

**SOMERSET WEST COMMUNITY POLICE FORUM PUBLIC MEETING
HELD ON 21st JUNE 2011 IN THE SOMERSET WEST PUBLIC LIBRARY
MINUTES OF MEETING**

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Hugh Roe (deputy Chairman) welcomed everyone. Apologies: Johnny Brown, Jackie de Sousa, Wendy Oxley, Gisela Jespersen, Metro Police, Cllr Middleton.

Before the meeting started John Kleyn did a Power Point presentation on Tik. He said it was the most intense evil on the drug front in South Africa. He said that in one of the suburbs of Somerset West there are as many as 8 Tik Houses in a community with approximately 250 houses. The presentation showed how easy it is to make Tik from household ingredients, the negative effects it has on behaviour and the medical and physical effect it has on users. Drugs know no boundaries and is a problem in all communities – rich and poor. A tik addict will stop at nothing to get his/her next fix. Hugh Roe asked that people talk to their children and friends about drugs and how it destroys people and families.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approved by David Alt and Benedicta van Minnen .

3. CRIME OVERVIEW

Hugh Roe thanked SAPS, Col Williams and her management team, for their work and for the relationship they have with HCW and the Neighbourhood Watches. He said Col Williams and Col Lento have a proactive approach even though they are hampered by the lack of resources. He said the station is woefully understaffed and under resourced.

He said the CPF represents the community and is the official liaison between the community and SAPS. He said the CPF can go to SAPS with any problem and they will sort it out. Likewise SAPS will let us

know if there is a problem that we as the community must sort out. We work as a team and all the roleplayers play an important part.

Col Lento gave a short overview of the crime situation in Somerset West.

He said that property crime and contact crime is our main problem, but the last 6 months we have been doing very well on that front. The only big concern is the house robberies that have occurred.

He said we can always do more, and all the successes are not only due to SAPS but obtained through the help of all the roleplayers. He said last month there was a decrease in crime of 38,2%. There were many successes and good arrests were made. He used Thursdays (16/06/2011) arrests as an example and said that the whole community took part in an all night operation to catch the suspects involved in a house robbery. He thanked the community for their help.

Col Lento said we need to build layers to defend our property. We need to increase our Neighbourhood Watch members.

He also said it is a fact that unemployment is high and people are going hungry and that is often causing them to commit crime. He said, unfortunately, these people often spend the money they get on Tlk.

He said we should not allow these criminals in our area - we must stand shoulder to shoulder and fight crime.

4. VICTIM SUPPORT

Reported by Annetjie Robertson in absence of Jackie de Sousa

Jackie de Sousa and her two helpers do a sterling job. Their work is voluntary and they are dependent on the community for donations. People come from all over the basin for help.

May: 25 cases 75 people consisting of 1 theft, 9 residential robberies, 1 hi-jack, 1 attempted hi-jack , 1 common assault and 14 others (walk-ins)

17 cases referred by SAPS, 7 referred themselves and 1 someone else referred

Stats for January to May:

For the year to date: 120 cases, 26 people.

3 theft, 4 residential burglaries, 26 residential robberies (2 January, 4 February, 7 March, 4 April, 9 May), 1 Attempted hijacking, 3 assault common, 1 GBH, 3 child abuse sexual, 1 child abuse emotional, 1 child abuse neglect, 2 rape, 3 indecent assault, 4 domestic violence, suicide and attempted suicide 8. Other cases (alcoholism, drugs, relationships etc) 55.

Referrals from SAPS 63, Walk-in 36, other 21

Col Williams said that people come to Somerset West Victim Support because they offer such a good service. She said we need more volunteers. She said anyone who is interested (male or female) should come and see them and if they are accepted they will go for training. She said the work the volunteers do is very important to help the people cope with the stress after an incident.

Hugh Roe reiterated the wonderful work that Jackie did and continues to do. He said that if a serious case goes down, Col Lento and Jackie de Sousa are often the first voices heard over the radio.

5. FINANCE

Opening balance in bank R2492.34. Received deposit for Victim Support R400. Interest earned 71cents. Less bank charges R15.00 = Total R2878.05. Petty cash R301.90 plus money in bank R2878.05=R3179.95 - of which R2324.15 is for account CPF and R855.80 Victim Support.

Tony said the monies belonging to the Victim Support and which is held at the station should be handed over to the CPF.

An audience member asked where does the money come from for the running of the CPF. Tony said from the community as we no longer get any money from the government (DOCS). He said the bank account details are on the website and donations from the community will be most welcome.

John Kleyn gave a short presentation on the “wine against crime” fundraiser. He said that if all goes according to plan we will be able to raise approximately R150 000 from this project. He said the money will be used to do upliftment & projects in the community. He said it is way short of what we need, but will help to alleviate problems.

6. TRAFFIC

Not present

7. CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Not present

8. LAW ENFORCEMENT

Wayne Aldridge gave a Power Point presentation on Street people. He said the Displaced People’s Unit was set up by him and JP Smit 12 years ago.

Street people are also known as vagrants, bergies, homeless people, street people. All of them are displaced people. 30% of the homeless are actually homeless – 70% chose to live on the street because they do not want to conform to society.

There are different categories of street people – from infants to children to adults. Most of the B crimes are committed by street children within the age of 14-18 years old. There are street people that permanently live on the street and day strollers that come in daily from their homes to beg in the streets. They are usually the ones that come and cause problems. Mr Aldridge said we must get to know the permanent vagrants. He said it is very difficult to get the street people back into society.

He said that the street people are here because of the residents – they give them reason to be here by giving them small jobs and handouts. He said we are our own worst enemy because the criminals hide between these street people.

John Kleyn said that Somerset West was chosen for the pilot recycling project two years ago and we have had nothing but problems with vagrants since then. This recycling in our town has given the vagrants reason to come into our suburbs. He said our crime stats are being pushed up by malicious damage and theft cases and the vagrants are probably responsible for that. Mr Aldrige said recycling increases the vagrant problem. John Kleyn asked him to write a letter to that effect.

A long discussion was held on the removal of trolleys from the vagrants. Mr Aldridge said that if a trolley is confiscated from a vagrant great care must be taken and the vagrants personal belongings must be given back to them (clothes, food, medication and blankets). He said we must treat them as we would treat any other person. He said he will come and collect the trolleys in such cases. He said he will bring his team and do a two day operation in our town.

He said that vagrancy will never go away and Law Enforcement is not the answer. He said the community must manage it. One of the audience members asked what can be done within the law to get the(bin scratchers) vagrants out of our area. Mr Aldrige said we should stop the soup kitchens and church bodies feeding these people. He said there are NGO's struggling to do their jobs. He said there is no law that allows you to lock people up. He said the community needs to help. He said Social Development has an assessment centre where these people can be taken and they can try and help them. Tel no to phone for help : Traffic 107 (say Wayne Aldrige referred you)or 021 596 1999 (day) DPU – 021 9001982, Social Development control centre : 0800872201

John Kleyn said the CPF is trying to stop Council to renew the recycling contract. He said Council has to take responsibility. He said the community is not against recycling, but until such time as it is managed and policed properly, the community can not support it. He

said there needs to be a workable solution and the community cannot allow the homeless people on a self employment scheme to trade on our streets. It affects crime and the value of our town. He said we need Law Enforcement on our streets on a Thursday and Friday to help with the bin scratchers.

Wayne Aldridge said that Solid Waste should be able to help .

Col Lento said that there has to be an complaint before the the vagrants can be arrested and a case made. He said only then can they arrest the person on suspicion of stolen property. He said the problem is that people often throw out valuable stuff.The vagrants pick up the stuff and sell it at Tik houses.

9. METRO POLICE

Not present. Apology made

10. GENERAL

10.1 Hugh Roe proposed that Cllrs J Middleton, S Pringle and B van Minnen be co-opted onto the Somerset West CPF. The proposal was accepted.

10.2 Hugh Roe thanked Rural Commander Sgt Thyssen on behalf of the community for the great work he does in the Metropole and especially for the farmers in the area.

10.3 Col Williams said that Somerset West is known as a property related station. Most crimes reported in Somerset West are House Burglary, Business Burglary, Theft of Motor Vehicles and Theft out of Motor Vehicles. She said that some of the cases are reported fraudently for Insurance purposes. However, SAPS is now linked to the South African Insurance Bureau. They in turn, are linked to the Insurance companies and to the Hawks, and she warns people not to make false claims as they will be caught out.

10.4 Col Lento said he has had meeting with Businesses in town who want to get involved with the CPF.

10.5 Pat Patterson asked what can be done with E-waste . He said that Wasteplan told him to put it out with the normal recycling. The Wasteplan Area Manager (Bernardt Bieler) was present and said that Wasteplan will collect E-waste from Residents homes if they call them , they should not put it out with normal recycling.

10.6 One of the audience members (Dr Bihl) said that he was connected to the women that were robbed the previous Thursday (16th) night in Briza and wanted to compliment SAPS , the community (NHW) HCW and the counsellor (Jackie De Sousa) on their work. He said that they have inspired him to get involved in the Neighbourhood Watch and that is why he is attending this meeting. He asked if there were training /self defense classes being offered in the area. John said there is training going on, but not enough. He said all the structures are in place. Anelia Marais said she is arranging for self -defence classes.

Meeting adjourned at 21h00.

The next Public meeting will be on the Tuesday, 16th August 2011

Hugh Roe
(Deputy Chairman)