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20th March 2017

CC Andy Burnham MP, Donna Hall Chief Executive Wigan Council, Local Councillors James Grundy, Kath Houlton and Ed Houlton.

Over the past year the people of Lowton East have been experiencing a steady increase in antisocial behaviour and burglaries, some of a violent nature. One young girl had to hide under the bed whilst men were robbing her house.

All this has caused huge concern within the area, so our local councillors, together with Lane Head South Residents Group and LENDF, called a meeting on Wednesday 15th March to discuss local concerns. Attending the meeting from the Police were Sergeant Topping and PC David Mayo. So many residents attended they could not all get in the room.

The following items were discussed:

Quicker response when a burglary is taking place or as been discovered.

PCSO need to be kept up to date with information, with better communication between investigating officers and PCSO.

One person got no response when burglars were round his house. The same person got a better response from Cheshire police than GMP.

When people ring GMP and give their post code sometimes they are told they live in Cheshire because of the WA postcode.

There was no confidence that crimes were being investigated due to lack of follow up.

Everyone in the room appreciated our small police team's efforts and wanted to help. However the best they could offer was keep ringing 101 and reporting incidents. One person pointed out that she had tried and after forty minutes without a reply gave up.

Residents living south of Lane Head have set up a WATSAPP system that informs everyone if someone has a problem. Then a large group of residents go to the house reporting the incident to give help.

They even talked about employing their own security people to patrol our streets.

Both the last two items should not be necessary and could lead to someone getting hurt.

What came out of the meeting was the disturbing lack of Police cover in our area. For a population of over 12,600 people we have two PCSO and one constable, they work shifts and because of health and safety they generally work together. This means we have a Police presence for only 6 hours per day 5 days a week leaving huge gaps without cover. The antisocial behaviour occurs mainly in the evenings, these kids know what shifts are being worked and when there is no cover they become very active.

We want two things - one is greater feedback when crimes are committed especially to those who have been affected. The other requirement is extra manning either with PCSO, or better still a constable. Two constables could work with our two PCSOs giving greater flexibility so all relevant times can be covered.

It would also be helpful if the PCSOs had some form of transport. One person attending the meeting was asked if he could collect a PCSO from Leigh police station, otherwise he would have to wait till he came by bus.

So to conclude everyone felt that the police cover is not good enough. The people causing problems know when we are not policed, so without improvements things will only continue to deteriorate.

Ed Thwaite

Chairman