

## West Park Friends' Meeting May 11<sup>th</sup> 2023

5.30 -7.00 West Park Academy

### Minutes

1. **Welcome and Introductions** from Neil Brimer. Apologies from Rob George. 12 residents attended plus 2 Community Officers PCs Stefan Haines and Becky Hesletine.
2. **Report from Police Neighborhood Team** outlining a small number (7) of reports of antisocial incidents including motorcycle and shopping trolley incidents. 6 incidents of theft mostly from shoplifting at the local shops and the theft of a parcel left on a doorstep by a delivery driver. No residential burglaries were reported. 2 minor commercial theft issues including goods and a vehicle stolen from one of the building sites. Some graffiti appeared near the hospital and a quad bike was reported stolen and subsequently retrieved and returned to owner. Overall the area is a safe one in which to live .
3. **Following questions and comments from residents to the police Neighborhood team, a number of issues were highlighted including:**
  - a. **Durham Police can be contacted for non-emergency matters through dialing 101 or online via the Durham Police website**
  - b. Issues of **inappropriate parking at the school** are dealt with by Darlington Borough Civil Enforcement team – residents observed that often nothing happens when reports have been made.

- c. Any cases where **vehicles cause an obstruction** can be reported directly to the police. **If residents provide police/Civic Enforcement with video evidence of people parking on double yellow lines or zig-zag lines near the school – they will be acted upon.** Police will usually contact the owner and issue a warning on the first occasion but if repeated then fines will be issued.
  - d. A local resident, RD, offered to volunteer with Civic Enforcement to monitor parking activity close to the school.
  - e. **Mini-police** – one solution to address inappropriate parking close to schools which has been used effectively in other places is ‘mini-police’ where volunteer children from a school wearing hi-viz will directly challenge any driver parking on yellow lines or zig-zags close to school.
4. **There was no detailed update to report on CCTV – though DBC to bring in by summer 23**
5. Discussion about the **increased number of dogs** in the area and an increase in the amount of excrement which a minority of owners fail to pick up. It was pointed out that Darlington Borough Council employs a dog warden, Andy Woods, who can be contacted to investigate and, where appropriate, deal with issues concerning dogs.
6. Feedback on the **community consultation** – there was discussion about the community consultation and support for the Friends of West Park and the Levy Trust to take forward ideas around Community events including seasonal events (including potentially a Christmas tree or appropriate art installation) also to look at working with residents to plan events such as a Community Fair or music events leading up to a major event in 2025 as part of the celebrations around the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Stockton Darlington Railway. The Levy Trust is open to suggestions and requests from anyone wishing to manage or support the creation of one of these events.
7. With regards to the potential **community facility** a resident suggested that we take note of the success of the Firth Moor community centre as a good example of a facility which works for its community.

8. There was some discussion about the poor state of the pond near the play area and the fact that at least one shopping cart had recently been fished out. There was some discussion about how the pond could be better managed – this will be fed into the Levy Trust meeting and also to Pippa Smaling, the Park manager.
9. There was a brief report on the current year's **maintenance programme** within the park and good wishes that once again West Park would be awarded a **Green Flag** following a recent inspection.
10. It was noted that anyone wishing to **volunteer for litter picking** can access free equipment and orange bin bags from Pippa at DBC
11. **Strategic Green Spaces** – the levy collected from houses from the other side of Edward Pease way in Phase 2 is being ring-fenced in a separate account until the new green spaces have been put in place by developers and adopted by council
12. It was reported that the **Cow Green Play park** are scheduled for 2025
13. **Questions from residents included:**
  - a. **Will there be a mat put under the swings in the park?**
  - b. **Will there be more buses when the new community facility and doctors surgery is in place?**