

Wimbledon Community Forum
2 December 2015
Chair's Report

The meeting was held at the Wimbledon Methodist Church, and chaired by Councillor James Holmes. Approximately 15 residents attended, as well as eight other Merton Councillors, and officers from the council and its partners. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Thames Water – water conservation and Smart Meters

Mumin Islam, Metering Stakeholder Liaison at Thames Water, and his colleagues Clare Collard and Laura Edwards, spoke to residents about Thames Water's Smart Meters and provided information on how residents could conserve water. The presentation can be found at <http://www.merton.gov.uk/community-living/communityforums/wimbledoncommunityforum.htm>

Smart meters will be fitted in homes of Thames Water customers for free. Unlike standard meters, which are fitted in homes and provide a dial reading, smart meters are online and provide greater information. They are located outside rather than in homes, but placing them inside houses is a possibility for the future.

In response to questions, Thames Water said:

- Other than the Sewers Crossing Railways scheme – an ongoing scheme to improve sewer infrastructure - no major water works are currently planned in Merton as the borough has fewer leaks than other areas. Thames Water will notify councillors and residents in advance of any further works planned in the future.
- Smart water meters are being rolled out across London over the next 10/20 years. The programme is not currently in LB Merton and Thames Water are not able to confirm a start date yet but will notify residents well in advance of any changes to their bill.
- Smart meter roll-out programmes take three to four years to complete in each borough; households without a meter receive smart meters first, but eventually the company will roll them out to all customers. Current analogue meters will not be removed until they reach the end of their 15-year life-cycle.
- Thames Water will contact each customer individually about the installation of their smart water meter. Any residents with concerns about moving to a smart meter because of the impact on their bill or sensitivities to electromagnetic waves, should contact Thames Water once they have received their first letter which will have contact numbers on.
- An educational programme on how to save water is planned. In terms of smart meters, all customers will go on a two-year transition period during which they will stay on their normal bill but will be able to see how much their metered bill would be, helping them to adjust their water usage in anticipation of metered billing.
- Smart meters will mainly be installed underneath pavements rather than underneath roads.
- The installation of smart meters is contracted out; however Thames Water works very closely with its contractor, Morrison Utilities, whose employees are fully trained and wear Thames Water uniforms.

- The roll-out programme is not intended to generate revenue and therefore there will be no additional charge to customers for its implementation.
- Thames Water is working closely the government's Information Commission Office to ensure data protection of its customers.
- Thames Water's planning department works with local authorities to look at implementing the required water infrastructure when major regeneration developments are planned.

Richard Tracey, Assembly Member

Richard Tracey, the London Assembly member for Merton and Wandsworth provided residents with an overview of the projects he's been working on in the run up to his retirement after eight years as Assembly Member:

Assembly Members have been involved in the scrutiny of the police budget and lobbied the Home Secretary and MPs to prevent budget cuts. The Comprehensive Spending Review has now concluded that the police will not face any budget cuts, and Assembly Members have been reassured by the Police Commissioner and Borough Commanders that the priority is borough and neighbourhood policing.

Mr Tracey has also been heavily involved in transport matters in London, including campaigning Crossrail 2 for longer trains to cope with commuter capacity and securing some more bus lines to support the new train network.

In response to questions about Crossrail 2, Mr Tracey said:

- Consideration is still being given to whether Crossrail 2 will include a track running through Tooting or Balham. Consultation over such issues is still taking place.
- Talks are ongoing over providing links from South London to Heathrow Airport. There is currently no suggestion that Crossrail 2 would divert from its proposed North-South route, but Mr Tracey/Councillor David Dean agreed to follow up with Network Rail the possibility of a link from Fulwell to the airport (feedback from Mr Tracey to be provided on this matter). Discussions are already taking place for the Crossrail Regional option to go west of Wimbledon.
- Mr Tracey has been lobbying for a Tramlink extension, but although this is an aspiration of Sutton and Merton councils, it is not in TfL's current budget plans, therefore is not funded.
- TfL is being encouraged to develop much of the land it owns for housing.
- Mr Tracey agreed with concerns voiced by Councillor Peter Walker that the construction period of Crossrail 2 could have a detrimental effect on Wimbledon Town Centre and its economy. Mr Tracey has raised this as a concern with Network Rail.

Mr Tracey has been working on the London Waste and Recycling Board to assist boroughs in being more efficient in handling waste and recycling and giving them funding to help them with this goal.

Greater London National Park City

Ben Brace, a volunteer on the campaign to make London a National park City explained what the project is about. A presentation on the campaign can be viewed at

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

The campaign is seeking support from Merton's wards - to date three of Merton's wards of signed up to show their support (Colliers Wood, Cricket Green and Longthornton). Once support has been obtained, volunteers will try to raise funds to create an entity to drive the campaign forward. Support can be given by signing up on the campaign website <http://www.nationalparkcity.london/>.

There is cross-party support for the campaign from all of the current London Mayoral candidates.

Motions to Council and Soapbox

These items were postponed to the next meeting due to time restrictions.

Dates of future meetings:

Monday 14 March 2016 at The Mansel Road Centre, Trinity United Reformed Church, Mansel Road, London SW19 4AA

