

LONDON BOROUGH OF SUTTON NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Held at Civic Offices, Sutton on Wednesday 17 September 2025

1. Members present: Appendix A, not public, contact Chair/Vice Chair

2. Apologies for Absence: Appendix A, not public, contact Chair/Vice Chair

3. Opening Remarks by the President. Ruth Dombey introduced herself as the new President, having taken on the role after the 2024 AGM following GF's departure, and gave some background to her long-term interest and involvement with SNHW. She thanked the attendees for joining the meeting and explained that this was an important part of understanding how much work goes on behind the scenes in creating a safe borough. She added that she was involved in setting up the Sutton Safer Partnership in 2005 comprising the police and the council and was grateful that it was continuing to work well after 20 years. This was different from the previous situation when more resources had been available, unlike today with police numbers under considerable stress. She referred to a recent survey reporting Sutton as the safest place in the country but added the caution that it was a survey and we should avoid being complacent. Finally, she emphasised that safety relies on partnerships, such as the SNHW with its 7.6k members to reach out to, and encouraged those present to spread that good news to their own neighbours and friends. But she reiterated that whilst the police in Sutton are good it is because they continue to do their best in a difficult situation.

4. Minutes of the 2024 AGM. There were no objections, and the minutes were signed off as a true record.

5. Chair's Report. Anna introduced herself and also welcomed the attendees. For her the key issue over the preceding year was improving communications. This had been addressed with the introduction of a Newsletter Editor and as a result regular Newsletters were now being sent out to all members on email – unfortunately, as was addressed at last year's AGM and advised to all members, we have stopped contacting members not on email, primarily because of the high cost of postage for which we do not have funds. We have, however, been present at several events across the borough (citing the older person events in Wallington, St Helier Festival, Benhill Fun Day, Cheam Fair, EcoFair) to identify new members and as a result our membership has risen to 7613. Anna explained that we are in the process of setting up a new phone number so that those unable to use online facilities will be able to report issues by leaving voice messages, and at this point she reminded the audience that reporting crime is imperative if the police are to be able to address important issues. This can be done directly by ringing 101, or online <https://www.met.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime>. She encouraged support for the police by attending Cuppa with a Copper events and through attendance at the police Ward Panels. She then turned to the issue of volunteers, pointing out that the current Vice Chair, CP, would be standing down as of this meeting – although he had agreed to remain available as a Special Advisor; that there are vacancies for Ward Coordinators on the committee; and that going forward we would be looking to identify deputies for the Ward Coordinators, and for that we badly need new volunteers. Picking up on earlier points she reiterated that it is important to focus on actual crime and not the perception of crime, and it is very important that with this in mind we work with our partners such as the police, the council, Community Action, the national neighbourhood watch, Sutton Women's Centre (for Violence against Women and girls) etc.

6. Treasurer's Report. Copies of the year end 31/3/2025 were available. Malcolm Booth reported that a recent MOPAC grant of £1,900 had been received, and the current account now stood at £5,575. Major outlays this year had been postage and Constant Contact costs (our communications system).

Q1: The President asked Anna to explain what MOPAC is?

A1: Anna explained MOPAC is the **Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime**, which had recently granted us £1,900 to be used for a targeted leaflet campaign in those areas of the borough having the least membership.

Q2: What are the remaining funds used for?

A2: typically for everyday running costs such as our communication system for emailing members (Contact Contact) and the website.

7. Election of President, Officers and Committee Members.

Re-elections and elections. The following nominations were proposed for re-election and election, and no objections were raised.

Officers and Committee members re-elected:

President	Ruth Dombey
Chair	Anna James
Vice Chair & Acting Secretary	Jim Dalton
Treasurer	Malcolm Booth
Social Media Lead	Ruth Genelazo
Domestic Abuse Lead	Heather Smiles
Website Manager	Rehan Zaidi
Committee Member	Shri Mehrotra
Committee Member	Maria Connor

Officers and Committee members elected:

Special Advisor	Colin Pye
News Editor	Jeff Pao
Membership Systems Development	Colin Bartram
Membership Software Development	Zeno Foltin
Committee Member	Anne Barnes
Committee Member	Noor Sumun

Anna thanked the resigning committee member Tom Brown for his contribution to the SNHW.

8. Talk by Superintendent Richard Lloyd-Ablitt, Sutton Police. Supt Lloyd-Ablitt was accompanied by Inspector Yolanda King and Elena Sanchez from Sutton police. He explained he was new to this role since March and went on to provide the background to his time and roles within the police. He thanked the audience for taking the time to attend as he felt that direct contact with the membership to be important, and that he wanted his team (of officers) to “make a difference and be the best version of themselves as police”. His mission for Sutton was to be “a place where all (residents, employees and visitors) are happy and thriving”, and whilst Sutton is the third safest borough today, he aspires for it to be the first in future. His team in Sutton promise to police the borough as they would “our house, based on data led, precision community crime fighting” with 6 top borough objectives:

- Retail theft,
- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)/drugs,
- Violence with injury,
- Domestic abuse,
- Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG),
- Motor vehicle crime.

Organisational changes involving affordability, and removal of posts from the organisational structure (in Sutton such as schools and licensing) were to focus on policing activity in the areas it is most needed.

Turning to resourcing he said there is no longer a Chief Inspector for Sutton, that there are 9 vacancies in various wards, and that this resourcing issue is common across the Met. We had lost the Town Centre Team driven by Met central - even though the other two boroughs (Croydon and Bromley) in the South Area, both had one - and that the town centre is where most crime happens so needs more resourcing. The abstraction (removal of officers from usual duties to other roles) rate in July had been 36% (compared with a lower rate in Croydon and a higher one in Bromley), but Sutton nevertheless consistently hits the target of attending 90% of 999 calls within 15 minutes. The Stop and Search stats were good, and overall, for Sutton, crime stats are presently low.

He went on to highlight the implementation of Met Engage (<https://www.metengage.co.uk/>), the new platform that provides for two-way communication between the public and the Met, and he encouraged everyone to join up.

And finally, he referred to the Government's Neighbourhood Guarantee, which is a Safer Street Mission to achieve:

- Neighbourhood policing in every local area,
- A named, contactable officer for every neighbourhood,
- Crack-down on anti-social behaviour,
- Safer town centres – focussed on retail crime, street theft, and assaults against retail workers.

The floor was then opened up to questions.

Q1: Is Facial Recognition being used in Sutton.

A1: None since the Supt had taken over, but there are plans to do so in the future as it has proven to be a very good tool in other areas. Norman Summerfield, Ward Coordinator for Stonecot, added that in the past this had been used effectively both in the town centre and at Sutton station.

Q2: WC asked - are we a victim of our own success and are officers being lost because of low crime?

A2: Yes, there is an element of this, but it remains my job to ensure this doesn't hamper Sutton's needs.

Q3: What is happening about ward panels in St Helier East and West?

A3: We are very aware of the issue, and we are working to identify a Chair for each Ward.

Q4: The lag in availability of crime data from the Met doesn't help with ward panel work.

A4: Supt Ablitt agreed to follow up with central team and report back. *[post meeting note: completed and updated data for crime, stop & search, **Use of Force and Use of Taser** has been provided <https://www.met.police.uk/police-forces/metropolitan-police/areas/stats-and-data/stats-and-data/>. The link will direct you to the Met Police website on the Stats and Data page, you can click on any of the topics, and this will direct you to TableauPublic which is an interactive app and is very user friendly. To search for the data of the area (Sutton), hover over the map and click the area that you would like to view the data for.]*

Q5: A concern was raised around speed limits where main roads are being reduced to 20mph whilst electric bikes, scooters etc are being allowed to travel dangerously at high speeds with no intervention?

A5: Supt Lloyd-Ablitt explained that whilst there have been some operations, this is primarily a societal issue needing changes in laws and perceptions. The issue around the High Street is a council issue to address the high level of delivery drivers. Sarah Fivian, Sutton Council, added that the council Regeneration Team is currently looking at this issue in conjunction with Highways.

Q6: Burglary has increased by 23% but doesn't appear to be a priority?

A6: this is relative. Whilst the percentage shows a sharp increase the actual numbers remain low from e.g., mid-200s to high-200s annually. There has also been an increase in Croydon and Bromley. The Supt emphasised that, however low the stats, it did not relieve the impact of being burgled.

Q7: Which is the second safest borough?

A7: Richmond.

Q8: AP highlighted an issue in North Cheam which suffers from a much higher abstraction rate and problems are therefore not being addressed, i.e., a spate of vehicles such as electric bikes, motorcycles and even quad bikes being driven on pavements. There are long standing laws to address this sort of activity but are not, apparently, being used?

A8: The police cannot check on each and every report but they do carry out interventions. This is a countrywide problem, interpretation of older laws is difficult, and both police and councils are involved but the situation continues to be monitored.

As a final point he said that New Met for London 2 Report was now available and that an event was planned in Sutton on October 7th at the Thomas Wall Centre from 18:30-20:30. *[post meeting note: the final details are The Thomas Wall Centre, 52 Benhill Avenue, SM1 4DP, on Tuesday, 7th October 2025. Doors will open from 17:00, the event will start at 19:00. An invitation to the event can be found here using the Eventbrite link:*

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/community-crime-fighting-sutton-tickets-1683575001149?aff=oddtcreator>

At his point and given the time, Anna asked for any additional questions to be forwarded to her and/or Jim and the police answers would be provided.

9. SF from Sutton Council Community Safety Team – Safer Sutton Partnership, spoke as Anti-Social-Behaviour (ASB) Manager; her background was that she had previously been a police officer for 15 years and then a Housing Association and an ASB Officer for 3 years. Her presentation about **Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)** explained what it covers and what can be done to prevent/resolve it.

What is Anti-social behaviour?

ASB is deliberate behaviour that can cause nuisance and annoyance to others around them. It can often involve criminal acts such as graffiti and harassment, but ASB is not always illegal. Disruptive neighbours consistently playing loud music or letting their dog bark all night would be considered this.

What is not Anti-social behaviour?

Behaviour that might be annoying but is not ASB include: parking issues, children playing, DIY at reasonable times, groups of people who are not rowdy, abusive or committing damage or other crimes, one-off parties, general living noise and religious or cultural festivals or practice.

Causes of ASB include:

- Social - this could be because people lack the same opportunities as their neighbours or there are simply too many people in one household
- Mental health can play into ASB if people do not know how their behaviour affects others, or they are so unwell that they are unaware of the behaviour completely
- Peer influence - this could be pressure from friends or gang culture that comes out in anti-social or criminal behaviours
- Substance misuse - where people in the grips of addiction will commit crime and other acts in order to get their fix or do anti-social things when under the influence.

Effects on the Community

- Perceptions of Crime and feeling unsafe,
- Lower quality of life,
- Damage to public property,
- Increased policing costs.

How to report ASB

Anti-social behaviour affects everyone, and it can be prevented with early intervention. There are various ways to report ASB and this can include:

- Safer Sutton Community Safety Team via the inbox safer.sutton@sutton.gov.uk or the website (<https://www.sutton.gov.uk/w/safer-sutton-partnership-service>),
- Environmental Health Team for noise and pollution,
- Sutton Housing Partnership (or other housing association),
- Private landlord,
- Police on 101, online or on CrimeStoppers,
- Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) in relation to home CCTV systems (<https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/home-cctv-systems/>).

Enforcement

In 2014 the Government passed the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 which included a raft of measures to combat anti-social behaviour (ASB). The new powers included Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) and we use these where ASB in a particular public place has, or is likely to have, a detrimental effect on the local community. These orders can help by giving us and the police additional powers to tackle ASB in specific locations.

In Sutton, ASB related to street drinking was a significant public concern. PSPOs are an effective tool in helping tackle this issue, by enabling authorised persons, including police constables and police community support officers to tackle street drinking at the time and on the spot, and in a visible way, thus improving public confidence.

Persistent or continuous ASB committed in public places can have a detrimental effect on local residents and communities. In order to maintain safety in the borough and continue the low levels of incidents of ASB associated with the consumption of alcohol in public the Council has made a number of Orders since 2002 and we currently have 17 active orders.

The police are increasingly using CBOs to tackle ASB and are being used successfully for prolific shoplifters in Wallington and Sutton High Street. There is a court disposal option after arrest and charge.

Community Protection Warnings (CPWs) are also being used by police in partnership with ourselves and were successfully used in the High Street last year to prevent local church groups targeting members of the public with inappropriate language and the use of loud speakers.

Respect Orders allow courts to ban adult offenders from engaging in specific ASB-related activities, with breaches treated as criminal offences.

More powers in relation to cuckooing with a view of making it a criminal offence. 'Cuckooing', that is seeing an increasing number of reports in this borough, is when criminals take over someone's home to use it as a base for crime. The victim's home may be used for:

- dealing drugs,
- storing weapons,
- sex work,
- other illegal activities.

By using the victim's home, the criminal hopes they can avoid the police.

ASB case review

If a person is victim to persistent anti-social behaviour, they can request an ASB Case Review or Community Trigger (<https://www.sutton.gov.uk/w/community-trigger>). The purpose of the meeting is to ensure relevant agencies and partners meet their statutory obligations in allowing victims to make an application if they feel their reports of ASB have not resulted in meaningful action to bring an end to the issues. There is an eligibility requirement for the case review which is 3 incidents of ASB in 6 months that were reported to agencies, and no effective action has taken place, and a review will take place within 15 days to see whether the threshold has been met.

On E-bikes: SF explained that a feasibility study is being undertaken by the council regeneration team to look at options including whether the whole of Sutton High Street can be pedestrianised.

Regarding policing: Police are leading on drugs and ASB across Sutton and are driving the intelligence to be able to get more warrants and results. St Helier West and East will be seeing an uplift in staff to support this,

Sarah then called for questions:

Q1: How is the Community Trigger enabled by a resident?

A1: A Sutton.gov.uk website search will find <https://www.sutton.gov.uk/w/community-trigger> and here the form can be downloaded.

Q2: SM highlighted that older people are not always 'online'

A2: The team work with partners such as care homes but recognises that there is an issue here and undertook to progress. Ruth D. suggested that local councillors could be used to work with the SSP (Safer Sutton Partnership).

10. Update from Trading Standards (TS) KS, Team Leader, reported that it had been a busy year for TS but they were lucky to have had an apprentice for the past 5yrs who has now completed her qualification and is awaiting her results - and in fact they had a new apprentice to replace her who is one of only 11 across all the London boroughs. She emphasised that community working is essential to prevent, for example, the elderly neighbour being scammed by the passing 'roof repairer'. There had been successes elsewhere and that the case of a criminal ASB resulted in a Community Closure Order (CCO) being used to close down a premises in Sutton. All of their efforts are aimed at making Sutton Safer.

T, another member of the TS Team, made a presentation about Scams explaining that they result in the loss of billions of pounds in the UK, and that only 5% of victims report their losses out of embarrassment. Reporting is important and can be done through:

- Citizens Advice (<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>)
- Action Fraud (<https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/>)
- Friends Against Scams/ Scam Marshalls (<https://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/>)
- Financial Conduct Authority (<https://www.fca.org.uk/consumers/protect-yourself-scams>)

And, by subscribing to e.g. Which Scam Alerts service (<https://signup.which.co.uk/wlp-scamalert-newsletter>) which includes free weekly updates.

No Blame No Shame Campaign

On 15 September National Trading Standards launched their #NoBlameNoShame

<https://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/news-and-updates/noblamenoshame-news-article>

campaign urging people to talk about scams to reduce the stigma, making victims feel more able to talk and report. They're aiming to raise awareness of the tactics that criminals use to defraud victims.

She explained the different types of vulnerability and how they can make victims more susceptible to scams and so they raise awareness of current areas of vulnerability in the UK. To help with this they promote coercive control training to appropriate audiences and guide people to watch the short video and/or the training video <https://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/coercive-control>. Trudy was unable to show the video due to technical issues.

Useful Information

- If you think you have been scammed, contact your bank first,
- Report it to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or www.actionfraud.police.uk,

to help stop it happening to others.

Get advice and report it to Trading Standards through the Citizens Advice consumer service on 0808 223 1133 or online advice at www.adviceguide.org.uk. The Citizens Advice consumer service provides free, confidential and impartial advice on consumer issues.

It is important that all complaints are referred to the Citizens Advice consumer service as they maintain a national database of complaints that provides an invaluable source of information and intelligence to the trading standards community. Details of all consumer enquiries, dealt with by the Citizens Advice consumer helpline, are made available to Trading Standards

If you are in immediate danger, contact the police on 999

Scams are more complex and convincing than ever. If you think you've been scammed, don't be embarrassed. Scammers are cunning and clever and there's no shame in being deceived. Reporting a scam is important to help stop criminals and to prevent others from falling victim.

Online Learning

Friends Against Scams is a National Trading Standards Scams Team initiative, which aims to protect and prevent people from becoming victims of scams by empowering people to take a stand against scams. To learn more about different types of scams and how to protect yourself and others, visit www.FriendsAgainstScams.org.uk and complete the free online Learning, available in many languages ([Friends Against Scams - Online Awareness Training](#))

Useful Links

Which Scam Sharer Tool <https://www.which.co.uk/tool/scam-sharer>

Reporting a scam is important to help stop criminals and to prevent others from falling victim

Be a ScamSmart investor. Avoid investment and pension scams <https://www.fca.org.uk/scamsmart>

Why not become a Scam Marshal?

A Scam Marshal is any resident in the UK who has been targeted by a scam and now wants to fight back and take a stand against scams. Scam Marshals do this by sharing their own experiences, helping others to report and recognise scams and sending any scam mail that they receive to the National Trading Standards Scams Team so that it can be utilised as evidence in future investigative and enforcement work

Visit www.FriendsAgainstScams.org.uk/ScamMarshals for more information and to sign up.

11. Any Other Business. There was no other business from the attendees, but Anna took this opportunity to thank Colin Pye for his work in SNHW for over 25 years and presented him with a small gift from the Committee.

End of meeting.

NOTE – these minutes were subsequently approved at the 2026 Annual General Meeting on September 17th 2026