

REPORT TO PICKMERE PARISH COUNCIL

1st August 2023

AGENDA ITEM 9.7 MEETING WITH POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER (PCC) FOR CHESHIRE AND KNUTSFORD POLICE

1 REPORT OF CHAIR

- 1.1 A meeting was held on the 7th July 2023 at the Village Hall with John Dwyer (PCC for Cheshire; JD), Inspector Andy Baker (AB), PC John Milman (JM) and Cllr Campbell (EC) to discuss the chronic issues experienced by the residents of Pickmere over many years. Sam Baxter, Principal Engagement Officer, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, was also present at the meeting.
- 1.2 John Dwyer, Police & Crime Commissioner for Cheshire was thankful for the invitation. John had heard about some of the issues the long suffering residents of Pickmere have had to endure in the summer months, and more recently from Cllr Parkinson when they met during the Cheshire Show.
- 1.3 EC gave a high-level summary to explain the issues and ASB that Pickmere has been experiencing for many years. He mentioned that they have intensified in the last decade. The major issues consist of:
 - 1.3.1 Drug use at the lake
 - 1.3.2 Parking on yellow lines, at junctions, across drop curbs, on corners, on both sides of the road restricting emergency vehicle access to Clover Drive and the lake.
 - 1.3.3 Speeding within the village, especially on Pickmere Lane and Park Lane.
 - 1.3.4 Use of portable/disposable BBQs on the private land that PPC owns, burning the grass and damaging wooden benches
 - 1.3.5 Launching of power boats off parish land, which is not allowed under the conditions of the 106, particularly dangerous as lake users paddle and swim at the lake.
 - 1.3.6 Lack of training of additional residents to carry out speed monitoring.
 - 1.3.7 When officers arrive from other areas they complain to residents that 'this is not their patch' and they should not be there. Several incidents of this were relayed to the PCC and Police.
 - 1.3.8 Lack of a PCSO assigned to Pickmere.
- 1.4 AB confirmed that the current full complement for the Neighbourhood policing team for High Legh was 7 officers consisting of 1 Inspector, 1 Sergeant, 3PCs and 3 PCSOs. Currently only 4 of the 7 positions are filled with the Sergeant recently retiring and 1 PCSO on Maternity Leave. Replacement officers have been interviewed and some offers have been made. However they are unable to join the Neighbourhood team until their current role is backfilled. Unfortunately there is a moratorium on recruitment for Cheshire Police currently.
- 1.5 On the issue of drug use at the lake the police updated on the current status. In the Past 3 months plain clothes officers have been attending Pickmere Lake. They have carried out 26 stops and issued 8 Out of Court Disposals (OOC) which is a method of resolving an investigation for offenders of low-level crime and anti-social behaviour, such as drug use, when the offender is able to be identified and admit the offence. If a person is stopped for a

second time in the future an OOC would not be an option and the law would be applied accordingly.

- 1.6 The use of Portable / disposable BBQs at the lake was discussed and Knutsford Police confirmed that this is dealt with by the Cheshire East Rural Crime Team. They recommended contacting Sgt Simpson at the RCT to discuss the issue further.
- 1.7 EC asked why the police had not issued more dispersal orders for Pickmere Lake such as the one at the end of June. The inspector explained that he can only issue a dispersal order under Section 35 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2014 in response to intelligence that indicates a serious incident may take place. The two dispersal orders for Pickmere lake were issued based on information received in relation to potential public order issues. It would be unlikely a dispersal order could be issued because of the weather forecast without specific intelligence of potential ASB.
- 1.8 EC raised the issue of obstruction on Clover Drive which had already occurred on several occasions. The police stated that when officers attended they could drive down the length of Clover Drive. EC did see the police car drive down Clover Drive while it was obstructed and pointed out that the width of the Police vehicle was significantly smaller than either an ambulance or a Fire Engine. The Inspector agreed to raise these points with the team attending the lake.
- 1.9 A resident had suggested that the police use a drone to gather evidence on sunny days. The PCC asked the Police to send their drone team down to the lake to gather evidence especially in relation to parking.
- 1.10 The issue with no new residents being trained in the use of speed cameras was discussed. AB explained that training on speed cameras by Cheshire Police has been suspended because their policy was found to be out of date. They hope to get the policy re-written and approved soon and then training of new residents can take place. People already trained are permitted to continue in the meanwhile. It was suggested PPC contact the trained people to ensure the activity continues in the interim.
- 1.11 The use of a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO), as described in The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, was discussed. Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) deal with nuisances or problems in particular areas that impact the local community's quality of life. We can use a public space protection order (PSPO) to look after public spaces where anti-social behaviour is a problem. The Police were positive about the use of these in Pickmere. However, they pointed out that they can only allow them to enforce a restriction that already exists. So for parking if there are double yellow lines or residents' parking in place before the PSPO would be more effective for the parking issues.
- 1.12 The issue around officers attending Pickmere and complaining to residents that it "was not their patch" was discussed. While Pickmere policing is generally divided between Northwich and Knutsford Police forces, there are times, especially as the Knutsford contingent is depleted currently, when other groups within Cheshire East will be covering the Pickmere side of the lake. This not only includes Northwich but also forces further afield like Macclesfield and Chester.

- 1.13 It was suggested that the Parish Council might arrange a public meeting to discuss issues concerning the lake, possibly at Wincham Community centre, with all relevant stake holders. If this is implemented, it was agreed to share further information and this will be sent once the date and room have been confirmed.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS OF CHAIR

- 2.1 That Council, prior to the public meeting, consults with residents on what specific improvements they would like CEC, the police and other agencies to implement. This could include residents parking, yellow lines etc.