

Notes on the AGM of Stirchley Forum 10th November 2008

A remarkably interesting talk was given by Fire Station Commander Sean Moore Kings Norton, followed by Police Inspector Paul Ditta.

Sean Moore surprised us by saying there is no statutory duty to respond to flood, although it goes without saying they do, and perform their duties remarkably well! He has been to many meetings and supports the 150 recommendations from the Pitt report. www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/thepittreview

- Putting together a National Asset Register for better coordination of equipment and manpower.
- Inter operability of services around the country
- The same training as other authorities so teamwork will not be a problem.
- A change in legislation for fire and rescue teams giving new authority and funding and training for flood situations.

He said there are detailed plans of areas liable to flood on the environment web site, along with advice and suggestions in the event of a flood.

www.environment-agency.gov.uk/

West Midlands fire and rescue service are able to respond with

- Vehicles that can pump water
- Boats and trained crews

However

- Saving life is their priority and
- Protection of services is also a priority e.g. electricity, pure water, hospitals, care homes etc even museums and other heritage buildings.

A question was asked about the fire service closing roads, the reply was; at the moment the fire service would be looking to the police to close roads. Should new legislation, as mentioned earlier, be put into place, closing roads to prevent further problems e.g. 'bow waves' will become a reality.

Another member of the neighbourhood forum spoke about water being every body's problem belonging to no-one and thanked the speaker and fire and rescue service on our behalf.

Police inspector Paul Ditta had a hard act to follow, however he stressed the need for locals, people on the ground, to work as a community, with a plan, in case of flooding. He suggested we plan for what we can do as individuals, and what to do for vulnerable members of the community, know who they are, and be able to tell police when they arrive on scene.

He pointed out there are guides on the environmental web site dealing with things like insurance, flood kits and other ideas.

Birmingham Resilience group was mentioned, you may remember Martin Tolman, who gave a talk to the forum earlier in the year, he is working at

command level putting together a package in order to be prepared and link with persons at all levels. If you google Birmingham Resilience you will find the following leader;

The **Birmingham Resilience** Team – based around the City Council's existing Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Team – has been created in partnership with West Midlands ... www.birmingham.gov.uk

Inspector Ditta went on to say crime in our area is reducing, part of the reason for this he acknowledged was due to our very good Neighbourhood tasking team headed by Sgt. Isobel Knowles, and some structural changes with policy.

It was pointed out that patterns and posts change too often, we were assured the chief constable was encouraging continuity and our present team will be with us for a while longer.

He went on to say he is resourcing mobile proactive response units with an increased number of officers for the proactive team. This he hopes will help keep the neighbourhood team together for neighbourhood problems. He said there was a 'my neighbourhood' web site we may enjoy looking at, with pictures of the team, for the site address come to the next tasking meeting at 7.00pm on the 26/11/08 at Stirchley Community centre, (on the one way).

Moving away from crime and back to floods, Lynne Jones MP spoke to us about meeting with the environment agency, and how Chris Bradley from Birmingham University, and resident of Selly Park, helped with the Pitt report. Apparently, even the earth works down at Pebble Mill are having an impact on our local environment! She said we need sustainable urban drainage, highlighting Germany's advance in flood maintenance, mainly through water storage during flood times. She also questioned if developments should have an automatic right to use sewers already working at capacity.

Lynne told us if you want to see what she is up to in Parliament there is a web site www.theyworkforyou.com so we can keep tabs on her.

Nigel Dawkins, our local councillor, said he had toured the 'hot spots' the previous evening and once again we were so close to more flooding, Pershore road, Bournville lane, Riverbrook Drive, awash again.

It was suggested by a forum member, people be encouraged to register with flood watch and they alert you by text if problems seem imminent.