

# Willesborough Community Forum



## Open Meeting and AGM – 11<sup>th</sup> November 2015

### Willesborough Baptist Church – Hythe Road

The doors opened at 6.30 with a display of various items of local interest.

Councillors George Kowaree (North Willesborough and KCC) and Gerald White (Highfield) were on hand for any questions/problems.

Councillor Jeremy Adby did not make an appearance.

The meeting was opened at 7.30 pm by Chairman of the Willesborough Community Forum, Ian Stevenson (ICS).

ICS introduced new Steerco member Edward Young.

### Law and Order

Following comments, from both Forum members and the public at large, that the PCSO was seldom to be seen, either at the meetings or on the streets, ICS and Steerco member Edward Young met with Inspector Andrew Judd at Ashford police station on the 4<sup>th</sup> November. ICS informed the meeting of the following feedback from Insp Judd:

- Because of the funding cutbacks the PCSOs were having to cover larger areas. PCSO Katie Scott now had to cover 4 borough wards instead of 2. Hence we would not see PCSOs “on the street” so often.
- Anti-social behaviour (ASB) was down (average 1 reported incident per day in the Ashford borough). One method used to reduce the figures was by using the “Hawkeye” camera van to identify young perpetrators then talking to their parents.
- Crime was down (average 13 reported incidents per day in the Ashford borough).
- The unintended consequence of reducing ASB and Crime was that the politicians reduced funding further, even though other police business, (such as attending accidents etc.) hadn’t reduced.

ICS related his experience following a break-in at his house, where he found the police to be most effective. As well as a uniformed response to a 101 call, a visit from forensics the next day, statements collected and a call from victim support, there was a subsequent plain clothes surveillance operation resulting in an address being searched and items recovered, a couple of which belonged to ICS. Ian felt he could assure the meeting that, although the police could not often be seen, they were there when they were needed.

Inspector Judd had also suggested some ways residents could help themselves:

- Locks - Locking windows and doors and keeping the keys out of reach of broken glazing.
- Home security systems - Burglar alarm and CCTV systems were now quite affordable and, with wireless technology, simple to install.
- Neighbourhood Watch - ICS subsequently discovered that there were several NW operations in the Forum area. The Forum would look at expanding this.

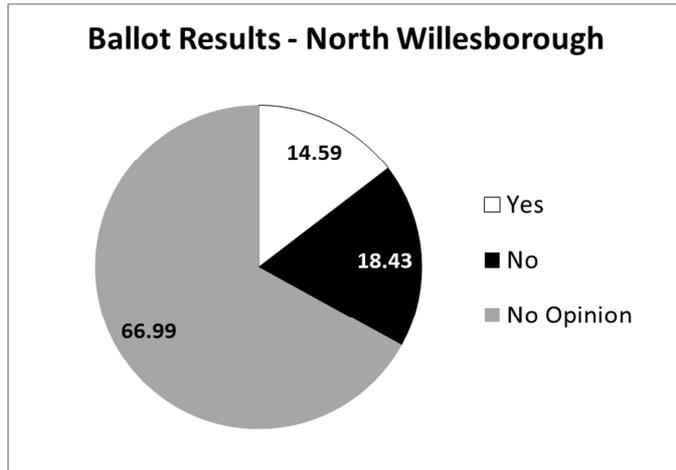
For further information it was suggested that those interested should visit the Community Safety Shop in County Square which is open during school holiday - here it is possible to get advice and get such things as kits for invisible marking of property.

PCSO Katie Scott had provided a collection of crime prevention and awareness leaflets and brochures which were available at the rear of the hall. She had also sent a report had which had been posted on the display boards.

Katie can be contacted via the following email address : [katie.scott2@kent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:katie.scott2@kent.pnn.police.uk), or call 101.

## Community Council Campaign Update

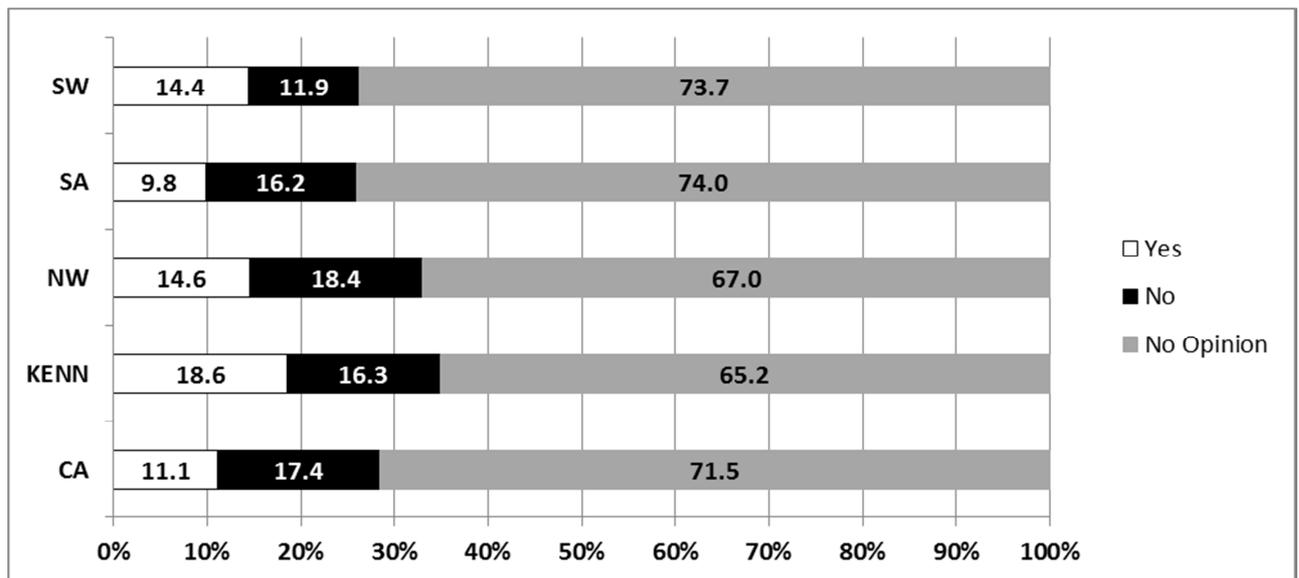
ICS informed the meeting that the CGR consultation was over and that the ballot result for North Willesborough was a majority NO vote against forming a Community Council and displayed the following graphic:



The summary yes/no vote for all the areas was:

- North Willesborough: Yes: 44 % No: 56 % = Yes
- Central Ashford: Yes: 39 % No: 61 % = No
- South Ashford: Yes: 38 % No: 62 % = No
- Kennington: Yes: 53 % No: 47 % = Yes
- South Willesborough: Yes: 55 % No: 45 % = Yes

The following graphic shows the percentage of votes cast:



ICS explained that ABC's press release explained that the final decision will not be based on the ballot alone and that the final decision is to be made in December. Councillor Gerald White informed the meeting that the final decision would go to full council.

A comment from the floor suggested that many people had voted NO because of the extra cost. ICS explained that ABC's leaflet had been somewhat misleading in stating that the additional precept might be as high as £88 per year - the Forums' publicity had indicated a figure closer to £22.

## **Local News and Updates**

The following were covered:

### **Hythe Road Pedestrian Crossing**

On hold until the impact of moving the Albemarle post office to the Premier shop in Foxglove Road has been assessed.

### **Kennington Road Chicane/S-Bend**

GK advised that the modifications would be made during 2016.

### **Albemarle Road Post Office**

Has moved to the Premier shop in Foxglove Road.

### **Speedwatch**

Patrols were ongoing and volunteers were always welcome. Results would be posted on the website.

### **Planning**

The following was reported:

M20 Junction 10a	The Community Consultation is now scheduled to run from 14 <sup>th</sup> January to 3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2016 - Highways England have been invited to attend the February 2016 open meeting to present the plans.
Sevington Development (U19)	Resubmission awaited.
Blackwall Road South (U5)	Stalled, apparently, by lack of sewage pumping capacity.
White Horse pub	Work ongoing.
Rear of Waltham Close	Plan for 26 houses - nothing since 26 <sup>th</sup> May.
Highmead House (Part of U14)	Appeal dismissed.

## **Councillor Reports**

### **Gerald White - Highfield**

GW explained that he had been attending to residents' concerns. There had also been a project to repair the footbridge over the river between the Highfield estate and Sevington.

### **George Koowaree - North Willesborough and KCC**

George (GK) gave the following updates:

- There would be a consultation over the plans for Lees Road under the motorway bridge (double yellow lines v one way from Cornes Close) - timescales unknown.
- GK spoke about a select committee called Corporate Parenting on which he sits at KCC - this looks at and assesses how well children in care are being looked after by KCC.
- He also spoke about how KCC was establishing training to counter the sexual abuse of children, either at home, in care homes or by abduction - about 350 children went missing in September in Kent.

## **Aylesford Green By-Election - Mini Hustings**

Following the resignation of Kate Hooker there would be a by-election for a new borough councillor for the Aylesford Green ward on the 19<sup>th</sup> November. The following is the list of candidates:

<b>Name of Candidate</b>	<b>Home Address</b>	<b>Description (if any)</b>
GEE-TURNER Adrian John	41 Western Avenue, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1LY	Liberal Democrats
HOWARD Alex	35 The Moat, Charing, Ashford, TN27 0JH	Conservative Party

KATHAWICK-SMITH Christine Ann	Lysander, Royds Road, Ashford, Kent, TN24 ODP	Ashford Independent
MILLER Gordon	98 Laurens Van Der Post Way, Ashford, Kent, TN23 3SG	Labour Party
PIZZEY Thom	24 Lynsted Close, Ashford, Kent, TN23 5RZ	The Green Party
YEO Harriet Bronwen	Lemon Sand, The Limes, Kingsnorth, Ashford, Kent, TN23 3NY	UK Independence Party (UKIP)

Each candidate (apart from Christine Kathawick-Smith) spoke for a few minutes to introduce themselves and explain why the ward residents should vote for them.

ICS read out a prepared statement from Christine Kathawick-Smith as she could not attend.

### **AOB**

Steerco Vacancies - ICS explained that, following John Micklethwaite's departure, there was a vacancy for a Treasurer, as well as a Secretary.

Ashford Mediation Service(AMS) - Edward Young briefly explained that AMS was a free service available to Ashford residents, to assist in any kind of disputes (Neighbours, school, family etc.), and that leaflets were available at the rear of the hall. For more information see <http://www.ashfordmediation.co.uk/>

The meeting concluded at 9.03pm. The next Open Meeting will be on the 10<sup>th</sup> February 2016.