

Your local voice



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Minutes of General Meeting Wednesday 28 October 2020

Opening of Meeting

The meeting was opened at 7.35pm.

The Chair, Tom Anderson, welcomed members and guests and those watching the Meeting on-line.

He reminded those attending of the Covid requirements and that the Meeting was being broadcast live.

Apologies: Mark Boast, Chris Steel, Giulia Jones, Janice Paull, Shelby Schofield, Emma Davison, Trevor Wilson

20 people attended the meeting.

Talk by Inspector Ross Williams – Officer in Charge of Woden Police

- Inspector Williams started off by providing some background of himself. He has been a police officer for over 20 years. Starting in Queensland and moving to the AFP after September 11 when he set up the Police presence at the Gold Coast Airport. He moved to Canberra in February this year to take the position of Officer in Charge of Woden Police.
- He has some 70 staff under his control.
- He stated that in relation to the recent murder at the skate park in Weston there had been the arrest on a minor and that further arrests were anticipated. The matter appears to be the culmination of threats and challenges issued on Facebook and the meeting had been arranged between groups and at least one of those attending had weapons.
- He recalled a number of break-ins in the area and said that two people had been arrested for break and enter. It seemed to him that there was a small group of people who went about their business and were arrested and removed for a period and then when released often started all over again.
- On pursuits, Inspector Williams said that the criminals know that the Police are likely to stop any pursuit as it is a safety issue for all concerned - Police, criminals and the public.
- He then went on to a Question and Answer session.

Q. What can we do to assist the Police?

A. One of the common things is what to do when there are burglars in your house without any sign of entry. So, you need to do things to make any intruder wary of

trying to enter your house.

- Lights are good as the intruders don't want to be seen.
- Cameras are always good
- Try not to leave valuable items in sight such as wallets, car keys.
- Ensure gates and doors are kept locked

Q. What should people do if they find someone in their house?

A. Some offenders carry weapons so we recommend that you do not confront offenders and try to keep yourself safe.

Q. One member had an issue with noise from traffic, particularly motor bikes on John Gorton Drive.

A. You should contact Access Canberra and ask them to use the Mobile speed camera vans and I will ask the road patrol to also keep an eye out.

Q. Police statistics – what's in and what's out?

A. Anything reported through Police Communications is included in the statistics. Even if the matter is not pursued by Police it will be reported as a non prosecution.

Q. We have a problem that the Police just won't/don't turn up after a report has been made.

A. If the Police didn't turn up then I am happy to speak to you after this is concluded.

Q. Molonglo Valley and building sites were a real focus for criminals in past times and this seems to have crime rise again and soon this will extend to Whitlam.

A. We operate on an intelligence driven basis and are regularly patrolling Denman Prospect.

Q. What do criminals look for?

A. They look for items that are small, portable and valuable as well as car keys. Crime is cyclical and sometimes an associate lives in the area. There are a few houses that are "honey nests" for offenders. I work with Housing ACT to try to deal with some of the problems being created because of this.

Q. Over time people post Holiday photos on Facebook and other social media sites which lead to problems. What should we do?

A. It is not a good idea to advertise/broadcast your movements. People need to make it harder for criminals as this can make a difference.

Q. How do we minimize "Hooning"?

A. This is one of those things that is hard. We are using aerial and covert technology to combat it. They do use cockatoos and lookouts to detect Police.

We have finite assets and we prioritise these as a matter of course.

Q. It's not "hooning" but dangerous driving. Across Coppins Crossing causeway and along John Gorton Drive. What can you do?

A. I will raise the matter with the road unit and ask to give this more attention.

Q. Do you have enough resources?

A. I am not going to discuss that as it is a question for the Senior AFP staff and others. Everyone could do with additional resources. Teachers, the health system, those who are in City Services as well as police.

If we were to open a new Police Station in Weston Creek or Molonglo then we would need to draw staff from across Police Stations in Canberra. This could cause issues for some stations.

One of the differences that I see is that in the ACT most cases go to Court and each person that goes to Court takes away one police person for a week and if and if other witnesses are required – they are usually called to give evidence then all the Police who attended the matter are then required for Court. The loss of the resource can be

great. In Queensland there is a different system and few cases actually went to

Court. We are working with Courts to attempt to streamline this and minimize the impost on police.

Q. What are the main issues that draw resources?

A. Domestic violence and mental health issues are vital response matters and they do take resources away from patrols but we have these as priorities. The Minister has funded some additional resources last F/Y under our futures program.

Q. We see teenagers roaming the streets – what can be done?

A. We see parents with issues and the children stay in the family and then we find that the next generation is coming through the system.

Q. Can volunteers assist the Police?

A. We welcome volunteers. We already have them in the system and they assist in Woden Police Station. Sgt Sharon Slater is the person to see or just come into the the Woden Police Station.

ACT Election – The Chair outlined the changes in the Members for Murrumbidgee. Jeremy Hanson, Giulia Jones, who was also the Deputy leader of the Opposition and Chris Steel had been re-elected while the new Members were Marisa Paterson and Emma Davison. He said that he was looking forward to meeting the new members as well as catching up with those who had been re-elected.

Murrumbidgee Members – no Members were present as they had been sworn in at the Assembly earlier in the day.

Surveys of Weston Creek and Molonglo – Council was planning short surveys on Weston Creek and Molonglo to try to determine what the important matters were for both areas.

General Meeting

Minutes of the meeting of 26 February 2020 – no minutes were available.

Treasurer's Report – the Treasurer was an apology and there was no Report

General Business

AGM – The Chair reminded Members that the November meeting would be also the AGM of Council and encouraged those with an interest to consider nominating for the Committee.

Updates

Old AFP site – The Chair and Deputy Chair brought Members up to date with the ACAT situation with the Village Building Company. The matter was still in the Hearing stage with the last dates for Hearings after 9 days already, the 17th and 18th of November.

Molonglo Developments - Ryan Helmsley reported that there was little to Report at this time.

Election promises – Council was preparing a Summary of the specific election promises from both the Labor Party and the Greens for the Weston Creek and

Molonglo Districts and the wider Territory wide policies.

Floriade Re-Imagined – There was a real positiveness about Floriade re-imagined and how well it had been received by the Community in general. Molonglo

residents were disappointed that there was little there to celebrate though. Council will work to try to continue this in the Community in the future.

Heysen Street Bike Path – it was pleasing that this had now been opened and that Heysen Street was also open again.

Garbage Collections – the Chair reminded those present that there would be no waste garbage collection on Monday in Weston Creek and Molonglo and would not be collected on a later day as it had been in the past.

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm

Next Meeting
Wednesday 25 November 2020
Community Centre Weston