

Freckleton Parish Council

Minutes of the Clean Neighbourhood, Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 24th May 2006

Present:

Councillor T. Threlfall, (Chair)

Councillors Mrs S Delany, Mrs. E Willis, St J Greenhough and Mike Walker, FBC Environment department.

Apologies: None

1. To review the powers available to the Parish Council and how they overlap with FBC's procedures.

Mike Walker reported that from April 2006, the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 would give Parish Councils a range of new powers to tackle environmental crime in their communities. These are:-

To make and apply dog control orders, to cover land in its area, making it an offence to:

- Fail to remove dog faeces;
- Not keep a dog on a lead;
- Not put, and keep, a dog on a lead when directed to do so by an Authorised officer;
- Permit a dog to enter land, from which dogs are banned,
- Take more than the specified number of dogs onto land.

And to take enforcement action against those that:

- Commit an offence against a dog control order;
- Litter;
- Graffiti; and/or
- Fly post.

The Act allows Parish Councils to prosecute, in the magistrates' court, those that are suspected of committing an offence against a dog control order, or who are suspected of having committed a litter, graffiti or fly posting offence.

As an alternative to prosecution in the magistrates' court, the Act gives the power to Parish Councils to authorise staff to issue fixed penalty notices to alleged offenders as an alternative to prosecution.

It was agreed that the Council should concentrate on dog fouling, as the other issues were not a major problem, at the moment.

In order to apply the new dog control orders the Council must first advertise its intention to introduce an order and then await comments from the public.

When the order has been agreed, it must be published in the local press and with signs in the area affected.

Once implemented, permanent signs have to be erected indicating that an order is in force in the area.

Staff who will enforce the order will have to be trained to a recognised standard and the Council will have to approve a strategy for dealing with offenders, including the legal arrangements, if the fixed penalties are not paid.

Mike Walker indicated that Fylde Borough Council has two dog wardens and there are six Community Police Support Officers that have been trained to issue fixed penalties for dog offences.

He suggested that the Parish Council should consider all the options available to enforce the new dog fouling orders. These are:-

1. Use or employ their own staff.
2. Use the existing facilities within the FBC
3. Approach the local Community beat Manager to see if they will enforce the orders.
4. Buy-in approved staff from private companies.

He confirmed that FBC have not set up any new dog control Orders.

It was agreed that the Parish should write to FBC asking if they have any intentions of progressing any dog control Orders and if not, would they consider a blanket Order as a first step. The Parish Council could then consider if additional orders (e.g. dog banning) should be introduced for specific areas within the Parish.

It was also agreed that the cost to the Parish, to undertake these enforcements, would be expensive and initially it should be progressed by working with the existing Dog wardens and Community Police Support Officers.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting.

Signed.....T Threlfall, Chairman.....

Date.....5th June 2006.....