

**COMMUNITY-POLICE
CONSULTATIVE GROUP
for LAMBETH**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

6 DECEMBER 2005

**CHRIST CHURCH
90 BRIXTON ROAD SW9**

PRESENT: Lee Jasper (Acting Chairperson), Jim Toohill (Acting Honorary Comptroller);

COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY MEMBERSHIP

Pauline Bower **Churches**

Together in Clapham; Greta Brooks **Churches Together in Brixton;** Wally Channon, Peggy Tyler **Clapham Town N'hood Watch;** David Corderoy **Lambeth Chamber of Commerce;** Stuart Horwood **Brixton Market Traders Assoc.;** Dr Brian Mantell **Assoc. of Jewish Ex-Servicemen & Women;** Ros Munday **Clapham Community Partnership;** Paul Reynolds **Herne Hill Society;** Abdul Sultan Virani **Lambeth Pensioners' Forum;** David Tomlinson **Stockwell Park Residents Assoc.;** Jean Carpenter **LCPT;** Neil Flanigan **Victim Support;** Dave Ormson **Nacro;** George Tuson, **INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS** Shane Collins; Peter Harris, Lena James; Richard Moore; Paul Andell, Rev. Canon Ivelaw Bowman

STATUTORY MEMBERSHIP Lloyd Leon **Lambeth ICV** John Roberts **MPA** Chris Lee, Asst. Ch. Exec; Simon Harding (Head, Community Safety Team), Megan Jones (DAAT), Khadir Meer (Community Safety) **Lambeth Council,** Supt. Stewart Low (Brixton), Supt. Rick Algar (Streatham), Supt. Jonathan Tottman; Ch. Insp. Nigel Cook (Safer Neighbourhoods), Insp. Steve Ainscough; PC Graham Alldus (LGBT Liaison Officer); Jez Roberts **Metropolitan Police Service,** Insp. Tim Scott **British Transport Police,** **SECRETARIAT** Ben McKendrick

Members of the Public who signed in: James Fox; Valerie Ann Geen (Vauxhall Estate Assoc.) John Howard; Teresa McCaffery; Lynn Thomas

Apologies: Nick Abengowe; Doye Akinlade, Rod Brown, Jean Carpenter, Gary Dando, Sheila Draper, Cllr. Bernard Gentry, Anna Hunter, Bushy Kelly, Cllr. R. S. McConnell, John Podmore, Cllr. Steve Reed, Cheryl Sealey, Fernando Senior, Cllr. Lydia Serwaa, Anna Tapsell, Mehmoda Mian Pritchard, David Michael, Arulini Velmurugu, John Wainwright, David Warner, Jane Warwick

Introduction

Information from Board and Members

1. The Group held a minute's silence in memory of Rene Webb, a long standing group member, who had passed away on 15 November. Mr Webb's funeral, which took place on 28 November in Brixton, had been attended by Group members past and present. Lee Jasper offered condolences on behalf of the Group to the family, friends and colleagues of Mr Webb, who he said had made a huge contribution to improving the quality of life to people living in Lambeth and beyond.

2. Mr Jasper said that the Group were also saddened to hear of the death of Streatham police officer DS George Goodfellow on 23 November and similarly offered the Group's sympathy and condolences to his family friends and colleagues.

3. Jim Toohill referred members to the tabled December Briefing for information from Acting Group Officers (see attached).

4. In respect of *No Deal*, a new initiative directed against drug dealing in the streets of Brixton town centre, Mr Toohill said that the original timetable would have

meant that it would have been discussed at a Group meeting, prior to its launch. However, Supt. David Zinzan, who had been leading on the initiative, had needed to take time off work for personal reasons.

5. With regard to the Group's company registration, Mr Toohill highlighted that this having been done, members would now be written and asked them to formally subscribe to the new organization. Mr Toohill added that before applying for charity registration members would have the opportunity to revisit the Memorandum and Articles and Rules and Regulations to pick up on minor points made by Group members.

6. John Roberts tabled three reports from the Metropolitan Police Authority on hate crime, mental health and race and diversity.

Minutes of the Meeting 1 November 2005

7. Minutes of the Meeting 4 October were accepted with an amendment to include adding Dr Brian Mantell to those present and apologies from Cllr. Lydia Serwaa

Matters Arising from the Minutes 4 October 2005

8. Mr Toohill reported that the Group had been granted permission from the Home Office to use the word 'police' in its company name and on 15 November had registered as a company [Minute 4, 01/11/05].

9. Mr Toohill said a letter had been written and sent to Commissioner Sir Ian Blair regarding the Group's concerns about the Kratos policy and a response was awaited [Minute 19, 01/11/05].

10. In respect of Arulini Velmurugu's concerns about crimes against disabled persons,

Mr Toohill said that a member of Bishops Ward Safer Neighbourhoods panel who had attended the last meeting had contacted Ms Velmurugu with a view to assisting her [Minute 78, 01/11/05].

11. Mr Toohill said that requests for updates on the murders of Victoria Adu-Mensah and Solomon Martin requested by Wesley and Canon Ivelaw Bowman, respectively, would be included in the police report [Minute 81, 01/11/05].

12. Similarly, Mr Toohill said that Lee Jaspers request for a breakdown of domestic violence statistics would be included in the police report [Minute 82, 01/11/05].

13. PC Graham Alldus had looked into homophobic incidents reported by Wesley Stephenson and had contacted him with his findings [Minute 85, 01/11/05].

14. Mr Toohill said that remaining outstanding matters arising would be added to the Groups rolling action list and pursued until such time as they had been resolved.

Lambeth Police Report

15. Borough Commander Bridger apologised for not being able to attend the last Group meeting. He said that he had necessarily made a judgement to deal with an urgent internal matter that kept him away from the meeting and of which Lee Jasper had been informed.

16. Mr Bridger gave a PowerPoint presentation on Lambeth Police performance during the past m and other matters raised from meetings (see attached).

17. In respect of crime reduction targets, Mr Bridger reminded the meeting that under PSA (Public Service Agreement) 1, it was a

police and local authority agreement to reduce 'priority crime' by 20% (2007/8 compared to 2003/4), and that required efforts in equal measure from both parties.

18. Mr Bridger said that he would provide a breakdown of domestic violence figures on a quarterly basis should the Group so wish it.

19. In respect of Disability Hate Crime, Mr Bridger said there were compliance issues (whether or not the correct 'flags' were being used in recording these crimes) and also of distinguishing whether or not disability had been a motivating factor in the crime. These issues were being addressed by the MPS wide Disability IAG of which Group Member Arulini Velmurugu was a member.

20. With regard to Gun Crime, Mr Bridger referred to the use of BB guns being used to threaten people in the street, an area where the borough had seen significant increase.

21. Turning to murders, Mr Bridger reported that the borough had received praise for the reduction in the number of murders over recent years. On specific cases, he said that the trial in of those accused of the murder of David Morley was still underway, but pointed out that the prosecution had not imputed a homophobic motive in making their case.

22. With regard to the murder of Solomon Martin, Martin Bridger said that solution of the case rested on those with information coming forward.

23. With regard to *The Beat*, the police and community shop on Coldharbour Lane, Mr Bridger said that contrary to perception the police had not established another Safer Neighbourhoods Team at the premises.

24. Expounding on *No Deal*, Mr Bridger said that the current guidelines for dealing with persons found in possession of a small quantity of cannabis, which was an informal warning and confiscation of the drug, would be suspended and a positive arrest would be introduced in order to address the street drug dealing problem in Brixton town centre.

25. In some respects Mr Bridger said that *No Deal* was a short term solution that would lead to some displacement. However, he added that it did not mean that the community, for whose support he was very grateful, was not intent in finding a long term solution to the problem.

26. On behalf of the Group, Lee Jasper thanked Mr Bridger for bringing the Group up to date with the information included in his report which Group members had asked of him.

27. In respect of the death in custody on 28 November, the Chair of the Panel of Independent Custody Visitors, Lloyd Leon, reported that he had visited Kennington police station on 2 December and could verify that the police cell had been completely sealed and that an investigation was underway.

28. Richard Moore said that he was grateful to hear the police say that more work needed to be done in terms of addressing crimes against disabled. However, he asked if the police could look into hidden disabilities such as those bullied for wearing spectacles or having stammers.

29. In response to Mr Moore's question concerning drug dealing in Brixton, Mr Bridger said that the police and its partners were receiving full cooperation from British Transport Police (BTP). Mr Moore further proposed that BTP could assist by helping to stop drug tourists at main transport

hubs from coming to Brixton and, similarly, placing publicity at such places stating that Brixton was a no go area for drug dealing.

30. Mr Bridger referred Canon Bowman to DCI Dean Hayden for assistance in finding out how the murder investigation of Justin Bernier was progressing.

31. *In reply to Shane Collins, Mr Bridger said that he did not have at hand the percentage of how many had been arrested and charged following Section 44 Stop and Search. However, he said he could make them available.*

32. *In relation to the proposal for a central Brixton Square, Mr Bridger said that once he had looked into the plan he would give Mr Collins his view as to whether he thought it would make the area safer or not.*

33. In response to Stuart Horwood, Mr Bridger said that possession of even a small amount of cocaine, a Class A drug, would invariably lead to an arrest.

34. In respect of the Brixton town centre team, he said that it was up to strength in terms of the number of officers. However, he added that Lambeth officers could be abstracted to other duties outside of the borough up to several times a week, although this did not apply to Safer Neighbourhood (SN) team officers.

35. With regard to displacement, Mr Bridger said that as it became apparent, he would back to the Group and consult about how the police proposed to deal with it. He added that the police would not just police the area already laid down for the *No Deal* initiative.

36. Paul Andell enquired as to whether lessons had been learned from Operation Hermes in terms of cost effectiveness in relation to a new but similar initiative, Operation Neon, involving armed police road blocks. Mr Andell said that there needed to be community input and a cost benefit analysis.

37. In response, Supt. Jonathan Tottman said that in terms of reviewing the cost analysis of any such activity the views of the community were taken into account. Lambeth police, he said, worked very closely with their colleagues in CO19 (armed police), not just by way seeking to remove firearms from persons stopped in vehicles but also by instilling reassurance and confidence in areas such as Lambeth where proportionately there was a high incidence of gun enabled crime.

38. Supt. Tottman added that police worked to make sure that the most effective and efficient use was made of limited resources. Operation Neon was a combination of covert officers in unmarked firearms response vehicles and uniformed traffic officers using the latest intelligence from many sources in areas where it was believed they would be best deployed.

39. In relation to Operation Hermes, Supt. Tottman said he did not believe it had been particularly successful in terms of recovering firearms, and he understood it to be none. However, Lee Jasper suggested that it may be a question of balance and whether the visible presence of the police was a deterrent in itself in high gun crime areas.

40. Supt. Tottman reiterated that Operation Neon was not just about the recovery of firearms but also about reassurance. He said that police had become more sophisticated in terms of the deployment of officers and,

in being acutely aware of how expensive police operations could be, recognised that they needed to have some measurable outcome.

41. On the point of community input in assisting the police, Supt. Tottman said that it would be really welcome, as it was critical for the police to be seen operating transparently.

42. Jim Toohill said that he and other Group members had acted as observers on a number of police operations and had raised questions of its efficacy, particularly of ancillary methods of identification, and of the use of Section 60. He said that the disproportionate stopping of young black people on a night out meant that whilst the exercise might give reassurance to some parts of the community it might have the opposite effect on others.

43. In response to Lloyd Leon, Mr Bridger confirmed that some drug dealers resorted to threatening and robbing people who refused to buy drugs from them.

44. On the point raised by Lloyd Leon about motorists who moved into bus lanes in order to allow emergency service vehicles to pass, Chris Lee said that motorists would not be expected to pay a fine for doing. However, he added that it was possible to drive from Lambeth to Camden in bus lanes and drivers would be expected to move out of bus lanes as soon as possible.

45. In response to Teresa McCaffery, who had asked a question on behalf of Kelly ben Maimon concerning stop and search, Insp. Dean Hayden said that Ms ben Maimon had sent an e-mail seeking information held by CO19 and that he understood that she had received a response from them.

46. Mr Bridger added, in respect of his officers' conduct in regard to stop and search, that if there was any inappropriate behaviour there was a process by which persons could make a complaint.

47. Mr Bridger asked Pauline Bower, who had expressed concerns that many crimes went unreported, to give further details of the incidents to which she had referred to Inspector Dean Hayden.

48. On the matter of drinks being spiked in bars and pubs, raised by Ms Bower, Mr Bridger said that it was a matter that the police were carefully looking into. He added that following the introduction of new licensing laws police had paid a visit to 45 pubs throughout the borough.

49. Ros Munday raised the issue of the evictions that had taken place in St Agnes Place, having commenced on 28 November. Ms Munday said that police officers outside the barrier that had been erected had been helpful and polite. However, prior to evictions, she said that Lambeth Council had promised there would be a centre where people could go and seek assistance from housing officers, but that the two who were there refused to talk to anyone and were very aggressive. She added that it was her understanding that vulnerable people would be helped, but that one week later they were still homeless.

50. ***In response, Chris Lee said that the Council had agreed to placing a help centre nearby and to the storing of people's possessions for a certain length of time. Furthermore, arrangements had been made for people's housing vulnerability to be assessed and he was aware of one who had been re-housed. However, he said that he would look into what had***

happened and how many people had arranged to have their possessions stored.

51. A member of the public said that she was appalled at the evictions which included people in ill health, including a man with a pacemaker, who were now homeless with no hot water, heating or clean clothes. She asked whether it was normal to photograph people who had not been charged with any offence, why residents were not allowed back in to collect their belongings, and why property was being stored in Bristol.

52. Mr Bridger said that he held strong views about the impact the eviction would have. Although he understood the Council's legal rights and that they had warrants for the evictions, he added that the residents were still people and part of the community and should be dealt with in an appropriate way.

53. Supt. Rick Algar who had been in charge of the police operation to support the Enforcement Officers during the eviction said that the police's role was to ensure that it was carried peacefully, safely and effectively.

54. Supt. Algar said that there would be debriefings that would explain what the Council and the police did as well as a specific community debriefing in order to see what can be learned from not only those involved in carrying out the operation but also the recipients of the action.

55. Lloyd Leon said that he thought many of the residents of St Agnes Place could not have been there illegally as Lambeth Council had paid to refurbish some of the buildings. Nevertheless, he said that the residents should have been treated like human beings and not evicted en masse in the winter.

56. A former resident of St Agnes Place, who gave his name as Ram, claimed that there had been no clarity about when the evictions would occur. Furthermore, he said that many questions needed to be answered, for example that the evictions had been based on Lambeth Housing Department's plans to demolish the houses. This he said went against the understanding that the residents of St Agnes Place, the wider local community and the conservation department of Lambeth, that a statutory policy document supported sustainability. He asked that the police investigate the matter.

57. Ram also told the Group that the possessions of the evicted residents had been sent to Bristol and that some demolition had commenced with people's property inside the buildings.

58. John Howard suggested that the Council was in breach of its own Unitary Development Plan as it would not be able to restore property once it had been demolished. As such, he said the Council's action would attract a judicial review.

59. With regard to the policing operation, Mr Howard asked why officers entered properties and who decided the numbers of officers used. He added that he considered the negotiations with the Rastafarian Temple to be a divide and rule tactic.

60. In response to Mr Howard, Supt. Algar said that it was he who had ordered police to enter properties, the reason being one of public safety, which was paramount. The fact that officers were wearing helmets, he said, was a matter of Health and Safety as they were operating in a hard hat area. Supt. Algar confirmed that one of the former residents was currently being held in prison.

61. Chris Lee proposed that he should bring back a report to the Group that went through all the issues concerning St Agnes Place. In the meantime, he advised that those people who were homeless as a consequence of the evictions to present themselves as quickly as possible to the housing department, adding that he would speak to those former residents present at the end of the meeting.

62. Mr Lee also said that the Council had given an undertaking to assess the housing needs of anyone who presented on the day and had made arrangements to re-house those residents considered to be vulnerable, vulnerable with priority needs, using certain it possessed to do so. If that had not been, he said it needed to be redressed as soon as possible and to give access to those people with property in storage or left in the houses.

63 In response to John Howard, Mr Lee said that he could not give an undertaking about when properties would be demolished as it was not his responsibility. However, he did say he would ask for the matter to be addressed in a responsible manner. On the matter of a Judicial Review, Mr Lee said that he felt that this was one which the residents of St Agnes Place and their supporters were free to pursue as they saw fit.

64. Paul Reynolds said that the operation to evict the residents had been lacking in several components, not least the humanitarian consequences. In responding within its powers, Mr Reynolds said the Council had an opportunity to demonstrate community leadership to address the immediate problems, as a Council should do in extraordinary, exceptional conditions.

65. Lena James referred to the Council's seemingly lack of preparations made for the residents prior to the evictions, particularly with the current cold weather conditions and the involvement of children.

66. Concluding the discussion on St Agnes Place, Lee Jasper said that there appeared to be a mismatch between the stated objectives of the Council and the humanitarian needs of the former residents. Therefore, he said that would like to take up the offer to facilitate a meeting so the former residents could engage in dialogue with Lambeth councilors and officers.

67. The Group agreed that Mr Jasper should write to the Leader of the Council to propose such meeting in January 2006. While Mr Lee said that he would be happy to attend the meeting, Mr Jasper said that he would expect those Lambeth councilors and officers involved in the operation to be present at the meeting.

68. On behalf of the Group, Mr Jasper also requested that Council consider immediately establishing a temporary Housing/Social Services office as matter of urgency at or near St Agnes Place to assist in responding to emergency housing and humanitarian needs.

69. In response to David Tomlinson comments concerning the changeover of responsibility for mobile CCTV from the Council to the police, Mr Bridger said that he was not personally aware of it. However, he added that CCTV was subject to review and that there was CCTV equipment on both the police and Council side that should be used more effectively. Mr Bridger said he give a report on the review in January.

70. In response to Mrs Lynn Thomas, Mr Bridger said that there was no such thing as stop and search strip, since it was illegal. Mr Bridger asked Mrs Thomas that if she had any information about such an incident to give details to Supt. Low.

71. In respect of toy guns and imitation weapons in general, Mr Bridger said he could not agree more with Mrs Thomas' view that they should not be for sale. Armed police officers could not, he added, tell the difference between a real firearm and a imitation from a distance, and everybody knew the potential it could lead to.

72. With regard to firearms coming into the country, and as a result of a gun crime review carried out in Lambeth, police had put significant pressure on the National Criminal Intelligence Agency to do some more work around this issue.

73. In response to John Howard, Mr Bridger said that he was never satisfied with the gun crime statistics and that it was his aspiration to see Lambeth free of guns. Many of the incidents involving guns, he said, were the result of 'disrespect' which had led to deaths. Mr Bridger added that much of the work he and others were undertaking around gun crime was with a view to long term sustainability by changing the culture and mindset of those susceptible to carrying guns.

74. Mr Bridger said he would provide a breakdown of figures involving those people actually killed or injured as a result of gun crime since he came to Lambeth.

75. In relation to whether a gun crime was carried out with a real firearm, an imitation or no real weapon at all, Lee Jasper said that in area of high gun crime, where the fear of such was more

heightened, criminals were capitalising on people's fears by threatening people without having to reveal a weapon, which few people would question whether it was true or not. Mr Jasper added that the incidence of gun crime could not be downplayed as it had such an impact on quality of life.

76. John Roberts reassured the Group that there were no plans to extend the remit of the Kratos shoot to kill policy to other criminal activity.

77. Gill Kenealy said that she understood, having been told by a police officer, that there was currently an initiative against bicycle theft, mainly aimed at young people who were being stopped and asked to prove that the bicycle was theirs. Moreover, Ms Kenealy said that she was aware of three incidents in which plain-clothed police officers had used their car to intercept youths on bicycles and in one instance knocking a youth off.

78. In response, Mr Bridger said that there was not actually a purge around youngsters on bicycles as an operation *per se*, other than there having been a significant increase in street crime by young people using bicycles in committing crimes such as theft snatch.

79. *In terms of bicycles taken off youngster, Mr Bridger said he could produce statistics to show how many of those seized had not been reclaimed. However, he said he would look into the issues Ms Kenealy had raised if she could provide some details.*

80. In respect of marking bicycles or any other property for proof of ownership, Det. Ch. Insp. Steve Ainscough referred those present to the property register website www.immobilise.com. Mr Jasper asked if the police could provide

a briefing paper explaining how and where registration could be made.

81. Speaking about the street crime figures, Mr Toohill pointed out that perpetrators had a 93% chance of getting away with their crime. Therefore, as a community, Mr Toohill said we needed to ask ourselves what more could we do, as clearly policing could not be the only answer.

82. In response, Mr Bridger said that victims' inability or unpreparedness to support prosecutions was a major issue in tackling street crime.

83. Mr Toohill said that in relation to Section 44 Stop and Searches of suspected terrorists, the Group should also be discussing this issue with British Transport Police, who were likely to be more active in this respect than the MPS. The Group had in fact obtained two quarters data relating to S44 Stop and Searches (by the MPS) following its September 'Lambeth United' meeting. The arrest rate was between 1 and 2 per cent, raising a similar issue for the Group as that with PACE Stop and Searches: if there are 'reasonable grounds' why are the arrest rates so low?

84. John Roberts said that under Section 44, police did not have to have 'reasonable grounds'.

Any Other Business

85. Reporting back on the Independent Police Complaints Commission's Reference Group for its investigation into the shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes, made up of representatives from the Latin Front, Muslim Safety Forum, The Refugee Council and CPCG for Lambeth, Jim Toohill reported that:

86. All interviews had now been completed, including officers issued with 'Reg 9' notices,

which included officers in the command structure on the day;

87. The IPCC report of the investigation will be completed late December/early January at which point the IPCC will consider whether or not to refer the case to the Crown Prosecution Service;

88. Three additional complaints had been received regarding (1) the time taken to inform the de Menezes family of the shooting, (2) information given out in the immediate aftermath of the shooting and (3) failure to correct misinformation in the days following the shooting. (1) will be subsumed into the main investigation, (2) will be the subject of a separate investigation (with the Home Secretary's approval) and (3) will not be pursued since this was in line with IPCC advice at the time.

89. The CRG had impressed on the IPCC the continuing concern over leaks, information in the press concerning the type of bullets used and implications for the Kratos policy and community expectations around the report in January. In respect of the latter, IPCC had said that they will endeavor to be as informative and helpful as possible, but their guiding principle will be to avoid harming any subsequent judicial or disciplinary proceedings.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

**6.00 p.m. Tuesday
10 January 2006**

**Stockwell Community
Resource Centre
1 Studley Road SW4
(behind Stockwell
underground station)**

* Minutes in ***bold italic*** indicate action points