glad that he has joined the NRSNF. We would also like to thank RBC's ASB Team and RBC Parks Team for their help during the period.

4. As Chair, I would like to say special thanks to our Local Neighbourhood Police Team. The team has continually been there to support the local residents. In particular, I am hugely grateful to PC Mike Havers, and PCSOs, Lauren Jerrom and Jess Lee. Lauren has been instrumental in driving the SpeedWatch programme forward. Derrin Giles joined the team in 2021 as a PCSO and makes a fantastic addition to the team. Thank you for your contribution in trying to create solutions for the residents. We know that there are changes coming at we look forward to working with the new members of the team. And of course a massive thank you to Nikki Drury who ensures that the NRSNF keeps running!

At this point I need to make you aware that PC Mike Havers has been promoted and will be moving to Abingdon to take up a role as a Sergeant. Mike has been incredibly supportive of the NRSNF. I am so grateful for the support that he has given the community in North Reading. It has been an absolute pleasure to work with him. I am delighted that he has been promoted and it is incredibly well deserved. I know that all of the members of the NRSNF will join me in wishing Mike all the best in his new role.