

MINUTES
of the meeting of the
Lewisham Community Police Consultative Group
Annual General Meeting
which was open to the press and public, held on
TUESDAY 5 DECEMBER 2006
at 7.00 p.m.
Committee Rooms 1 and 2
Civic Suite
Lewisham Town Hall, Catford, SE6 4RU

Members Present

David Michael (Chair)	Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust
Councillor Jackie Addison (Vice-Chair)	LB Lewisham
Lulu Pearce (Treasurer)	Association of Sri Lankans in UK
Reverend Michael V Clarke	Tabernacle Church of God
Claudette Henry	Tabernacle Church of God
Bert Duffus	Lewisham Association of People with Disabilities
Carolynne Batley	Lewisham Association of People with Disabilities
Terri Foulis	Lewisham Pensioners Forum
Alma Hunt	Sydenham Society and Sydenham & Forest Hill Community Action Group
Kevin Haggarth	Race Equality Action for Lewisham
Phil Turner	Second Wave
Gurbakhsh Garcha	Ackroyd Community Association
Mahad Abdullahi	Somali and Somaliland Lewisham Community
Lloyd Larose-Jones	Inner London Probation Service
Rose Davidson	Lewisham Independent Custody Visitor
Councillor Crada Onuegbu	Lewisham Council
Chief Superintendent Archie Torrance	Metropolitan Police
Superintendent Adrian Rabot	Metropolitan Police
Asquith Gibbes	Lewisham College
Shelagh Fitzpatrick	Deptford Sector Policing Group
Trevor Jones	Deptford Sector Policing Group
Ken Maxton	Milford Towers Tenants Association
Joan Coulson	Colonnade & Terrace Tenants' & Residents Association
Bill Tutt	Sportsbank, Engleheart and Shorndean Tenants' & Residents' Association
Linda Latch	Lewisham Victim Support Scheme
Barbara Raymond	Moonshot Phoenix Youth Club
Janice Gushway	Lean on Me Youth and Family Centre
Dave Smith	Lewisham Fire Brigade
Louise Smith	Crown Prosecution Service
Angela Slaven	Crime Reduction Service
Helena Green	Temporary LCPCG Co-ordinator

Also Present

A Catnick-Phillips
Avis Rhone
Judith Reed
Conrad Graham
Abi Odusanwo
Paul Newing
Sybil T Phoenix
Heather Rothwell
Geoffrey Thurle
Steve Harrison
Joseph Oladosu
Yvonne Bethune
Shirley Selman
Dr Hassan Arero
HD Levy
David Ignain
Steve Curran
Ralph Harding
Councillor Barrie Anderson
Dwayne Brooks
Charmaine Scott
Ditl Banshing
Rebecca Long
Norman Freeman
Trudy Thompson
Sherine Whittle
Milgo Mohammed
Colin Lynch
Dorian Williams
Ally Lee
Charles Batchelor
Kevin Sheehan
Ben Owusu
Paul Vogler

Inner London Probation Service
Inner London Probation Service
Crown Prosecution Service
Lieutenancy of Greater London (DL Lewisham)
Lewisham Ethnic Minority Partnership/LSP
LLHS
Marsha Phoenix Trust
SESTRA
Resident
LBL Community Safety
LEMP/ADNC
Bethune Skin and Hair
Tianshi UK PLC
Horniman Museum
Member of the Public
Redeemed Christian Church
Lewisham College
Lewisham Sector
Lewisham Council
Member of the Public
Member of the Public
Lewisham College
Marsha Phoenix Trust
Member of the Public
Friend of Marsha Phoenix
Bethesda Ministries

Grove Park Safer Neighbourhood Team
NXG SNP
MA Journalism Student – Goldsmiths
Lee Manor Society
Lewisham Council
Crazara
Metropolitan Police

Minute No.

A C T I O N

1. Chair's Welcome and Introductions

The Chair commenced the meeting by handing over to Helena Green for a general housekeeping brief.

The Chair then welcomed all members and guests to the meeting and asked for permission to change the agenda

and bring forward the election process. This was agreed. He then explained that Item 5, Election of Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer would be swapped with Item 4 in order that Asquith Gibbes could preside and leave as soon as the item was completed.

2. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from the following members of the LCPCG:- Joan Ruddock MP, Sinna Mani, Councillor Sam Owolabi-Oluyole, Reverend Mark Paul, Bishop Owen Douce, Bob Hodgson and Omolade Oshunremi. Apologies were also received from the following:- Eric Smith, Barry Quirk, Mike Wells, Wozzy Brewster, Sarah Wainer, Rob Yeldham, Leo Downer, Andrew Willshire, Victoria Townsend, James Dean, Anne-Marie Batson, Ralph White, Heather Rabbatts, John Roberts, Mike Humphreys, Michelyn Lafleche, Edward Sharrod, Dean Leigh, Commander Paul Minton, Cynthia Coleman, Amadeep Somal, Douglas Gardner, Gordon Glean and Aileen Buckton.

3. **Minutes and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6 December 2005 were then discussed. The Chair pointed out a piece of work that the Strategy Group had been asked to complete about having the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Stop and Search Group to be elected at the same time as the Chair and Vice-Chair is elected at the AGM. He said that this had been done but could not be brought back at this stage but details of the work would be brought back in the New Year for the Group's consideration.

**David Michael/
Co-ordinator**

He reported that the Strategy Group had also done a piece of work about the Strategy Group itself and again some work has been done to define the roles of the Chair and Vice-Chair and the Treasurer. Again, this will be brought back for consideration in the New Year.

**David Michael/
Co-ordinator**

Alma Hunt proposed that the minutes be agreed as a true record and Bill Tutt seconded the proposal.

4. **Election of Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer**

The Chair then vacated his chair and asked Asquith Gibbes to conduct this part of the meeting.

Asquith Gibbes said that there had been an error as individuals had not been asked to second the nominations. Asquith then asked everyone to take it as read that the proposals had been seconded.

LCPCG Chair

There were 9 nominations for David Michael as Chair of the LCPCG and no other nominations. In line with the constitution, by consensus, David Michael was elected Chair for 2007.

LCPCG Vice-Chair

There were 9 nominations for Councillor Jackie Addison as Vice-Chair of the LCPCG and no other nominations. In line with the constitution, by consensus, Councillor Jackie Addison was elected Vice-Chair for 2007.

LCPCG Treasurer

Asquith Gibbes explained that Lulu Pearce had stood down and so the nomination had been put forward by the Strategy Group. Asquith then asked Michael Clarke to stand up and make himself known to the meeting. He then explained that in these circumstances members were asked to accept him as the Strategy Group is proposing that Michael Clarke be the next Treasurer.

Asquith Gibbes asked for approval. There was a show of hands indicating agreement and Asquith said that he was very grateful. In line with the constitution and by consensus, Michael Clarke was elected as Treasurer.

Asquith expressed his deep thanks to David Michael for writing kind things about him in the AGM report and said that he hoped that everyone had read the report. He expressed his deepest appreciation and asked the Chair to resume his position for the remainder of the evening.

Asquith then explained that he now had to leave the meeting for another meeting at a school.

5. Annual Report 2005/2006

The Chair said he would first allow the Borough Commander, Chief Superintendent Archie Torrance to share five minutes about areas where the LCPCG and the Partnership had been of help to the Police and how he sees the LCPCG in the coming year.

The Borough Commander commenced his contribution by saying that he was very happy to support the LCPCG and

also to be here at the meeting tonight.

He said that it had been a good year of progress and was pleased to play a part in the excellent Stop and Search conference which had been held earlier in the year. He pointed out that Lewisham was one of the only boroughs to have followed up on a Pan-London meeting.

He mentioned the special LCPCG meeting on counter-terrorism that had been held in the previous week and said that Lewisham was one of the first to rise to the challenge and arrange this meeting.

He said that he was pleased to attend the Strategy Group seminar at the Bromley Court Hotel and this debate had helped to move things forward.

He said that he would like to record his approval and credit to David Michael and other members who supported him during the HMIC inspection. The main visit had been held in May and the feedback had been given in the third week of May. He reported that the report was currently being published and thanked the Chair for his support.

The Borough Commander said that members of the CPCG had been extremely helpful in supporting the local police around some critical incidents. The main reason was a Community Reassurance Group which the Chair attended and this was into the murder of Emmanuel Odenewa last week.

He welcomed this year's AGM report and said that it demonstrated the progress that had been made. He also said that the Lewisham CPCG was the envy of a lot of places in London.

Safer Neighbourhood Teams

The Borough Commander said that there are now teams in all 18 wards in Lewisham. Teams had been allocated from April of this year and this had been completed ahead of time. He said that he was looking for effective Ward Panels in each of these wards and wanted this link to be created with the CPCG.

The Borough Commander said that Superintendent Adrian Rabot and Chief Inspector Simon Davis were taking forward the work of the Partnership

He ended by saying that he was looking forward to a hard

working year ahead and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The Chair then called on Angela Slaven, Head of the Crime Reduction Unit to say a few words.

Angela started by saying that one of the real marks of progress had been the CPCG's Chair joining the Strategic Lewisham Partnership and this had been a really important move forward. She pointed out that the views of the CPCG were now represented and said that the Chair brought a very clear challenge to the Partnership and thanked him for joining that group.

Angela said that there had been a good understanding of partnership in this group and this had enabled the Crime Reduction Unit to work with new groups. With the new memberships in the group Angela said that this would help with solutions to youth and race and hate crime. In terms of work done this year, Angela mentioned some specific issues. She said that youth crime was often high on the agenda and this group has entered into discussions about how we bring the perpetrators to justice and how we support this.

She mentioned that the Stop and Search conference held earlier this year was an excellent forum which made links with Second Wave and other youth groups and together with the work of Race Equality Action Lewisham prevented people coming into the Criminal Justice System.

Angela referred to the new clinic that had opened along Lewisham High Street and said that although concerns had been expressed about this clinic, their work on drug offending and misuse had been really supportive. She said that the link had been really supportive to this group and thanked everyone for allowing her to sit at this top table and wished everyone a Happy Christmas.

The Chair then called on Adrian Rabot, Head of Partnerships to say a few words, and these are quoted as follows:-.

Firstly, in regard to the Safer Neighbourhoods, I would like to thank the CPCG for giving support to the Ward SGTs. It is important that the support that the SGTs get is given so that we can hand these Panels over to the community. I know a number will be becoming members of the CPCG.

With regards to youth involvement, I am grateful to the support we have had in developing consultation with the young people. We are developing an Independent Advisory Group of young people in the borough. It is important that we develop this consultation with young people.

Robbery in the borough has brought some challenges but again, I am grateful to David Michael for holding a special meeting which is planned for the New Year.

One of our key priorities is reducing hate crime and we are developing our hate crime action plan. Hate crime in the borough is significantly higher than other boroughs but some key work is going on to reduce this.

I look forward to working closely with the CPCG in the coming year.

The Chair then presented the AGM report.

He thanked Helena Green for helping him to pull the report together. He also gave a special word of appreciation to Anna Morrell, Marketing Communications Advisor and Sarah Knowles, Design and Print Assistant who really exceeded their duties far and beyond in getting the AGM report together. He also thanked the members of the Strategy Group for their help and support throughout the year and also leading up to the AGM. He also said that he would like to thank Lulu Pearce who had been of great assistance to him in understanding the financial rules and had helped make matters much clearer.

The Chair mentioned the report from Second Wave Youth Arts which touched on the work that they are doing with young people and with partners. He said that from the foreword you can get prominence of youth in our thinking, so there is no misunderstanding of values. Some of the negative areas of young people are accentuated and some of the positive things of youth are not acknowledged as they should be.

Stop and Search Conference

The Chair said that this has been one of the highlights of our community engagement this year and he paid tribute to Gordon Glean and everyone who took part in it. John Roberts, MPA Member had sent his apologies to the meeting but he had also sent a message of encouragement and the Chair read this out as follows:-

"Keep up the good work around Stop and Search. You are one of the boroughs we know and trust. It is about time the others looked to Lewisham for good practice."

The Chair said that during the year he had made efforts to meet with the editors of the Newshopper but because of their workload, it had not been possible to do this. He said that he was determined to do this because the role of the members was important in reporting the work of the CPCG in the borough and he thought that it was just as important to report to the wider community, the work of the Group and the nature of the membership.

Membership

The membership has been reviewed and work done and a drive made to increase membership. The Chair welcomed the diversity of groups who had applied for membership but he said that he knew that there were some communities who were not represented on the CPCG. He informed the meeting that he had attended a meeting of gypsies where he had eaten hedgehog stew and he said that we need to be much more flexible about how we evaluate the membership of those new groups.

The Chair then asked the Treasurer to present her report. Lulu Pearce presented the reports for the previous year. There were no questions. She conveyed her thanks to the funders of the CPCG and the people who has funded the Stop and Search conference.

The Chair asked for a proposer to the agreement of the AGM report. This was proposed by Ralph Harding and seconded by Bill Tutt.

7. Guest Speaker, Dru Sharpling, Chief Crown Prosecutor, London

The Chair introduced the guest speaker, Dru Sharpling, Chief Crown Prosecutor for London. Dru delivered her presentation as follows:-

She thanked everyone for the warm welcome and said that she was very pleased to have been invited to the AGM as she lives in the borough and so has a shared interest in tackling crime in Lewisham. She said that the concerns of the Group were also her concerns and that she likes to feel that the Police Force is protecting her interests and also the interests of her family.

She went on to say that the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) was a relatively new organisation that was established in 1986. The organisation started its life as an under-funded and under-valued organisation, which in the last five years has sought to redress that balance to ensure that it is a world class prosecuting authority. She said that the CPS wants to be more responsive to the communities it serves but wants to retain the independence necessary to bring about “just” results. The principles that guide their decision making are set out in the Code for Crown Prosecutors. She said that a case will not be started unless there is a realistic prospect of conviction and it is in the public interest to proceed. The CPS works closely with the Police, however, to bring strong cases to court. She went on to say that in London 250,000 cases were prosecuted each year and this ranged from someone going through a red light to murder and organised crime. There are over 400 prosecutors in London. She said that the Criminal Justice system is nothing unless it responds to the people in the community and it responds to their fears, hopes and expectations. The organisation believes that it is important to strike a balance: the rights of individuals to go about their business free from molestation by criminals. Dru said that there were no snappy solutions. She said that what lies at the moral heart of the criminal justice system is the determination of everyone involved to make the process “fair” and to recognise that you cannot please all the people all of the time. She stated that the risks of “unfairness” real or perceived were well known and brought about a corrosive effect on public confidence.

She felt that it was important to foster partnerships with communities and across agencies to bring about change and that no victim should feel outside the protection of criminal justice and no defendant should believe that he or she is above the law.

Dru said that most people will have experienced crime, either as a victim or a witness and she felt that most people have an innate sense of fairness.

She said that certain crimes are pernicious in our society, hate crime in particular and everyone should play a part in ensuring that these crimes are reported and acted upon.

Dru listed the following as things that the criminal justice system is doing: witness care units staffed by CPS staff and Police staff to keep witnesses up to date with the progress of their case; constructive partnership working

with Victim Support and the witness service; managing expectations by ensuring that the right charges are selected at the outset. CPS lawyers are co-located at Police Stations to give face to face advice to Police colleagues.

Public confidence in bringing offenders to justice is on the increase. 48% of Londoners had confidence in the system bringing offenders to justice and this is on the rise but this means that over half of Londoners do not have confidence. Dru said that the service must work hard to bring about a change.

Dru ended by saying that protecting the rights and interests of victims comes hand in hand with responsibilities as citizens. She said that members of the communities were required to sit on juries, become magistrates and importantly give evidence when the need arises. She said it was important that we stand up to crime and this required resilience, persistence and commitment.

Questions were then invited from the floor as follows:-

Question from Ralph Harding

How do you ensure that people involved as witnesses as victims of crime are kept informed as to how the case is proceeding. I was nominated by my unit to be a magistrate but my company would not support me but how can we get round this?

Dru Sharpling replied as follows:-

It is a real problem and one of the things we are looking to offer is a different pattern of using 10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m. and looking at the things which cause difficulties to men and women. I think it is important because unless we respond to communities' needs we won't attract the most diverse magistracy, so I have every sympathy.

Is there a difference in the prosecutor's code when it comes to presenting the appeals?

No – it is the same. It is whoever you and whatever the offence. We need to hear how they are not going to prosecute because the chance of conviction is not high.

Is there an element of pre-judgement?

Yes – because you are required to come to a conclusion

about whether the case should come forward or not, but this is not based on the personal views of the Crown Prosecutor involved. Whilst there is an element of judgement, it is informed judgement following informed analysis of the material.

How long will it be before victims' families have a say in a case?

I cannot say but some work in London is going on at the Old Bailey where the bereaved family now make a statement from the well of the court, either themselves or from an advocate about traumatic effects that the crime has had on them. The Police will prepare a victim impact statement so that the judge has a better understanding of both sides of the coin about the seriousness of the crime and the victim's family.

How long will it be before victims' families have a say in the length of sentence?

Judges are responsible for giving the sentence and they have guidelines. If we think the sentence has been unduly lenient we can appeal against it if the Attorney General agrees.

Can you tell me if the magistrates service is still ageist because I think there are still a lot of people who can give service if they are available?

I think there is an age limit but am not sure. Certainly, years ago there was a feeling that if you were retired and able to give the time then you were more likely to be a magistrate than those who were not. There is a move to gather lay magistrates together and they are looking for people from all walks of life to join.

The following question was received from Bill Tutt:-

You were saying about the time it takes, are you looking at ways of speeding up the process?

Dru Sharpling replied as follows:-

It has taken too long for some offences to be brought to justice. We are trying out two sets of experiments and we think the matter should be dispensed with within weeks and not months. There will be opportunities for defendants to have their cases disposed of whilst at the Police Station through a video link to a court that will sit

for extended hours. Those who wish to plead guilty can do so.

The Chair then asked for a vote of thanks from Councillor Jackie Addison and this was delivered as follows:-

I would like to thank Dru very much for her time. I always encourage people to come to these meetings. It is a learning experience. The information given puts our experiences into a proper context. Listening to Dru has confirmed my confidence in the Criminal Justice Service.

The Chair then also thanked Dru Sharpling for her contribution to the meeting.

He also thanked Eric Smith, Police Federation representative for his contribution. He said that Eric was a regular attendee and contributor at meetings.

He also acknowledged Steve Harrison who makes regular contributions to the LCPCG and deputises for Angela Slaven when she was not able to attend. Steve has been with Lewisham Council for about six years and is moving to Nottingham.

The Chair said that the Strategy Group agreed to recognise some long standing members of the Group, Councillor Peggy Fitzsimmons, Solomon Brown and former Councillor Gurbakhsh Garcha who have given long service and total commitment to the Group.

The Chair asked Councillor Barrie Anderson, Chair of the Council to assist him.

Councillor Anderson said that the evening had been most entertaining. He said that we need people we can trust and that David Michael was doing a grand job as Chairman. He thanked David for the contribution he had made and said that he was very grateful to have been invited to the AGM.

Presentations were then made by Councillor Anderson to Dru Sharpling, Steve Harrison and Gurbakhsh Garcha.

The Chair then asked Sybil Pheonix to make a response on behalf of the guests. The response was as follows:-

As one of the old citizens that has worked with the good relations of the Police, I am honoured to know that our

guest speaker is part of our community. Mrs Pheonix then formally thanked Dru Sharpling for her contribution as guest speaker.

The Chair drew attention to the appeal for witnesses to the serious murder of a teenager and asked members to pass the information on to the organisations that they represented. He said that as a Strategy Group we agreed to have a special meeting in the New Year on gun, knife, drug and gang related crime and again it is very tragic that we have had another murder whilst we are in the process of the planning of the meeting dealing with that aspect of crime. He said that he valued the support of members and looked towards a diverse gathering from the community of Lewisham to debate the matter.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting and invited all to stay and have some food and drink afterwards.

7. **Any Other Business**

There was no further business for discussion.

INFORMATION ITEMS

8. **Dates of Future Meetings 2007**

Noted.

9. **Public Question Form for Future Meetings**

No written questions were received.

The meeting finished at 8.39 p.m.