

Supporting Documentation for Environment & Leisure Committee

Tuesday 6 July 2021 7:45pm



AGENDA ITEM – 3

Police Community Support Officer

Overview

Since 2016 Wiltshire Police has been following a Community Policing Team (CPT) Model which was a one team approach to Policing. Since that date, the model has been continuously evaluated and developed.

From March 2019 having reviewed the model it was decided that the capacity for Neighbourhood Policing should be increased across Swindon and more officers allocated to specific areas in order to provide a response to community needs, whilst still working alongside CPT teams who cover the 24/7 policing need.

This has been true for North Rural villages. Highworth along with the other villages have PC Mandy Stevenson, PCSO Victoria Townsend, and PCSO Jo Bennett. (Currently maternity leave). All supervised by PS Penny Sprawson.

These officers come under the North, East and Rural Neighbourhood team and are supported by Inspector Barry Reed, additional Police Sergeant, PS Danny Salmon, 5 other Police Constables and several other PCSO's aligned to other specific areas.

PC Stevenson has been an officer with Wiltshire Police for just over 12 years. She worked as a frontline response officer for almost 10 years before the CPT model began and has also had time working in the intelligence department as well as collating intel for the drugs team. After returning from having her children she returned to working as a frontline officer for CPT, based in Swindon. Prior to joining in 2008 she was in the sport and recreation industry.

Crime Statistics:

3-month Review:

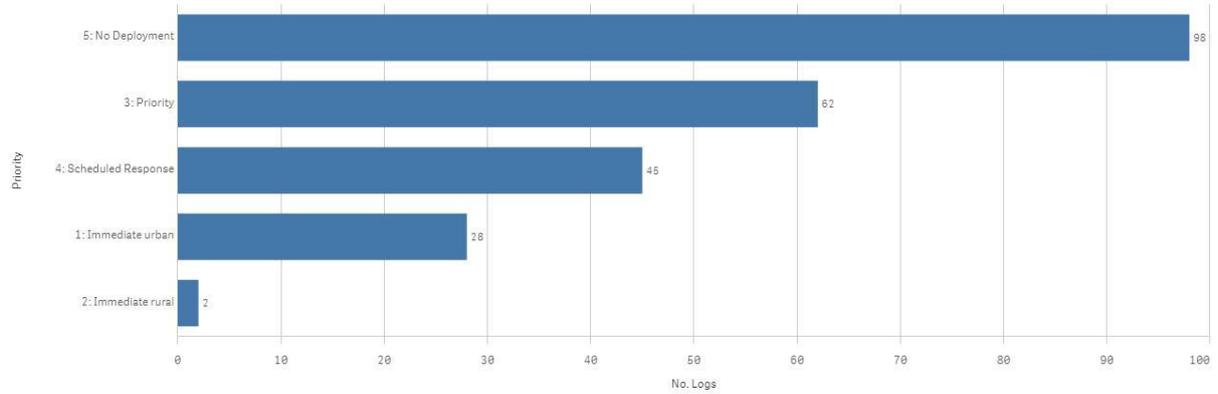
We start by saying that in comparison to other Swindon areas Highworth is one of the safest areas of Swindon, with a very low crime rate.

April – June 2021

- There were 235 calls made to Police regarding incidents that have occurred within the beat-code for DA11 – Highworth. (Wroughton would be the most closely compared area for size, demographic, and rural location. In the same time period, they had 341 calls)
- This includes people reporting Covid-19 breaches, although these have dropped significantly in the last 2 months.
- Only 72 of these has had a requirement to be closed to the crime recording system. The others were either dealt with at scene, did not require further Police assistance, or duplicate logs.
- A total of 58.2% (137) of the calls made to Police were attended. The 41.8% (98) not attended include duplicate calls, calls made to Police in error or persons being directed to the correct service.

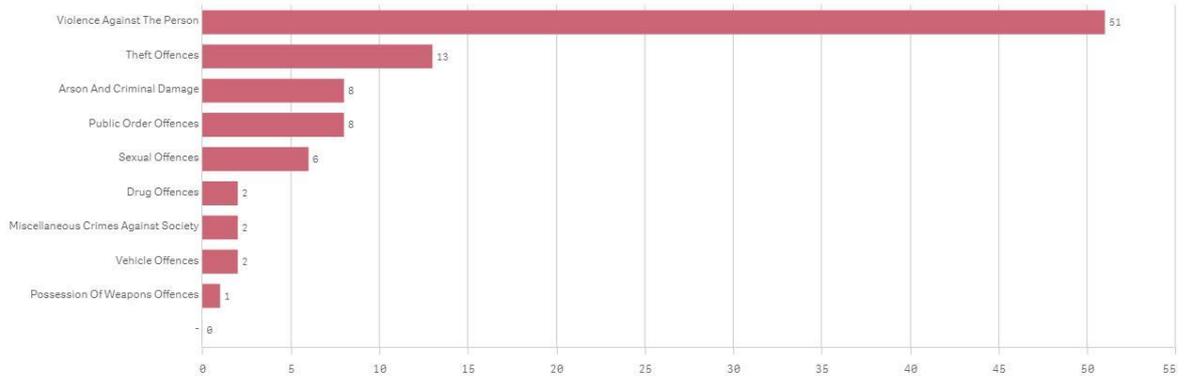
- In comparison 11,628 logs were created for the whole of Swindon in the same time period.

No. Logs / Units by Priority, Type, Name, Location etc
Click axis to change dimensions and measures



- 93 Recorded crimes (Wroughton 93)

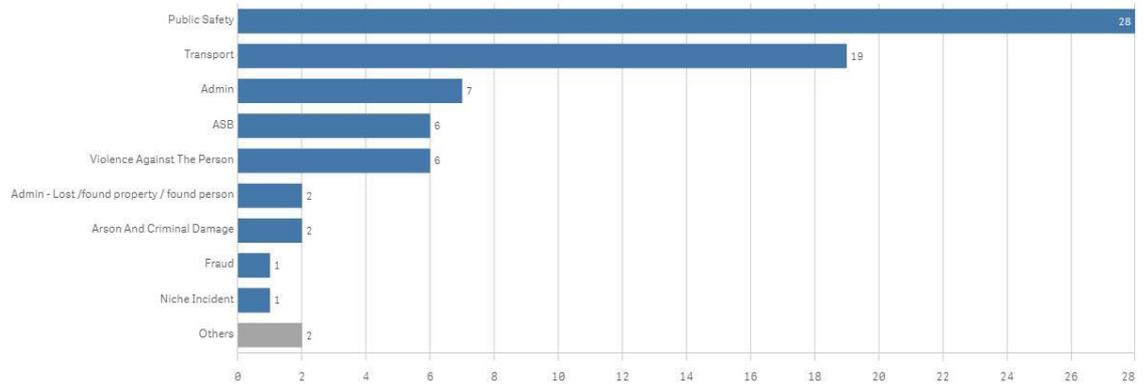
Number of Crimes by Crime Group
Click bar to drill down



- 74 Recorded Incidents (Wroughton – 98)

Number of Incidents by Incident Group

Click bar to drill down



AGENDA ITEM – 6

Play Areas

The draft Playground Survey has been created to gain an understanding of:

- How often the play areas are used
- What additional equipment would be desired?
- If they still meet the needs of the children and young adults that use them
- To identify where improvements can be made
- How Highworth Town Council can support inclusivity and accessibility for all users

See Appendix 1. Once approved this will go out to the public.

Following the routine playground inspection training several urgent issues were raised, in light of this a full inspection of all 3 play areas on each item of equipment was carried out by a qualified inspector. (Reports – Appendix 2)

High risk areas have been reviewed with the Grounds Manager and a schedule has been implemented to address each item.

An annual inspection budget is to be built into the precept along with a maintenance and a replace or repair budget.

Following the inspection, play areas have been highlighted as a high priority and the necessary work is being undertaken in the office to draw up potential schemes, analysis costings, potential grant funding etc.

It is anticipated for proposals to be brought back to Council in September 2021, this will allow time for public participation and public consultations to shape the overall scheme.

AGENDA ITEM – 7

Grounds Maintenance Report: March – June 2021

Grass-Cutting

With a new regime of working, changes in personnel and challenging weather conditions, it has taken till the present time to gain some proper measure of control. Despite this I am informed that five rounds of the Towns grass-cutting have now been completed.

Strimming

The round of strimming about the Town follows the main mowing. The Team are getting round approx. every two weeks. This is an improvement on previous seasons, enhancing the overall look of the Town. Certain other areas, such as the play areas, have been affected by the weather. But now the Team is in a position to commence remedial activities. (All play areas have now been both strimmed and sprayed with weedkiller).

Dog Bin Collection

The emptying of dog bins round the Town has very recently been taken in-house. The Team make two collections weekly, on Mondays and Fridays (the second collection is in high use areas only) and will bring a saving of approx. £10,000 annually to the Council. This appears to be efficient.

Bedding Plants/Watering

The watering Town's bedding plants, in hanging baskets, planters and troughs has also very recently been taken back In-house. Members of the Team take it in turns to water all plants. Initially once- a-day to get plants established and thereafter once every other day, dependant on the weather. This will bring a saving of approx. £3,000 to the Council.

Weeding

The central area of the Town has been weeded by hand in an effort to gain time for more permanent remedial work. Team members Steve and Paul (Roberts) deserve credit for doing a splendid job.

Weed-Spraying

Our weed-spraying programme has been hampered and delayed by the Spring/early Summer adverse weather. At this time, a start has been made to our programme, and it is to be hoped that, given more favourable weather and now having a measure of control with the grass-cutting, a more rigorous prosecution of weed-spraying around the Town may begin in the next week or so.

Allotments

All allotments are currently tenanted. The weather has been an issue for these tenants too. Some allotments are fine, one or two are mainly uncultivated: this situation seems to be the same every year. I shall be liaising with the Office in future, informing them of poorly tenanted plots so that action can be taken. In the early Spring the team did clear several poorly maintained plots and restored them to a manageable condition. This has been a good thing, bearing in mind the length of the waiting list for allotments. Currently we have 36 people on the allotment waiting list with renewals not due until early next year.

Saint Michael's Church

The grounds are currently being cut once a week by the Team, reflecting the importance of maintaining a good standard there. This is offset to some extent by the 'wild' area to the Lechlade roadside, which has generated a lot of criticism. Weed spraying round the site is targeted to be done in the next week or so, weather permitting.

Cemetery, Cricklade Road

Grass-cutting is maintained weekly. Hedge-cutting, strimming and weed-spraying have been carried out. Burials and Ashes committals have continued.

Play Areas: Barra Close/Northview/Jubilee

As mentioned above strimming and weed-spraying work has been carried out at all three sites. All sites are routinely inspected once a week, as a minimum. The play areas and the equipment therein are currently under review by the Town Clerk. This follows the recent training of the ground staff on RoSPA Routine Training. I believe a full inspection and report will be carried out in the near future by a RoSPA inspector.

Grounds Manager – Paul Tilling

AGENDA ITEM – 8

Great Western Community Forest

2021-06-24 Draft update on Pentylands Country Park improvements

Thanks to the planning, consultation and physical work undertaken by the Friends of Pentylands Country Park group, and as part of the national 'Trees for Climate' project, tree planting and other improvements have commenced in 2021 at Pentylands Country Park, with further work planned for the next year. The Park sits on the western edge of Windrush, Home Farm and Pentylands Lane.

The initial tree planting went ahead in spring 2021, with volunteers from the local community helping the Friends group to plant around ten thousand trees. The initial tree planting - including birch, oak, and pear - was completed in Little Forty (west of Barra Close) and Grove Furlong (north of Fitzgerald Avenue). The last of the protective tree shelters have just been installed and all trees have been spot-weeded – a necessity to give them the edge over nutrient and water competition from the existing vegetation.

The remainder of the tree planting is currently being planned and regulatory steps being taken. This will enable small blocks of trees and shrubs to be planted through –

- Big Forty (west of Lismore & Kilda Roads)
- Shill Furlong (north of Kilda Road & Skye Close)

The planting will be undertaken this coming winter and will be a mix of native trees and shrubs including oak, small-leaved lime, willow, alder, hazel, spindle, and wayfaring tree. Volunteers will again be warmly welcomed to come and help plant trees to safeguard the planet's future whilst helping nature on the doorstep.

Finally, complimenting the mix of small woodland blocks and open space in the fields mentioned, a number of 'feature trees' will be planted at a much wider spacing this winter in The Butts (west of Windrush) - which will contain various species in agreement with the Friends of Pentylands Group.

We are also working with Neil Pullen from the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust on further improvements to the biodiversity of the site, particularly The Butts field, as part of the Forest Meadows initiative.

The plan below gives a good idea of the planting pattern, which may be fine-tuned in agreement with the Friends group and with regard to localised aesthetics.

We look forward to continuing our partnership working with the Friends group, local community, Swindon Borough Council Ward Councillors and Highworth Town Council to help safeguard the future, aid nature recovery, and bring well-being benefits to the local community.



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Proposed tree planting for Highworth Countryside Park winter 2021-22

AGENDA ITEM – 9

Blue Heart Scheme

The BLUE campaign was founded in 2014 by wildlife filmmaker Fergus Beeley in response to the State of Nature report published that year which showed a dramatic decline in Biodiversity in the UK.

BLUE campaign is the ideal solution for Councils looking to save money and meet their climate and green-space obligations. UK Councils are responsible for thousands of acres of land and can play a huge role in increasing wild spaces across Britain.

Simple but incredibly effective action that all Councils can take is to turn roadside verges and public spaces into native wildflower meadow. This requires far less maintenance than traditional mowing schedules, saving the Council money, reducing their carbon footprint, and significantly increasing local wildlife density and diversity. No wildflower seed mixes are needed, just one annual cut-and-collect followed by little to no maintenance. Native plants will quickly begin to re-establish themselves, bringing with them a wonderful variety of invertebrates, birds, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals.

To mitigate any complaints regarding perceived neglect of such areas, it is recommend erecting blue hearts on a wooden post to alert members of the public to the project. These can be made from recycled materials or bought online.

For more information visit <https://bluecampaignhub.com/>