

- 1 NOV 2010

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Jill Durham
Democratic Services Manager
St Albans District Council
Civic Centre
St Peters Street
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29th November 2010

Dear Ms Durham

Petition about CCTV in Redbourn

Thank you for your letter of 15th November.

Following Mr Peers' response to our questions a meeting of our local Neighbourhood Watch did take place and you may remember that it was the decision of that meeting that we should not present the petition to the council at that time.

Since then, we have continued to attend Neighbourhood Watch Meetings for Redbourn and have had the opportunity to discuss the Lamb Lane problems at those meetings. You may or may not be aware that The High Street and Lamb Lane have remained at the top of the list of priorities for that meeting for some time.

I understand that the Parish Council requested that the police should log incidents relevant to Lamb Lane over a three month period which, I believe, has now ended. During that time there were several recorded incidents of damage to cars. In addition, sometime between last Saturday evening and early Sunday morning (27th/28th November) further damage was done to four cars parked in Lamb Lane. Wing mirrors were targeted, resulting in potential costs to individual car owners of several hundred pounds.

I can assure you therefore that the matter is far from closed and we certainly wish it to remain 'live' until such time that effective preventative measures have been put in place.

Whilst recognising that Lamb Lane's problems are some of many that have to be addressed within the councils remit, we were disappointed with the response that we received.

To say that the letter accompanying the petition was written by the Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators, Jean and myself, for Lamb Lane/Shepherds Row, it was disturbing that Mr Peers' response asked the question, 'Do you have a Neighbourhood Watch scheme for just your street.....?'

We asked whether anyone from St Albans District Council had carried out a site survey. Maybe we should have said that we would have welcomed a visit by someone to discuss the problems associated with our specific area of Redbourn so that they can be seen at first hand by someone who can influence decision making.

Most of the issues that we raised drew the response of further questions of a general nature as you will see from your copy of the email.

However, the possibility of alternative off-street parking has already been discussed at the Redbourn Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators' Meeting. In essence there are very few options and, not necessarily appropriate to the needs of the car owners. For example, a single parent with a very young child and shopping to carry needs to park close to her home, as does a very elderly person for whom walking any great distance would not be practicable.

The police have made a particular effort to patrol the area as much as possible within the resources they have available.

It is clear to us that the anti-social/criminal behaviour affecting Lamb Lane/Shepherds Row has been on-going for many years and has caused and is causing a great deal of distress to many of our neighbours.

We recognise that Redbourn might not have the problems that are experienced in other parts of the UK but that does not mean that they cannot be addressed.

We also accept that CCTV might not be the only or best solution. However, to quote Mr Peers 'even the older cameras had some very impressive results in catching serious cases'. As our neighbourhood PC has said on many occasions, 'whilst CCTV might not capture the moment of a crime, the evidence from the cameras does give us the opportunity to question persons who are on record as having been near the scene of the crime'.

It is possible that in the past incidents have not always been reported to the police. We have endeavoured to ensure that all our neighbours do now report any incident so that there is a full log of such happenings.

From our own experience of living in Redbourn during the past five years and on the evidence of those who have lived here much longer, we appreciate that it is very difficult to establish any particular pattern of anti-social behaviour. It is true that we can be free of problems for quite long periods but they do rear their ugly heads before long, such as during last weekend. Given this irregular pattern, it seems to add weight to a case for installing CCTV because it will always be there.

We believe that much might be gained if an appointed representative of the council would visit the area to meet with us and to gain a full appreciation of the problems. We feel that an informed view of the problems by someone who is recognised by the council and will report to them would be much more effective than a presentation by us.

We do want to work with our local authority in a constructive manner and would be more than happy to co-operate for the good of the community.

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the names and contact information of the signatories.

Jean Godfrey

Tony Godfrey

c.c. Councillor Chris Oxley