



Park Hall Area Neighbourhood Watch

Summary of a speech given by Robert Read to mark his standing down as PHANW Chair

**Speech given at the end of the Committee Meeting - 2nd November 2021
Held at Broadway United Reformed Church, Gillity Avenue**

PHANW 2017-2021

PHANW is what it is because of the hard work and effort of its Committee members, both active and retired, street coordinators, and all the supporting groups.

RR was elected Chair in 2017 after the resignation of the previous Chair. A few months later at a meeting attended by more than 150 residents who were dismayed by the increase in crime and anti-social behaviour in the area and wanted to know what PHANW and the police were going to do about it.

PHANW at the time of the meeting was a very different organisation from today. It was, in truth, doing nothing other than reporting to residents what had happened and what crimes had been committed while offering generic advice in its magazines about home and personal security. It was not attempting to stop crime or make its members more secure.

The meeting in 2017 was a turning point as RR having recently been elected saw the need and potential to change things for the better.

At the time of the meeting a WhatsApp group was in existence, designed to allow residents to report incidents to each other. It was backed up by a team of active volunteers prepared to give up their time to respond to reports and requests for assistance. The WhatsApp group was brought under the wing of PHANW and linked to its membership giving it structure and organisation and increasing its profile with the police. PHANW was becoming proactive, and the WhatsApp group grew very quickly.

Street Watch was another new project which, thanks to the persistence and enthusiasm of those behind it, grew rapidly and has now become an integral part of PHANW. It has been fundamental in the development of a sense of community which PHANW is trying to foster.

The strap line which now accompanies all our published information, "Building a stronger, safer, caring community" is all about building that community spirit and encouraging residents to work together and communicate with each other. To that end we have tried to get our faces in front of as many people as possible by developing Watchword in to a first class magazine, using The Pioneer, and building our Facebook and Twitter presence.

Feedback from the community through our coordinators and via social media and WhatsApp has led to further developments such as Speed Watch and Litter Picking.

PHANW is unlike any other Neighbourhood Watch because it is based on a membership by subscription. Making fees mandatory builds a fund for reinvestment in the community.

We must emphasise PHANW's change of direction from 2017 onwards. In 2017 it didn't represent the community but in 2021 it does. It is incumbent on all who lead and represent PHANW in the future to keep it that way.