

Colliers Wood and North East Mitcham Community Forum
19 October 2016
Chair's Report

Councillor John Dehaney chaired the meeting. Five residents attended, as well as five other councillors and officers from the council and its partners. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Police update

PCSO Dave Russell provided an update on policing issues in the area and shared the latest crime figures.

Detective Chief Superintendent Theresa Breen has started in Merton as the new Borough Commander. The Safer Neighbourhood policing model is changing with another PC to join each ward team before Christmas. These officers are being re-tasked from the Local Policing Teams and it is possible further changes will be made in the future to strengthen the ward teams. Across the Met Smart Water is being used to mark property. This is being targeted initially in areas with high rates of burglary so will not be coming to Colliers Wood in the first instance.

Operation Fortress has seen a high reduction in burglaries across Colliers Wood. The operation involves providing free burglary prevention surveys to residents and targeting those with UPVC doors left unlocked. Colliers Wood had the highest reduction and highest number of surveys in the borough. Since this work there has been a spike in burglaries during August and September 2016 due to the work of a single prolific offender who has now been arrested.

New priorities to tackle hate crime and support vulnerable people have been introduced. This includes working closely with local partners and ongoing outreach work to encourage victims to report incidents.

New anti-social behaviour powers are now being used. The new Community Protection Notice does not involve going to court and people can be arrested for breaching. This can lead to a Community Behaviour Order with a long timeframe and jail for breaches. This has already led to a landlord evicting an anti-social business tenant.

In answer to a question PCSO Russell said that he was not aware of the timetable for rolling out body worn cameras to officers in Merton.

Colliers Wood Library

Anthony Hopkins, Head of Library & Heritage Services, provided an update on the building of a new library in Colliers Wood. The main structures of the library are complete with the mechanical works still to be completed. A consultation on the interior of the new library took place over the summer and Anthony thanks those who got involved by coming to the meetings or

completing the online survey. The responses to the designs suggested were mainly positive with natural colours preferred. The results can be found at <https://arena.yourlondonlibrary.net/web/merton/donald-hope-redevelopment>

Final plans for the internal look of the library will be shared next spring before the works commence. The new library is due to open next summer.

Merton Council update

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Alambritis provided an update on borough wide and local developments.

As well as the new library in Colliers Wood opening in 2017 Stephen was pleased to report that all Merton's libraries would be staying open. The role of volunteers has been vital in achieving this.

On schools Stephen said that Merton schools were the third most improved in the country, and 20 primary schools expanded to create 21 new forms of entry. In addition solar panels are being installed on all primary schools. The need for more primary school places will soon create demand for new secondary school provision and the Council is working with the Harris Foundation to secure a site for a new school in nearby South Wimbledon. An announcement on this will be made shortly.

Work is also beginning on the new family leisure centre in Morden with a new habitat being created for crested newts. The facility is due to open in early 2018 when the old swimming pool would be demolished and returned to open land. Stephen was pleased to report AFC Wimbledon would be playing in the borough, hopefully in time for the 2018/19 season. Crossrail 2 is also being planned to come to Wimbledon and the council is working with TfL to protect the town centre.

The Council has frozen council tax since 2010 as well as not cutting support for low income households. We are now consulting on whether to continue the freeze as planned, or to increase council tax to either protect just adult social care or all services. You can complete the consultation form in My Merton or go to www.merton.gov.uk/consultations

The Council continues to lead on developing shared services with other boroughs. Wandsworth is now seeking to be the fifth borough to join our successful shared legal services.

In Colliers Wood Stephen was pleased to see that following the pressure from the Council the works on the tower are finally nearing completion with 180 new homes and additional retail outlets. The opening of the new Baltic Close outdoor space added a great facility for residents.

Upcoming events includes the two excellent fireworks displays on 3 and 5 November (www.merton.gov.uk/fireworks), remembrance Sunday (<http://www.merton.gov.uk/news-events/events/remembrance.htm>) and free parking in council car parks in the run up to Christmas.

In response to questions about the council tax consultation Stephen said a 2% rise equated to an extra £21.79 for a band D household in 2017/18, or £44 for 2017/18 and 2018/19 combined. There are huge pressures on social care services and the 2% precept will not address the gap in social care and health funding. Erin Cowhig Croft from Healthwatch Merton shared a report they produced earlier in the year which highlighted the impact of reductions in social care funding on individuals. The report can be found at http://www.healthwatchmerton.co.uk/sites/default/files/hwm_asc_focus_group_s_write_up_report.pdf. Stephen said that Merton was continuing to work with other boroughs from across South West London to look at health and social care provision across the borough.

In response to other questions Stephen said that the cinema chain that had been looking at a site in Mitcham had withdrawn but others may be interested. The possible extension of the Tramlink from South Wimbledon to Sutton was still being considered by TfL but no funding has been secured. The Council is ambitious for all the town centres and is currently prioritizing Mitcham and Morden as well as smaller areas like South Wimbledon.

The new waste collection contract will save the boroughs involved £2m each year and using wheeled bins will help increase recycling and reduce the litter created by foxes and other wildlife tearing open black sacks. Blocks of flats will continue to be collected separately and alternative arrangements will be made for properties that open directly onto the footpath. A weekly food waste collection will be maintained. The council will be continuing to fine those who litter and is already using new powers to fine fly-tippers.

Soapbox

Residents asked for an update on the future location of the Colliers Wood GP surgery. Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah had recently met Merton CCG and confirmed they still planned to move the surgery but there has been no news since the meeting.

Councillor Cooper-Marbiah also agreed to follow up on residents' concerns about a property on Fortescue Road.

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