



Please ask for: Ms Jill Durham
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Date: 15 November 2010

By email to

Dear Mr and Mrs Godfrey

Petition about CCTV in Redbourn

Following the response from the District Engineer Brian Peers, on 7 July 2010 to your petition, you raised a number of follow up questions as attached, with paragraph references to Mr Peer's letter. His responses to your follow up questions are also attached.

I understand this further information was to be considered at a meeting of the local Neighbourhood Watch Committee. On this basis your petition was not presented to the full Council meeting on 21 July 2010 and I confirmed that you could reserve your right to present it at a future Council meeting pending exploring other avenues.

You also requested details of the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and his remit in relation to your petition in response to which I confirmed that the Portfolio Holder is Councillor Chris Oxley, Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement and Support and his contact details are on the Council's website at [St Albans District Council - Councillor details - Councillor Chris Oxley](#) together with a full list of his responsibilities including Community Safety, for which he has executive responsibility as a member of the Cabinet. This would include working with officers to respond to a petition such as yours.

Can you let me know if the matter has now been resolved so that I can update my records as to whether your petition can now be regarded as closed, or whether you still wish it to remain 'live' for a further period.

The Council's Petition Scheme is explained in detail on our website at [St Albans City & District Council - Petitions](#) but in the meantime if you have any queries please contact me on 01727 819519.

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I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Jill Durham
Democratic Services Manager

cc Brian Peers, District Engineer, SADC
Andrew Robertson, Head of Environment and Regulatory Services, SADC
Mike Lovelady, Head of Legal & Democratic Services, SADC

Petitioner Questions raised by Mr and Mrs Godfrey on 9 July 2010:

- Other than CCTV what are the other measures that can generate better results and have they been tried? (paragraph 2)
- Has any representative from the Council conducted a site survey of Lamb Lane to establish whether there would be any grounds for suggesting that there could be an incursion of privacy? (paragraph 3)
- What are the improvements resulting from the replacement of cameras in the High Street, particularly those adjacent to 'Peaches & Cream', and is there a direct link to a control centre? (paragraph 4)
- What specifically are the good results arising from improved CCTV cameras? (paragraph 5)

Responses from the Council's District Engineer Brian Peers, on 9 July 2010:

Quite often better lighting will bring about an improvement in community safety. If criminals or people who might commit anti-social acts feel conspicuous then they are less likely to commit those acts. There has been much research into this, and the Market Place in St Albans experienced a drop in crime when better lighting was introduced prior to putting in CCTV.

Do you have a neighbourhood watch scheme for just your street or is it one for a much bigger area? A local one tends to give better results as people are more likely to take ownership of the issues.

Could the Police undertake more patrols of the area?

Are any of the residents interested in becoming Specials with the Police?

Can people park off street away from passers by?

The Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Unit can investigate the issues and if it is the same people or groups then they could serve Acceptable Behaviour Contracts or apply to the courts for Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs).

Are there diversionary activities to stop young people turning to crime or disorder?

The comments about intruding into peoples' privacy are generic and would apply to any residential street. The Council has used a mobile camera to give temporary coverage for limited time, but would not consider leaving it there on a long term basis. It works best when problems occur on a regular basis rather than for trying to catch random one off events.

The new cameras in the High Street are of a higher specification than the older ones and have the ability to use infra red illumination when natural day light is not available or when the street lights are insufficient to give clear images. The cameras are not linked to the CCTV control room but record locally and are interrogated if a problem arises. They are future proofed and have the ability to connect to broadband and or 3G. Currently the cost of the links is too expensive for anything other than occasional use but the costs have been falling in recent years and continue to fall, so it is likely that it will become cost effective to have permanent connections in two or three years time.

I cannot give details of current cases for which there is CCTV evidence contributing, but even the older cameras had some very impressive results in catching serious cases. There was even a case where a person claimed that all their tools had been stolen from the van when it was parked overnight in the High Street and it turned out to be an insurance fraud scam as nobody went near the vehicles during the hours in question.

I must stress that Hertfordshire is one of the safest counties in England, and St Albans is one of the safer Districts in Hertfordshire. Nevertheless problems will arise from time to time but they must not be allowed to override the vast majority of times when nothing happens. I think that when problems do occur they must be reported to the Police to help build up a case for a greater Police presence.