



Queensferry & District Community Council

www.queensferrycommunitycouncil.org



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Chief Inspector Jones
Police Scotland
Drylaw Police Station
701 Ferry Road
Edinburgh EH4 2TY

6th March 2017

Dear Sir,
Policing of South Queensferry

I am writing to you on behalf of Queensferry & District Community Council (QDCC) and the three Ward Councillors, Messrs Paterson, Shields and Work.

Following representations by the residents of Queensferry at both our January and February '17 business meetings we wish to raise with you our concerns about the increase in anti social behaviour and crime in the South Queensferry.

This is a "first" that residents should have cause to complain to QDCC and actually take time out to attend the monthly public meeting in over our 30 years of our existence and ask "what are the Police doing about this crime" which gives you an indication about the level of concern; the community is feeling threatened and insecure in the town they work and live. We have also received representations to our website and Facebook accounts.

Background

Prior to the formation of Police Scotland Queensferry enjoyed a fully operational manned Police Station with a low crime rate. We benefitted from the manned station with Police Officers regularly seen in and around the town going about their business.

Within the first few months of Police Scotland being formed a review of operational Police Stations was held. QDCC representing the community put forward a justification for keeping Queensferry Police Station open which was accepted and to this day the station remains open – just. Bit by bit, piece by piece over time Police Scotland has dismantled the Police Service to Queensferry residents, to a shadow of its former self, such that we are now

suffering from the significant changes. Over the course of the last three years serious crime has taken place in our community with a murder, a significant increase in house crime and are now again experiencing a spate of house break-ins, theft, car crime, anti social behaviours and excessive speeding. We contest that the cause is solely down to the withdrawal of police resource and the changes implement piecemeal with little or no consultation with the community representatives and I put to you that Police Scotland is failing our community. Those that wish to break the law know that there is often no Police presence in and around South Queensferry.

20 mph speed limits

In the last few months we have seen a significant increase in car drivers visiting and parking at Hawes Promenade. They choose to drive well above the 20mph speed limit along the High St, Kirkliston and Bo'ness Roads often with the car windows down playing loud music, Community Policing has attended on a number of evenings and issued a total of 34 first warning notices, which is exceptionally high. I have been advised that one resident who resides at the Hawes has had cause to contact Police Scotland 57 times over the last year to complain about the anti-social behaviours from these drivers. Whilst officers are doing their best with limited resources it's only scratching the surface as the problem continues and is escalating. QDCC and the Ward Councillor's contest that additional resource is needed to Police the locality, carry out speed gun checks (particularly on Friday and Saturday evenings) to check the speeding around the town of Queensferry. Speeding is prevalent on Kirkliston and Bo'ness Roads with some cars travelling at 40 plus mph in the 20mph speed limits. We are concerned that it's an accident waiting to happen. Indiscriminate parking on double yellow lines on the Loan compounds the problem. I have raised this with Gavin Brown Care Parking Manager CEC but would appreciate any help that can be offered by Police Scotland.

In regards to these issues QDCC with support from our Ward Councillors discussed and considered that CCTV might help at the Hawes Promenade as a monitor and control. After going around the houses finding out who was responsible I placed a request with Peter Strong Localities Manager. Peter Strong attended the QDCC February meeting and advised that after speaking with you that our request for consideration of CCTV had been rejected as other areas have a greater priority.

I wish to contest that decision by making you aware of the content of an email that I have sent to Peter on 28th February '17 and ask you to consider the points I make;

"I would also like to formally raise the question of CCTV being located at the Hawes Promenade. I did express my disappointment that a decision seems to have been taken very quickly and that not all the facts have been considered. At Monday's meeting you learnt about some of the issues. The request for cctv to be placed at the Hawes Promenade is not just about boy & girl racers causing

anti social behaviours. It's also about the Hawes Promenade being used as an events arena.

This year plans are in place at the Hawes locality for 19 liner visits, three abseils, lifeboat day, Ferry Fair week and the Lonny Dook just to list the main events.. The Hawes Promenade at weekends also attracts the motor cycle fraternity, and when the weather is good they turn up in large numbers. Last year for example with no permissions they decided to hold a major rally on the promenade and set up stalls selling goods and items. One stall was selling Harley Davidson motor bikes. Further that the Forth Bridge is a Unesco World Heritage In-scripted site and that the daily visitor numbers are increasing. This causes car parking issues, anti social behaviours from car parking and motor bike parking.

In my capacity as Chair of QDCC I attend the Forth Bridge World Heritage Management Committee meetings and presently the Tourism sub group is engaging a consultant to produce a report and advise about the Forth Estuary and the three bridges becoming a recognised tourist destination. The point I make is that the visitor experience is important in delivering the expected growth in numbers and if we can't offer a safe and good experience they won't return. More recently residents living on the Hawes Promenade have made representations to QDCC as during these events they cannot get access/egress to their homes. So on behalf I reject the decision made to not install cctv at the Hawes and formally request that this decision is reconsidered for the reasons stated".

Anti Social Behaviour

In the last few months we have seen a significant increase in anti social behaviours, minor crime, damage to cars and property. Cars in particular are being attacked; common is breaking the wing mirrors from the car. There is no specific location it's across the town. There are no boundaries the car can be parked in the drive of the house or on the street. This is a worrying trend and has resulted in residents attending our meetings to voice their concerns and looking for assurances that the problem is being addressed. As you are aware we only have one Community Police Officer generally covering Queensferry and Kirkliston and into the wider area so he is limited in what can be done. One resident living on Edinburgh Road has had his car vandalised twice and his wife's once.

This all came to a climax on Saturday evening 25th February with a fracas by youths visiting McDonalds restaurant on Builyleon Road.. I understand that Police attended from Costorphine as none were on duty in Queensferry. By the time they arrived by blue light and sirens blaring, giving advanced warning of arrival, the youths had ran off into the night and hid in the surrounding grounds. They then headed off through Varney's housing estate damaging cars, causing alarm to the residents.

House Break-ins

A new trend we see is regular house break- ins over the course of the year. And more serious crime like the theft of £10,000 of lead from a house building site. Over time materials have been stolen from the FRC works too.

Conclusion

This crime and anti- social behaviours is becoming "A" typical. Our concerns are that the we don't have the officers on the ground in Queensferry that we should have. QDCC contests that the resource we enjoyed has been moved elsewhere and what little resource we do have in the form of the Community Police Officers is often compromised. It's a big area for the three officers to cover and whilst we understand that we don't accept it. The changes implemented over time, as described was just implemented, they were never discussed with community representatives.. We live in a democracy we are entitled to be consulted its our right to be consulted about operational changes as residents living in a district of Edinburgh entitled to a Police service that is keeping our community safe. There is a number of elderly living in Queensferry and many don't feel safe. More recently we are learning that a few people who have the ability and funds at their disposal are moving away from Queensferry and others who are contemplating this.

Further as you will know the council has a service level agreement (SLA) with Police Scotland and have allocated £2.6M in their budget to support community policing. The populous of South Queensferry do expect a better service in return for this investment.

I put it to you that the Police service being provided is compromised and QDCC and our Ward Councillors look to you to find the necessary Police resource to reduce and fight crime accordingly which is as far as QDCC can see is not happening.

Finally as I write this letter to you I'm learning that the administration officer working in the Queensferry Police Station is leaving so is this the "final nail in the coffin" for the Station at Queensferry and Policing will be managed from Drylaw and Corstorphine.

And that on Saturday evening 4th March '17 we had a similar event to last weekend at McDonalds and Varneys taking place in Echline, Stoneflatts with marauding youths up to mischief and damaging cars.

Yours sincerely

Keith Giblett
Chairman QDCC

CC;

Councillors Paterson, Shields and Work

Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP

Councillor Andrew Burns

Councillor Lesley Hinds

Peter Strong Localities Manager