

## Mitcham Community Forum 25 March 2014 Chair's Report

The meeting was held at Vestry Hall, and chaired by Councillor Ian Munn. 20 residents attended, as well as five other Councillors, and officers of the council and its partners. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **Police Update**

Inspector Stuart Buchan said that the budget cuts since the Olympics had resulted in considerable changes to neighbourhood policing. However, he was pleased to announce that five new officers would join the Mitcham sector in November with another five joining in the New Year. This would take the number of officers slightly over the other two sectors. Insp Buchan also confirmed that there are no plans to close Mitcham police station, and works were taking place to improve the building so that specialist teams could use it.

Insp Buchan said that crime rates were falling in most areas but Merton has seen an increase in Domestic Violence being reported in line with the whole of London. The police have worked to encourage reporting so hopefully this is having an impact. Insp Buchan also said that his team were aware of the issues of street drinkers in Mitcham and they have been using the power to confiscate alcohol, with more than 400 litres seized to date. They would also be looking to issue Anti-social behaviour orders to the most prolific street drinkers. The problem seems to stem from the culture difference for some East Europeans where street drinking was socially.

A number of concerns were raised that Insp Buchan agreed to look into further:

- Motorcyclists using the Tramway path on their way to Mitcham Common, especially on Sundays
- Speeding on Rowan Road
- Cycling on pavements if residents could identify hot spots

### **Merton Council Budget**

Councillor Mark Allison presented an update on the Council's budget and how decisions would be for the next four years. The presentation can be found at: <http://www.merton.gov.uk/community-living/communityforums/mitchamcommunityforum.htm>

Councillor Allison said that Council Tax would continue to be frozen at the 2010 level until 2018. Along with continued reductions in government grant this would create pressures on the budget of £32m over the next four years. The Council is reviewing every service to find savings or cuts and will be making announcements over the next few years. Decisions would be made using the 'July principles', which emphasis protecting the vulnerable.

## **Burn Bullock**

Sam Amoako-Adofo, Planning Enforcement Team Leader updated the meeting. English Heritage has added the building to their Heritage at Risk Register from October 2014. It will remain on the list until the required works for its preservation have been carried out and the building is occupied. A Listed Building Repairs notice to require identified works to be carried out for the preservation of the building, was issued in August and the owner has until 27 October to submit a Listed building application to the Council for approval. If they fail to do so the Council would consider applying to the Secretary of State for a compulsory purchase order. That process may take around six months. In addition they have until Monday 20 October to cease the use of the car park and remove the cars for sale from the site or be subject to prosecution. Officers are also aware of the presence of squatters..

## **Rediscover Mitcham update**

Anthony Bailey from the Future Merton team, Merton Council, presented an update on the proposals for improving Mitcham Town Centre. The presentation can be found at:

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

Anthony confirmed the planned timetable for works, with enabling works starting in October; removal of the clock tower in November; phase one construction starting in January and the wider works taking place in winter 2015. There is also a consultation on parking restrictions taking place until 25 October.

In response to questions Anthony confirmed a commitment to a public toilet but the location is yet to be decided. He also confirmed that Transport for London have approved the phase one works and will be approving the wider works once the review process has been completed. Anthony said that the new marked cycle lanes on Majestic Way should reduce conflict with pedestrians, and that the new water feature would be suitable for children's play, using the same standard as in Tamworth.

Anthony also offered to circulate further information about the Christmas lights switch on event and the maps being produced for local businesses.

## **Heritage Lottery Fund bids**

Jil Hall from Merton Council's Parks team described the two proposals that have been submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). One of the bids is under the Parks for People funding programme and relates to the Canons and Madeira Hall. The proposal would see the park upgraded and the hall converted to use for weddings, events and community groups. This bid will be considered by (HLF) on 16 December and if successful a second, more detailed bid would be submitted in 2016 with a view to starting works in 2017.

The second bid is under the Townscape and Heritage programme and relates to the Cricket Green area. Under the bid improvements would be made to the

Burn Bullock, the Cricket Pavilion, Vestry Hall, the Fire Station, and other buildings on Church Road. This bid will be considered on 26 January and if successful and stage two bid would be submitted later in 2015 with a view to commencing works in 2016. Both bids are for five year projects.

The images used by Jil in her presentation can be found at:

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

In response to questions Jil said that there would be extensive community involvement in putting together stage two bids if we are successful. There would be a range of projects and events to encourage the local community to get involved. Jil also said that under the plans the playing fields would be retained but would be reconfigured to accommodate a new path. An additional play ground would also be added and the current one improved along with a new natural play environment. Jil was not aware of plans being considered by Merton Clinical Commissioning Group for redevelopment of Birches Close so will speak with colleagues. Jil also confirmed that war memorials would be protected and are being added to the local list.

### **Safer Merton consultation**

Ian Callaghan from the Safer Merton team at Merton Council asked residents and local businesses to get involved in their annual survey of crime and community safety. The survey is designed to get beyond simple crime statistics and record how safe residents feel. The survey is open until 31 October and can be found at [www.merton.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.merton.gov.uk/consultations)

### **Soapbox**

The Merton CCG plans for a new local healthcare centre were raised. Councillor Munn confirmed that the Council does not have a preferred site but has been offering support and advice to the CCG. All of the sites being considered by the CCG were included in the Sites and Policies document and for those that are rejected they would be available for other development.

A question was asked about a transport survey of the use of Church Road. Councillor Munn said that those results had not yet been published. Further surveys were needed but when full results were available, and conclusions drawn they would be published. A meeting with the Community Liaison Group would take place with SITA on the 20 October. Those residents experiencing unpleasant smells should continue to complain to SITA.

Concern was also raised about the impact on traffic resulting from the expansion of Date Valley and Cramner Schools. Richard Lancaster from Future Merton said that both schools have travel plans in place but there have been noticeable problems since the start of the term in September. His team would be meeting with Date Valley to address these issues with them. If necessary increased parking enforcement of restrictions will be put in place.

It was reported that businesses had responded well to Merton in Bloom and an award ceremony would take place on 23 October. There are no plans to stop Merton in Bloom.

A consultation will shortly be taking place on the junction of Cedars Avenue and St Georges Road.

**Date of next meeting: 18 March 2015, 7.15pm, at Vestry Hall.**