

Colliers Wood and North East Mitcham Community Forum Item 8a  
17 November 2010  
Chair's Report

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Gregory Udeh

5 residents attended, as well as four other councillors and officers from the council and its partners.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Action points from the previous meeting**

Inspector Jon Phillips said that there had been around 100 tickets issued to people driving while using a hand held mobile phone in July/August 2010, across the borough of Merton. He was awaiting September figures.

**Police update**

Inspector Phillips reported that builders had started on the new police office for Figges Marsh and Cricket Green wards, in the old Jobcentre Plus building in Mitcham Town Centre. He hoped that the front office would be used in future, but for the moment it would stay at the Mitcham office, which still operates a 24 hour service. The planned date for occupation of the new office was February 2011.

The Mitcham Town Centre Dispersal Zone expires on 9 December, and the Joint Tasking Group have agreed to renew it. As this is a complete renewal the decision is out to consultation for ten days. If approved, the renewal will take effect on 10 December. There had been a reduction in calls to the police from Mitcham Town Centre in July-October 2010 as against the same period in 2009. This might be related to the closing down of the 'House of God' in the old stable site. In reply to a question Insp. Phillips said that in this case the Dispersal Zone had not resulted in displacement to another area, although he agreed that it had sometimes elsewhere.

Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) shifts for the Halloween/Guy Fawkes period. Very limited numbers of calls were received.

All of the Merton SNTs are engaged in the 'Meet the Streets' initiative. All residents will be visited by the police in the next 18 months to two years, to find out their concerns and provide them with useful information.

The Metropolitan Police were going suffer cuts of 4% for each of the next three years. SNTs would remain, but almost certainly not in their present format of 1 Sergeant, two PCs and 3 PCSOs in every ward in London. Resources were likely to concentrated on areas of greater criminal activity, a number of Sergeant posts would be lost (although probably not in Colliers Wood/Abbey), and some ward panels would merge. Already there are task forces used for deployment across several boroughs as they are needed.

Councillor Nick Draper congratulated the police on their excellent achievement in making Merton the borough with the second lowest crime rate in London, and enjoying the highest confidence from residents of any London borough. Since this was a result of good policing, he was concerned that any reduction in police resources in Merton might result in crime rising and confidence dropping.

Councillor Edith Macaulay told the meeting about the 'Face the People' events that had taken place in Mitcham, Morden and Wimbledon over the past week, with the Borough Commander and the Council's Chief Executive meeting residents in a Reassurance Bus in the town centres.

Neil Martin praised preventive action taken by the police, mentioning particularly the women's self-defence training that PC Elaine Braddon runs. Inspector Phillips said that this would change, as training was to be concentrated at area level, and officers would have to choose to specialise if they wanted to continue as trainers. PC Braddon would prefer to remain in a SNT.

The Dispersal Zone in Singleton Close had been successful; the individuals chiefly concerned had moved.

There are no rough sleepers at present in Colliers Wood High Street.

Action is being taken to remove squatters from Denison Road.

*Action:* Inspector Phillips to seek update on the position from Sgt Richardson

There had been a borough wide increase in burglary. Various actions are being taken, including daily mapping and fortnightly intelligence meetings. Crime figures for theft from vehicles are high locally. Joint action is being taken with Abbey SNT, and there has been an important recent success.

Councillor Nick Draper said that the police's achievements were not talked up enough. Local activists and councillors should do so as a way of further increasing confidence.

The Chair thanked Inspector Phillips for his work and that of his teams.

### **Graveney Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ)**

Paul Atie, Network Improvement and Renewal Manager for Traffic and Highways, told the meeting that the CPZ included the 'ABC' roads north of Links Road, and the roads to the south of them. The CPZ had been approved by the appropriate Cabinet Member, and would start to be implemented with road marking from 10 December. There would be a break over the Christmas period and then it would be completed.

In reply to a question from Inspector Phillips, Paul said that he would be happy to discuss potential parking problems created by the CPZ for police from the Tooting station.

Councillor John Dehaney said that 'ABC' residents had been expecting the CPZ as they had wanted it.

In answer to a question Paul said that unwanted parking would not be displaced in the direction of Colliers Wood, but towards Streatham. He would like any suggestion for extension of the CPZ area to come from residents. He thought that this might happen when they saw the change to the 'ABC' roads.

### **Action in Merton (AIM) feedback**

Kris Witherington, Consultation and Community Engagement Manager, described the purpose of AIM. AIM is an initiative to make Merton a safer, cleaner and healthier place for all. It is a partnership approach looking to make a real difference to local communities in a short period of time. Local residents and the Safer Merton partnership work together to identify key issues affecting their area, and bring in services to address them.

AIM is a series of activity days to address local concerns including:

- Environmental issues
- Crime and anti-social behaviour issues
- Preventative health

Fire and other safety issues

The walkabout had taken place on 5 October, and the event itself on 22 and 23 October.

Those in attendance included:

- Met Police and Trading Standards who stopped a number of vehicles that either were not insured or were carrying waste illegally
- Met Police Safer Transport Team who gave advice on cycling and security-marked two children's bikes
- Health service who gave residents advice on various health concerns
- Safer Merton ASB offering their services and advice
- LBM Recycling team, providing advice on kitchen waste, recycling, graffiti, fly tipping, and street cleansing.

Also:

- Micro-chipping of dogs took place in Figge's Marsh and dog poo bags were handed out to dog walkers

<b>Action required following walkabout</b>	<b>Action taken</b>
Flytipping identified on a number of roads	Site inspections took place by Merton Priory Homes who made arrangements for rubbish to be removed from their properties on Shrewton Rd and at Pitcairn Court  Other identified flytipping removed by street cleansing who also undertook solo sweeping
Graffiti	Removal of graffiti carried out
Open land on Flanders	Pay back did a make over in Flanders

Crescent in need of tidying up	crescent within Colliers Wood Ward area, cutting back overhanging vegetation, and tidying up the main grass area of litter etc
Garden waste left in front gardens	Information on Merton's green waste services sent to identified properties
Broken fence which borders between 20-27 Flanders Crescent and 111 Lyveden Road – constantly torn down by youths who use the route for access	Wandle Housing Association, following a meeting with local residents and Councillor Nick Draper, have agreed to replacing the fence with a strong concrete or steel wall. The communal entry to the flats (broken for the last two years) is also due to be fixed and amendments are to be made to the rubbish area, which is currently in a state of disrepair.

Councillor Edith Macauley welcomed the used of Payback teams. Her experience as a Magistrate was that offenders on the Payback programme did not break the conditions of their probation.

The Chair asked what had happened to the abandoned furniture at Flanders Crescent.

*Action:* Find out what enforcement action was taken

### **Customer Contact task group**

Councillor John Dehaney introduced himself as a member of a councillor task group looking at how residents choose to contact the council. Merton has a smaller proportion of residents contacting it online than a number of other London boroughs. If more could be encouraged to do so it would create a saving for the council and council tax payers. He distributed questionnaires for residents to complete.

### **Section 106 and the community**

Bartle Sawbridge, Neighbourhood Governance Officer, said that the previous meeting of the forum had asked him to produce a proposal for community involvement in the section 106 process. He had brought forward a proposal for the period of austerity the public sector was entering. In previous years other councils have given substantial budgets to local resident assemblies to spend on local projects, but this has required quite large staff teams as well as financial resources. Merton is not in a position to follow this approach.

Bartle said that the proposal was based on discussions in each of the five community forums, and with a group of residents drawn from all of the forums.

This is the proposal:

“I’ve had an idea for the area...”

A proposal for community involvement in ‘section 106’ decisions

### **Proposal**

Merton’s community forums each set up a small group of residents and ward councillors (the ‘Ideas Group’) to seek ideas for small local improvements across their area.

Community groups and organisations, residents associations and individuals will be encouraged to send in their ideas. The Ideas Groups will sift them, only rejecting any that are clearly impractical, illegal or offensive. They will work up the others into projects, with the people or groups who submitted them, and put approximate costings on them. Projects will be prioritised, and the list agreed or amended by the full community forum.

Projects agreed by the forums will be sent to the appropriate departmental Implementation Officer at Merton Council. These officers already have responsibility for matching projects to section 106 contributions and other sources of funding that may be available.

Ideas Groups will meet as often as they think necessary, depending on how many ideas are coming in, and what resources may be available at any one time.

As this proposal is being written, residents in two areas– Raynes Park and Longthornton – are arranging public meetings with their local councillors, to put across the message that there may be funding available for residents’ ideas to be put into action; and how residents can become involved locally. Other areas may want to follow suit, but it is up to the different community forum areas to decide for themselves whether they want to operate on a smaller area, or across the whole area covered by their forum. They should bear in mind that there will not be any council officer support available to help them organise locally below community forum level.

### **Possible questions and answers**

*Why only ‘small local improvements?’*

- two reasons:

1. The purpose of section 106 contributions from developers is to provide appropriate compensation for the effects of a development. A good example is a development of family housing which puts pressure on school places locally. The council needs to use a section 106 contribution from that development to create new school places. Or changes and improvements to the road layout will be needed if a developer is given permission to build a supermarket. Section 106 can pay for this.

Large section 106 contributions will come from large developments from which there will be a large impact. The council needs to use and direct these to deal with the impact in a way that is consistent with its strategy and policies, often in a borough wide context.

2. Most of us might see how planting a few trees in a local open space would make it more attractive, or how a dropped kerb in a shopping street could make life easier for wheelchair or buggy users. Working out how to make a one-way system less of a nuisance to pedestrians is more complicated. So it makes sense to involve residents at a level that means something direct to them, and maybe build on that later.

*Why can't people send their ideas straight to the council?*

- They can. For example, Friends of Parks organisations have good relationships already with Implementation Officers, and a number of improvements to our parks come through this relationship. But the public spending cuts will stretch the council's resources, and it will be helpful to Implementation Officers for new resident interest in section 106 to be channelled through the Ideas Groups.
- Another advantage is that the process of reaching out to the community for ideas will help ward councillors and resident activists to involve more people in local issues, not just the funding of projects. And if people see that their ideas are listened to and acted on, they will continue to take an active interest in what is happening to their local area.

*Will there be enough money around to make this worthwhile?*

- Development has slowed during the recession, but new schemes continue to come through, and there is a substantial sum in section 106 contributions awaiting suitable projects to be matched to.

*How can residents know what money might be available?*

- A lot of information is publicly available, but not in one place. Planning officers intend to create a new page on the council's website with links to all of the relevant information. Ward councillors are informed whenever a section 106 agreement for a development in their ward is signed, and this information will be published more widely.

### **Next steps**

This proposal has been prepared at the request of the Colliers Wood and North East Mitcham Community Forum. If accepted or amended, a version will be taken to the other four forums during November and December. Detailed work on setting up and running the Ideas Groups can then start with the forums in the New Year.

Councillor Nick Draper thought that the proposal represented a very good idea. He warned, though, that residents needed to know that not all section 106 money generated in their ward would stay there.

Borough wide priorities would often mean that contributions would be spent in a different part of the borough or across it. He suggested that this was brought out in the revised proposal that was put to the other forums.

Andrew Wakefield agreed, and said, that as Chair of Merton Chamber of Commerce, he had been determined to see that s106 contributions from development of previous industrial or commercial land was used to promote employment or training opportunities for residents across Merton.

The meeting agreed that, with the addition suggested by Councillor Draper, the proposal should be taken forward to the other forums in November and December.

Bartle said that following the forum meetings there would be a meeting for ward councillors and forum representatives in January, to start to work out how to implement the proposal in different parts of the borough.

### **Transport issues**

Neil Malcolm reported back on the Public Transport Liaison Committee meeting held in Merton Civic Centre on 26 October. Residents have been campaigning for years for adequate public transport in the Lavender Fields/Colliers Wood area, with no apparent interest from Transport for London. At the meeting TfL's representative Robert Pontin did not respond on this issue, which he said was Merton Council's responsibility. The Chair of the meeting then said it should be pursued through the Community Forum, (which has also been unable to bring about any change). Neil has written to Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet member with responsibility for transport, and Richard Tracey, Member of the London Assembly.

Councillor Nick Draper added that he had received no comeback on the proposal for a bus route via Lavender Avenue. The only imminent change is for a bus to be diverted via Liberty Avenue, where residents do not want it.

Andre Wakefield invited Neil Malcolm to write to him in his capacity as Chair of the Transport Sub Committee of Merton Partnership.

### **Soapbox**

Keith Allen asked what had happened to Labour's election promise to reduce charges in CPZs. Councillor Nick Draper replied that they would probably be announced in January or February 2011.

Neil Martin outlined a case in which the Planning Applications Committee had refused retrospective consent to a development carried out without permission, but the owner has announced an intention to

appeal. It seemed unreasonable that the Committee's decision could be delayed for such a long time.  
Councillor Nick Draper knew the case and its complexities, and commented that planning law favours the developer over local residents.

**Next meeting:**

The original date has been changed to avoid a clash with Colliers Wood Residents Association.

The next forum meeting will now be on Thursday, 10 March 2011, at a venue to be arranged



The meeting was held in Raynes Park Library Hall, and chaired by Councillor Linda Scott.

36 residents attended, as well as 8 other Merton Councillors, and officers from the council and its partners.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **Councillor Scrutiny Task Groups**

Councillor Chris Edge invited residents to complete survey forms produced by two task groups of councillors. One group was looking at how residents access council services, the other at the impact of late night drinking on the night time economy of Wimbledon and Mitcham.

### **Action points from the previous meeting**

Bartle Sawbridge went through the action points and the responses received to them.

### **Police update**

Sergeant Dan Wheatley, from Raynes Park Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) told the meeting that plans for restructuring SNTs were still in progress. Consultation with residents about where they regarded as their 'natural neighbourhood' (as opposed to council ward) might influence the way in which SNTs were restructured. Posts of Sergeant were more at risk than other SNT posts.

Significant arrests had recently been reported in the press. Two people had been arrested in connection with more than 300 thefts from vehicles in and around London, including 12 in Raynes Park. There had been a reduction in offences since the arrests.

In response to a question Sgt Wheatley suggested that people should send replies to items on the Community Safe e-mail address to the appropriate SNT, as Community Safe is not set up to deal with replies.

A resident commented that senior police officers should recall the increase in crime that followed the ending of community policing thirty years ago when considering cuts.

### **Gas main replacement in Coombe Lane**

Stuart Pritchard, with colleagues from Southern Gas Networks and their contractor, Morrison, described the work that would be carried out after the Wimbledon tennis championships in 2011.

The 30 inch cast iron main would be replaced with a 630mm pipe along Coombe Lane between Copse Hill and the Old Wimbledonians Sports Ground. The road would be made one way, with a cycle lane running counter to the one way system. Work would start after the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in July 2011, and would last a maximum of 16 weeks.

No access would be required to people's properties.

The 57 bus would be diverted by Beverley Way and Coombe Lane West.

Councillor Chris Edge said that the Apostles Residents Association were monitoring the proposal, and suggested that residents contact them with comments, rather than raising issues individually. Their Chair is Peter Fischer, who can be contacted at: [peterfischer@pj464.co.uk](mailto:peterfischer@pj464.co.uk)

Businesses were being badly affected by the gas works to Kingston Road. They had been given compensation packs, but would have to approach Merton council if they were looking for rent or business rate rebates.

Elaine Richards, LBM Network Coordinator, said that future gas projects in the area would include completing Merton High Street, and work in Haydons Road.

### **Merton Council's approach to spending cuts**

Councillor Mark Betteridge introduced himself as Deputy Leader of the Council, and Caroline Holland, Director of Corporate Services. He described the times as difficult and challenging, and spoke about the funding gap faced by the council for 2011/12:

- the council must produce a balanced budget, and this will be predicated on a council tax freeze
- the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) suggested a gap of £25 million from 2011-13. That gap now looks like £42 million, and £70 million for 2011-15
- a step change was required in service delivery; the council was open to ideas from everyone about how to achieve this

Caroline Holland added that the council had built assumptions around Government plans into the forecast, around public sector pay, inflation and loss of Government grant (£30 million over 4 years). The council needs to find how it can share services with other councils. Targets for reductions have been given to all departments – not equally, as it is important to protect frontline services as far as possible. The latest position was reported to Cabinet on 8 November, and to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission on 18 November. £9.5 million has been found to reduce the gap to date. A risk assessment is applied to each type of proposed saving in terms of the probability of it being delivered. Key dates in the budget making process would be:

At some point in December: Government announces local government settlement

13 December: Cabinet

17 January: Cabinet

25 January-8 February: Scrutiny of budget proposals

9 February: Overview and Scrutiny Commission

14 February: Budget Cabinet

2 March: Council (which must agree a budget)

(individual grants from Government departments may be announced throughout this period)

Caroline Holland also spoke of the 4 year capital programme, which is dominated by the Primary Schools Expansion Programme.

On the significance of the council tax freeze, she said that the Government had promised a 2.5% annual grant till 2014/2015 to councils that froze the tax in 2011/12.

The following points came out of questions and discussion:

- Reduction of £70 million over 4 years would represent about 30% of the council's expenditure
- The Human Resources service is already shared with Sutton, and the council is looking at sharing legal services with Richmond. The new Chief Executive of Wandsworth may be interested in sharing services with other boroughs The South London Waste Strategy is a joint venture with Kingston, Sutton and Croydon
- At the beginning of this financial year there was a General Fund balance of £10.2 million, and £8.5 million was carried over from the previous year's underspend. This money had been set aside for redundancies, the capital programme and transformation of services to deliver longer term savings. There is some underspend this year as well, which will help to reduce the gap
- Labour had pledged to introduce wheeled bins, but in the current financial climate, and with very different views of their desirability, the Executive has decided to ask the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel to consider the issue. With the Chair's casting vote Labour councillors would have a majority on the Panel. The Panel would consider whether long term savings would result from introducing the bins.
- A £25 million budget gap had been identified in March 2010, and so all parties had taken this into consideration before the May elections
- There is only £100,000 available in grants to deal with flooding emergencies, and future grants have been cut by the Government. It may be possible to plan jointly with Wandsworth in future
- Councillors, as well as the council's communications team, have a very important role in communicating the budget making process to residents. Although the Raynes Park Community Forum is very well attended, that is not the case with some other forums. The Council will only know the funding position just before Christmas, and then there will be two months before the budget must be set. This puts limits on the amount of communication and consultation that could take place
- PFI credits for the South London Waste Plan will not now be available. There may be long term, but not short term, savings from the new arrangements

### **Proposed changes at the Bushey Road/Grand Drive Junction**

Paul Robinson, LBM Traffic Engineer, outlined a proposal to prevent right turns northbound into Bushey Road from Grand Drive. This would alleviate the serious congestion for traffic wishing to go straight on along Grand Drive at the junction. He answered a large number of questions during and after his presentation. Anyone requiring more information can contact him at [paul.robinson@merton.gov.uk](mailto:paul.robinson@merton.gov.uk)

### **Raynes Park Enhancement Plan and Planning update**

Paul McGarry told the meeting that the £370,000 budget for the town centre had been protected. The detailed design, focusing on the Bellmouth, had been prepared, and work would start on 15 January and be completed by the end of February.

There was to be a meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> December to finalise the removal of the remaining hoardings and stumps.

The Raynes Park Association had prepared leaflets about parking in Raynes Park which is on [www.merton.gov.uk/raynespark](http://www.merton.gov.uk/raynespark)

Waitrose is due to open in February, and all of the flats in the St James development had been sold. The Public Art Group had recommended cladding the Thames Water box with stainless steel, and St James had been happy to go along with this. The Group will have the opportunity to approve the detailed design.

In answer to a resident's comment Paul said that there were problems with 'Planning Explorer' on the council's website as the server had been moved. He would check the position. It can be located at [www.merton.gov.uk/planning](http://www.merton.gov.uk/planning) - please update any 'favourites' or 'links' as the URL has changed,

The Lambton Road Medical Centre is to go ahead. It is being built by a company called Medicx, and will be leased to the GPs who will work there.

The section 215 notice on the old Pine Shop in Worple Road had lapsed and not been complied with. The council is now looking to prosecute.

There has been a pre-application meeting about the Junction Tavern site. Details were confidential (as are all pre-apps) and could not be released to the meeting.

Negotiations on the Atkinson Morley site continue.

There would be a public meeting around the Raynes Park Playing Fields planning application.

The Electrical Sub-Station site has planning permission. The council is asking the Homes and Communities Agency whether it could help with the development.

There had been no further proposals relating to the Rainbow Industrial site, which is no longer on the South London Waste Plan list.

### **Soapbox**

It was possible that West Barnes Library would close on Mondays, or possibly completely. The issue was going to Cabinet on 13 December.

**Next meeting: 7.15pm, Thursday 24 March 2011, in Raynes Park Library Hall**

Morden Community Forum  
1 December 2010  
Chair's Report

Item 8(c)

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Maurice Groves

6 residents attended, as well as 5 other councillors and officers of the council and its partners.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Police update**

Sergeant Graham Chapman, from West Barnes Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) said that he was representing Inspector Matt Boyd, who was unable to attend.

Sgt Chapman reported a reduction in crime in Ravensbury ward between June and October, an increase from a low base in Cannon Hill, and little change in St Helier and Lower Morden. Responding to a question he said that crime fell during the school summer holidays in West Barnes, but this varied from ward to ward. He agreed to note reports of drug taking near South Thames College in Morden Park at around 9 a.m. and lunchtime. He said that the college was involved with the police.

On police restructuring Sgt Chapman said that there was likely to be a reduction in the number of SNT Sergeants, with wards sharing them, and that resources would be concentrated on areas that needed them most. In response to a question he said that Green Lanes SNT office was very probably being looked at, as all police resources were being reviewed. This did not mean that it would necessarily close.

Councillors Groves and Southgate were both concerned for the future for SNTs in successful, low crime wards such as Lower Morden, St Helier and Merton Park. Councillor Southgate hoped that greater flexibility would come from the restructuring.

**Public Health**

Julia Groom, who works jointly with Sutton and Merton PCT and Merton Council, spoke about infectious diseases and how to prevent them. Although they now represent a small proportion of serious illness in the UK, they could still be dangerous for very young and old people. She highlighted the importance of vaccinating young children against measles, and said that the suggested link to autism had been disproved and the research discredited. The slides from her presentation can be found at:

<http://www.merton.gov.uk/community/communityforums/mordencommunityforum.htm>

*Action:* Julia said that she would find out what the shelf life of the anti-Tamiflu vaccine was.

Trevor McIntosh, Merton's Building Control Manager, told the meeting that Building Control were responsible for ensuring correct connections to clean

and foul drains in buildings in the borough. They were also concerned about surface water drainage, wanting to maximise its return into the ground. They favoured porous surfaces in front gardens where householders wanted to park their cars. Not everyone was aware of recent changes to the law in this respect.

Building control were also concerned with thermal insulation and ventilation.

In fact, they controlled all building work in Merton.

In answer to a question he said that the Environment Agency was responsible for the activities of car washing businesses if dangerous chemicals were being released by them into water courses.

Shared drains were currently the responsibility of the households who shared them, but would shortly become Thames Water's.

Andrew Bradley, from Environmental Health and Trading Standards, described the work of the service.

The council has no direct control over water supply and drainage, but can try to get Thames Water to take action when required. The local authority has to make sure that water is wholesome, sufficient, and getting into people's houses. In the past a lot of testing was carried out, but this has become less necessary as standards have increased to the point where our water is possibly the best in Europe. The council is now more concerned with possible disruption to water supply.

Trading Standards are concerned with the quality of bottled water. Merton is the lead authority for LIDL superstores. Andrew showed a bottle of contaminated water from one batch that had slipped through quality control. In this case it had not been necessary for national stocks to be withdrawn, as the problem had been spotted early enough. But the Food Standards Agency can be contacted about problems of this sort and local authorities alerted throughout the country within a few hours.

For the 2012 Olympics the council will be looking at the quality of water in the many mobile vans that will be in use selling refreshments. It will also be important to ensure that all vulnerable buildings are Legionella free.

Other concerns are drainage, where the law is complicated, and restaurants and fat disposal (lamb fat in particular solidifies very quickly).

The service has received 450 notifications of gastro-enterital illnesses since January 2010.

There are a lot of food manufacturers in Merton which have to be inspected, with e-coli always a concern.

Local authorities now have powers to seek orders to detain people with TB, and had obtained a 'Part 2a' order to detain a patient who had absconded, in hospital, where he is now under 24 hour guard.

Andrew described the 'Score on the Doors' scheme, which rates cafes, restaurants and pubs selling food, on a zero to five star scale. Residents can check an establishment's rating by going to the Scores on the Doors website. In reply to a question, Andrew said that the service had not tested cooking oil in chips shops.

He hoped that the transfer of Public Health functions to local authorities would be helpful.

A resident was concerned about the frequency that gulleys were cleared.

They frequently became blocked, leading to local flooding, and pedestrians

being soaked by passing vehicles. The council now only had one gulley-cleaning machine, when it used to have have two. He disputed the suggestion that the new machine was more efficient.

*Action:* Seek a statement on the gulley cleaning service.

### **Balancing the night time economy**

Councillor Peter Southgate introduced this item as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission. One of its task groups was investigating the impact of late night drinking on Wimbledon and Mitcham town centres. It wanted to know the extent to which people who might otherwise use the town centres in the evening were put off from doing so by the drinking and associated behaviour.

One resident suggested that supermarket sales of cheap, high alcohol drinks, especially to young people, was a much greater problem than pubs, most of which were well managed. Under age drinking should be looked at.

### **Section 106 and community involvement**

Bartle Sawbridge, Neighbourhood Governance Officer, introduced a proposal that had been worked up with representatives from all of the Community Forums. He said that the proposal was a realistic one for the difficult economic times that faced the council. It would create 'Ideas Groups' for each community forum area, made up of ward councillors and local residents. They would seek out, consider and filter ideas for small local improvements from community groups and organisations, and interested individuals.

Practical ideas would be prioritised and sent to the appropriate departmental Implementation Officer. These officers already select projects for section 106 and other external funding.

Visible success in having projects adopted could encourage local groups to become more active in their communities, and possibly lead to greater involvement in the funding process.

The full proposal, 'I've had an idea for the area...' can be read at:

<http://www.merton.gov.uk/community/communityforums.htm>

### **Soapbox**

Bob Whitfield was most concerned about council newsletters and similar publications, such as 'My Merton' in this borough. He said that politicians had a built-in interest in them as vehicles for their propaganda. No case could be made for them continuing at considerable cost to council tax payers, particularly in this time of major cuts to local authority budgets. Independent local newspapers provided the only channel for proper democratic accountability.

Elsbeth Clarke recommended Brent Council's guidance to householders on dealing with snow outside and near their homes. The leaflet is enclosed with this report, and can be found at:

<http://www.merton.gov.uk/community/communityforums/mordencommunityforum.htm>

Councillor Peter Southgate said that there was also guidance on Merton Council's website: [http://www.merton.gov.uk/living/transport-streets/roadandpathwaymaintenance/winter\\_maintenance.htm](http://www.merton.gov.uk/living/transport-streets/roadandpathwaymaintenance/winter_maintenance.htm)

Alan Ellis raised the issue of a broken barrier in Morden Park near the Register Office. He suggested that it should be replaced with an electronically controlled entry, and that the people who worked there, disabled people and others, could be issued with cards to enter.

*Action:* Investigate possibilities for improving arrangements.

On a different point he congratulated the council for the gritting of main roads, but suggested that a list be made of hilly back roads, which became lethal in icy weather. These could be given priority for gritting.

*Action:* Raise this point with Traffic and Highways

### **Councillors' update**

Councillor Peter Southgate reported that the old Wimbledon House School was squatted. The squatters were friendly, and the council's lawyers were taking up the case.

Councillor Dennis Pearce said that the campaign around the Morden Tavern continued. Residents were concerned about the loss of the pub, and also about what they saw as over-development on the site.

He had gone to all of the Primary School Expansion meetings. It was possible the Morden Primary might be expanded.

Councillor Philip Jones said that there was still no sign of work starting on the new GP surgery, but thought that there would be action soon.

Councillor John Sargeant referred to the consultation on possible closure during school hours of a footpath in John Innes Park between two parts of the Rutlish School site.

He also noted that Transport for London had responded rapidly to a problem with traffic lights on London Road in St Helier Ward raised at the recent Public Transport Liaison Meeting.

**Next meeting:** The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 23 March, in the Merton Civic Centre Committee Rooms.