

SOMERSET WEST COMMUNITY POLICE FORUM

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

GENERAL MEETING HELD IN THE SOMERSET WEST LIBRARY HALL
ON 16 MARCH 2010 AT 19H00

1. PRSENT

As per Attendance Register. Apologies were received from Supt J de Milander (Metro Police), T & B Van Minnen,
J Badenhorst, W Oxley.

2. OPENING AND WELCOME

The Chairman, Mr Andrew Cosmopoulos, welcomed all present .

3. CRIME OVERVIEW

Insp M Fleischmann said that the overview would cover the three month period from 1 December 2009 to end February 2010. There had been an influx of people to the area over the Festive Season, including the Festival in the CBD, all of which contributed to increasing crime levels. The area had registered 331 crimes per 100 000, although the last census had been done in 2001 and since then 12 new suburbs had been added to S/West, these people had not been included in the stats .

Violent crime had increased by 13% and the recent home robberies were one of the main concerns. He said that residents were most vulnerable when they arrived home and advised them to check that there were no strange vehicles parked in driveways or close to their houses when returning home. If so, they should drive past and call Saps.

Property-related crime had increased by 26% (80 cases per 100 000 residents) and all suburbs had been targeted , there were no particular hotspots. Good news was that arrests for drugs had increased by 25% and DUI (Driving under influence) by 42%. S/West was a property crime related area, most common were housebreakings, theft, theft of motor vehicles and theft out of motor vehicles. The Festive Season would continue until after the World Cup, with increased visibility.

Neighbourhood Watches were operating in various areas of S/West and residents were encouraged to join them and learn what to look out for and what to do.

4. ADDRESS BY SNR SUPT M A WILLIAMS

Supt Williams explained that Somerset West fell under the Khayelitsha Cluster, there were 8 Stations in the Cluster (3 in Khayelitsha, S/West, Strand, Gordon's Bay, Macassar, Lwandle). S/West was the largest Station covering 274 sq. km. On average S/West had 4 murders per year while Khayelitsha had 300. During the past season, SAPS had concentrated on Khayelitsha. She said that S/West also had violent crime, most assaults were domestic violence-related, street robberies (e.g. CBD during the day, along the railway line, Chris Nissen Park).

She thanked the local Neighbourhood Watches for their assistance and said that security companies were being paid to provide security to their clients and that they should render that service. Residents were also guilty of negligence around home and personal security.

The new Station Plan would be formulated later this month and priority crimes were murder, robbery, assaults and drug-related cases. Housebreakings were not that high. Criminals came from both inside and outside the area. She urged residents to get to know their neighbourhoods and what was taking place in the houses around them.

SAPS ROADBLOCKS/VEHICLE CHECK POINTS

- Held regularly by SAPS and Metro Police, must have at least one marked vehicle
- Stop sign, orange cones
- Checks for driver's licence and vehicle licence
- Checks for firearms and illegal goods
- Motorists need to support these measures in the interests of community safety

WHEN SIGNALLED TO PULL OVER BY SAPS VEHICLE

- If in doubt, phone nearest police station and check registration plate of SAPS vehicle
- Or phone Vodacom/MTN emergency number
- Or drive to nearest police station
- All police members must have ID with them (card ID no. and name tag)
- SAPS vehicles would stop more than 2m behind your vehicle
- Detectives sometimes travel in unmarked cars, if in doubt, call nearest police station

METRO GHOST SQUAD

- The highly trained specialist unit will use powerful new cars and motorcycles of different colours
- to blend into traffic across the Peninsula, from Atlantis to Gordon's Bay
- Offending motorists will be flagged down by uniformed officers, with powers to arrest, using sirens, public address systems and flashing blue lights

5. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS

Eblockwatch: A resident described the "black box" paying service by Eblockwatch in response to the rising number of reports of bogus police etc. Members of Eblockwatch save the number to their cellphones and dial it when confronted by blue light vehicles, their conversation with the member/s gets recorded automatically.

The Chairman said that any organisation has its bad apples. The CPF was there to help SAPS by giving recognition to those members who were good, and exposing those who were bad. A resident said that he made a point of meeting the police members who patrol regularly and thanking them for their efforts. Supt Williams said that neighbours should look out for one another and also keep an eye on empty houses, as there were a lot of houses in use by "swallows" who spent half the year abroad.

Vagrants: Anélia of the Briza NHW said that they had been trying to rid their area of vagrants, including a girl of 14 or 15 (at Aanhouwen Wen and Geelsloot). She had tried reporting them to the Sector vehicle, at the police station and to Frederick Snyders of Metro, but they were still there. She asked what could be done. The Chairman said that during the day the public should phone Law Enforcement.

Councillor Stuart Pringle said that Wayne Aldridge was Head of the Displaced People's Unit which had 17 members who did come out when called. Two of them had been seriously wounded by vagrants recently. He advised members of the public not to give vagrants money or food, not to leave rubbish out for them to use - no handouts. They were part of a bigger problem which he said would get worse due to the recession and other factors. The CoCT was trying to establish a centre for street people. He said that it was heartening to see the cooperation between SAPS and Metro. If residents could not get results they should contact the Councillor for their area. Alastair Shand also reminded residents that contact details were available on the CPF website www.somersetwestcpf.org.za.

CCTV surveillance: A resident of Waveren Avenue said that he and his neighbours were looking at putting up CCTV cameras as a deterrent, due to the high incidence of crime in their street. Insp Fleischmann said that cameras were a good idea, especially if they included a recording function. They could be erected on private property facing the street, as long as they were not directed into any neighbours' properties.

Police presence at strike: A resident asked why SAPS members were stationed at the scene of the Command Security strike. Supt Williams said that the strike action had been approved by the High Court and that it was a condition that they be monitored by SAPS. ACUU members were being used for this, not S/West members.

Child Protection Unit: John Kleyn asked if the CPU was operational. Supt Williams said that children were the responsibility of the Dept of Social Development. Residents could give a statement and ask SAPS for assistance in investigations related to physical and sexual abuse of children.

Ward Forums: Peter Kinnaird, CPF PRO and Ward 83 representative, advised residents to make use of the 5 Ward Forum representatives as a lot of the issues raised by residents could be channelled through the CPF and Ward Forums. He had dealt with the vagrants in Bizweni Avenue through contact with Frederick Snyders and his team and recommended that residents make use of their Ward Forums and Councillors to resolve issues in their Wards.

Warning re deliveries: Peter Ford said that a relative had experience of criminals posing as couriers, with full details of the home owner, and hiding a firearm behind the parcel they were "delivering". He recommended that residents did not open their doors to accept delivery of articles unless they were 100% sure it was genuine.

Garden Village: Doreen Finger asked when the CPF was going to try and re-establish a Sub Forum in Garden Village. The Chairman replied that the CPF had made several attempts to do so, holding meetings for residents in the Gordon High School hall, but that the response had been very poor, with only 6 residents attending. He said that people could not be forced to attend meetings and get involved against crime in their neighbourhoods.

Drivers' licences: Beatrice Wiltshire asked whether it was necessary for motorists to carry their driving licences at all times. This was confirmed.

Next meetings: The Sector 2 Commander, Capt B Lourens, would be holding a meeting for Sector 2 residents on Tuesday 14 April 2010 at 19h00 in the Life Church, 1 Lobelia Street, Heldervue.

The next CPF public meeting would be held on 11 May 2010 at 19h00 in the Somerset West Library Hall.

ANDREW COSMOPOULOS
CHAIRMAN