

MINUTES of the meeting of the **CCTV COMMITTEE** of
WARMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

held on **Wednesday 14th DECEMBER 2011**

Councillor S Fraser in the Chair

Membership: Cllrs Baker, Davis (also Wilts Council Unitary Rep), Fraser and March; GSM A Gazzard, Capt. Rtd. R Hood Land Warfare Centre; D Deacon; Inspector L Winter Warminster Constabulary; Rep West Wilts Trading Estate; Cllrs. S Ezra and D Tout, Westbury Town Council; Councillor R Hawker, Wilts Council Unitary Rep, and S Howell CCTV Supervisor.

Present: Cllrs Davis, Fraser, March and Burden; Cllrs S Ezra and D Tout. P Sammons rep West Wilts Trading Estate; D Deacon, Insp. L Winter and S Howell

351. Apologies & Substitutions – Cllr Baker (Ill). Substitute Cllr V Burden. Cllr R Hawker, Capt. Rtd. R Hood, GSM A Gazzard.

352. Minutes – The minutes of the meeting held on 14th September 2011 were approved with the manual addition of Councillor D Tout's apologies and signed as a true record by the chairman.

353. Chairman's Announcements – None.

354. Public Participation – None.

355. Deputations & Petitions – None.

356. Declarations of Interest – Councillor Davis declared that as a Unitary Authority member he is Dual Hatted. Councillor Fraser advised that she is a retailer in the town.

357. Reports from Unitary Authority Members relevant to this Committee – None.

358. Activity Reports–the activity reports were NOTED after some discussion about the figures. Activity in monitoring hours had increased due to the return of the CCTV supervisor after a long period of absence. Anti social behaviour experienced within Westbury and Warminster had caused some problems over the last couple of months. There were reports of regular sleepers within the Westbury public toilets.

359. Accounts–The accounts were NOTED.

360. Operations Manual and Code of Practice- Councillor March proposed acceptance of the Operations Manual and Code of Practice dated December 2011. Seconded Councillor Fraser. Voting unanimous in favour.

361. Memorandum of Understanding-Councillor Davis proposed updating the document which was produced originally in 2002 to reflect amendments to the system and its operation and have this brought back to the next meeting of the Committee for review. Seconded Councillor March. Voting unanimous in favour.

362. Camera Review-The current position was NOTED.

363. Litter and Dog Mess- The committee discussed at great length the issues over litter and dog fouling and what likely support CCTV could or should give to this national problem. The principal authority with enforcing powers is Wiltshire Council and at this time there is not a desire by them to prosecute. The focus is on education. There is not much evidence of the dog warden within the town and for a notice to be served; the warden has to make a personal approach at the time of the incident. The Dog Warden can patrol areas of particular concern after reports from the public are received.

The issue of CCTV involvement is that monitoring staff cannot determine what a crime is. The police are the only body within the Council's Code of Conduct to instruct the staff and therefore it would not be possible for us to take photographs and use that information to publicly to shame offenders. The Code of Conduct states that monitoring and surveillance will only be used for major crimes. Dog fouling is not a major crime.

Inspector Lindsey commented that if the enforcing authority chose to ask the Town to participate in additional surveillance then that would necessitate a different conversation and there would be a requirement for relevant permissions to be gained. As the authority had not approached CCTV we must assume that they are happy with their current arrangements.

Councillor Burden reiterated that education is still a requirement and many dog owners may not be aware of the problems faced by those using wheelchairs, buggies and pushchairs that regularly experience dog mess on the pavements and have to clean wheels after use because of an inconsiderate owner.

Unitary Councillor Keith Humphries, Cabinet member with responsibility for CCTV and Dog Control Orders for the County, advised that" he would welcome anything that would help with this problem and he will forward our interest to the multi agency community safety partnerships. The publishing of images could be open to legal challenge and the authority to view images taken with CCTV would have to be determined."

Councillor Humphries added that" the main problem with enforcement is that we can take action against offenders but those that report the offence may have to give evidence if the matter goes to court and the reporter mostly withdraws their complaint at this stage. It is believed that even if we massively increase enforcement activities, research shows that it has little effect. Social Marketing and education to get behaviour change has to be the way forward."

Councillor Davis proposed that after discussing the problem in detail, CCTV are not able to support the request to photograph inconsiderate dog owners as this would breach the Code of Practice in operation. Seconded Councillor Fraser. Voting unanimous in favour.

364. Communications- the members asked for a press release on the Dog Fouling issue.

Meeting closed at 11-00 am.

