

Wimbledon Community Forum  
20 March 2013  
Chair's Report

Item 8(a)

The meeting was held in Wimbledon Methodist Church and was chaired by Councillor Henry Nelles. 12 residents attended, as well as Merton Councillors, Inspector Jonathan Wilson from the Merton Police, and officers from the council and its partners. Councillor Nelles welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## **Matters Arising**

- A motion to introduce a 20-mile an hour speed limit across the borough was defeated at the last Council meeting
- There was uncertainty over whether the Council is looking to develop a new secondary school. This would be raised with Tom Proctor
- Councillors had attended an event in January to look at the Mayoral funding for Merton High Street. A second meeting will take place in April
- No planning applications have been received for the Plough Lane stadium site

## **Changes to Policing in Merton**

Inspector Wilson set out the proposed changes to policing in Merton as part of the Metropolitan Police Service's (MPS) Local Policing Model. The MPS is looking to save £500m through efficiency measures including buildings, staffing and IT. Across London this would see 136 front counters closing. In Merton the following changes would be made:

- Wimbledon would remain a 24/7 front counter
- Mitcham front counter would only open Monday-Friday 9am-5pm but would still be used as a base by officers
- Morden would close
- Other Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) bases will close as leases expire over the next three years
- Additional contact points will be developed using libraries, community centres, shops and other popular locations
- SNTs will 'parade' at Wimbledon station at the start of their shift

Other changes will be made to the make up of SNTs. Each SNT will have a ring-fenced PC and PSCO devoted to the ward. Other officers will be available flexibly across the sector (Wimbledon, Morden and Mitcham sectors make up the borough). This will offer more flexibility across the teams to target priorities. We anticipate that numbers of PCs available will double from 12 to 24 by 2015 and each ward will have a dedicated Sergeant. There will be a slight increase in officers across the borough but a significant change in how they are deployed.

In response to questions from residents Inspector Wilson said that:

- Ward phones will be answered in a call centre when ward officers are not on duty.
- Shift patterns would change to make more officers available during the evening and at night.
- The 101-phone number can be used to report non-urgent crimes.

- Missing persons is a large use of resources so the MPS will be using improved filters to assess risk.

### **Police ward update**

- Sergeant Steve Murfin was introduced as the new Sergeant for Abbey ward.
- Sgt Murfin is also working on the TKO boxing project with young people.
- All wards should have the full compliment of staff after Easter.
- The Wimbledon Dispersal Zone is being considered for renewal and a consultation is currently taking place.
- Thefts in the town centre have been very high with customers in coffee shops, pubs and bars being targeted.
- Wimbledon Park has seen an increase in theft from motor vehicles. More resources will be deployed accordingly
- A new Business Watch scheme starts in Abbey ward in May
- Hillside has been seeing more burglaries than other wards
- British Transport police has been helping to target a team stealing pedal cycles.
- The Street A Week programme continues. 54 streets have already been visited and crime prevention advice provided.
- Cycling on the pavements has been raised as a priority for Dundonald SNT.

### **Soapbox**

Two gambling license applications have been submitted. John Hill agreed to confirm the dates for the hearings. [Subsequent to the meeting the following information was provided by the Licencing Officer - In respect of the first application from Coral's for 9 Wimbledon Bridge, the closing date for valid representations is the 2 April, the second application from Ladbrokes for 4 The Broadway closes for valid representations on the 9 April. Neither application requires a change of planning use. In the event that we do not receive any valid representations, officers, under delegated authority, will grant the licences and they would not go to a hearing.]

Councillor Chris Edge has proposed to Transport for London that traffic lights be installed at the junction by Merton Park tram stop to ease the flow of traffic. TfL have installed a camera to monitor traffic and are awaiting the results.

Love Wimbledon is currently carrying out a survey on the town centre. This can be completed online at: <http://www.lovewimbledon.org/>

A resident raised concerns about the phasing of lights outside Wimbledon station. Concerns were also raised about manhole covers on the Broadway sinking into the ground. Given the number of highways issues being raised it was agreed to ask Highways officers to attend the next Forum meeting.

### **Census Presentation**

Kris Witherington, Community Engagement Manager, from Merton Council delivered a presentation on the 2011 Census results for Merton and

Wimbledon. The presentation can be found on the Community Forum webpage.

### **Update on parking consultation**

Following the town centre parking consultation the council is considering a number of recommendations including:

- Mobile payments
- Improved signage
- Parking forums
- Free or reduced charges at key times, such as Christmas

A second parking consultation is now taking place, looking at parking on neighbourhood parades. This can be found at [www.merton.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.merton.gov.uk/consultations)

### **Planning update**

John Hill provided an update on planning matters:

- 153-165 Broadway – the application is still under discussion
- 1A Leopold Road – officers have met with the new owner and action is expected to be taken by May
- Theatre car park – the cabinet has taken the decision to put the car park up for sale but the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel have called in this decision. It will be examined at their meeting on 23 April 2013 at 7:15pm.

### **Other Consultations**

In addition to the neighbourhood parades parking consultation there are a number of other consultations taking place that may be of interest. These include:

- Domestic Violence
- St Georges Hospital NHS Trust's proposal to become a foundation trust
- Merton's Community Infrastructure Levy proposal
- My Merton readers survey
- A borough wide Controlled Drinking Zone

Links to all of these consultations can be found at [www.merton.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.merton.gov.uk/consultations)

### **Date of next meetings:**

- **Wednesday 12 June 2013**, at Drake House, 44 St. George's Road, Wimbledon, SW19 4ED
- **Thursday 26 September 2013**, at Wimbledon Methodist Church, Griffiths Road, Wimbledon, SW19 1SP
- **Wednesday 11 December 2013**, at Drake House
- **Tuesday 18 March 2014**, at Drake House

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**WIMBLEDON COMMUNITY FORUM  
WEDNESDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2013  
MEETING MINUTES**

The meeting was held in Drake House, 44 St. George's Road and was chaired by Councillor Henry Nelles. 22 residents attended as well as Merton Councillors, the Love Wimbledon BID manager, Sergeant Murfin from Merton Police and officers from the Council. Councillor Nelles welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Matters Arising**

In relation to the gambling licences discussed at the previous meeting, Coral at 9 Wimbledon Bridge was rejected (concern about number of fruit machines) and Ladbrokes at 4 The Broadway was approved with conditions attached relating to site security.

In relation to secondary school provision, the meeting was advised by that two options were being examined – expansion of existing school and a new school and that it was likely that a new school would be recommended. It was confirmed that a combination of both expansion of existing schools and a new one would be amongst the options being considered.

The issues raised previously about traffic management and manholes would be dealt with by Mario Lecordier in his presentation.

**Police Update**

Sergeant Murfin provided a crime update by Ward.

Abbey – increase in residential burglary and car theft. The 6 month dispersal action was being extended on High Path.

Trinity and Hillside – mainly town centre thefts. Police concentrating on crime prevention work

Dundonald – thefts from town centre and thefts of cars in Kingston Road Wimbledon Village and Park – lowest crime figures in the Borough, theft of cars left unlocked for short periods occurring. Wimbledon fortnight will mean an increase in police resourcing.

Culprits committing criminal damage in Wimbledon park had been identified from the local Guardian.

With the introduction of a Borough wide controlled drinking zone (CDZ), violence within the town centre was falling. The effect of the Controlled Drinking Zone is that street drinkers being anti-social can be targeted and moved on or arrested if necessary. Sergeant Murfin was questioned about the problem of Eastern European street drinkers in Palmerston Road being anti-social and aggressive to local residents. He advised that this was a delicately

balanced issue as the presence of the street drinkers was linked to the Salvation Army's Faith in Action programme operating in the vicinity. Also, the street drinking was tending to occur within the private car park where no action could be taken. He also advised that the police needed to be made aware at the time if a problem was occurring so that they could respond.

### **Update on Traffic Management in Wimbledon Town Centre**

Mario Lecordier, the London Borough of Merton Traffic and Highway Services Manager provided an update on Wimbledon town centre traffic management issues. He advised that in relation to the traffic signals outside the station, TfL had completed the linkage between the pedestrian crossing and the main junctions so that all the signals were linked. In relation to issues with right turns blocking movement, he advised that CCTV had been added by TfL on 2 of the signal heads and that the signal pattern could be changed if queues build. Also, different signal patterns were being used at peak and off peak stages in response to different traffic flows. The Council would continue to monitor the operation of the junction and fine tune as required.

### **Manhole Covers**

In relation to concerns about manhole covers on the Broadway sinking into the ground, ML advised that 5 highway inspectors cover the Borough and that a new inspection regime started on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2013 where both the carriageway and footway would be inspected monthly so that any defects would be picked up more quickly.

### **Imminent works**

Road re-surfacing to take place 15-16<sup>th</sup> July between 9pm and 3-30am and also in July the town centre lighting would be upgraded and columns would be re-painted. More benches and cycle stands have also been added.

### **Traffic lights**

ML was asked why some green lights had horizontal louvres. He advised that TfL did this to prevent road users looking too far ahead to the next set of lights and that the same principle was also applied to staged pedestrian crossings, and that their use could be reviewed if there were visibility problems.

Councillor Evans advised that she had had some successfully removed at Plough Lane.

### **General questions/Comments**

ML to investigate conflicting signage about no right turn from Gap Road into Haydon's Road.

New tree planting was applauded by a resident but concerned they were being vandalised and wondered if better protection was possible? ML advised that this would be investigated.

ML was asked if the bottleneck outside Colliers Wood was an intractable problem. He advised that the red boxes were managed by TfL and that parking arrangements were being reviewed.

ML was asked why the Wimbledon town centre one way system was not 20mph the whole way around, with some signs and road markings saying 20mph but other signage such as near TKMaxx saying end of 20 mph/start of 30mph. ML to investigate and provide a map of what is 20mph and what is not.

ML was asked if there were any proposals for traffic lights at the junction of Dorset Road and Kingston Road. ML advised that there were no proposals as they would cause long delays. The difficulties arose from the trams and these difficulties were likely to intensify with TfL proposals to increase no. of trams per hour from 12 to 16. ML supported sustainable transport but was concerned about problems from intensifying congestion at that junction if trams were still given 100% priority. Survey work was taking place to support LBM's argument that it is not necessary to give trams 100% priority and ML will update further when that work is completed.

Resident noted that Dorset Road was a rat run with cars driving at excessive speed - were chicanes/width restrictions an option?

### **Progress Report On Second Phase Parking Consultation**

Sara Williams, the Regeneration, Investment and Renewal Manager for LBM reported on the parking consultation survey of local shopping parades.

She advised that in April 2013, 34 neighbourhood shopping parades were surveyed, asking businesses for their views with a hard copy questionnaire. The survey was also open to responses from the general community. 214 responses were received. 65-87 Ridgway had highest response with 33, Merton Park next with 19 then Grand Drive and 373-421 Durnsford Road.

She then summarised the results, which are attached at Appendix 1, before questions were raised by the audience.

She was asked what the free parking periods were across Merton and what determined this. ML advised that it was 20 mins within the town centre and either 1 or 2 hours in secondary locations to encourage turnover. He was advised that at the northern end of Haydon's Road by the petrol station, a minicab business was using the free bays for hours at a time. He advised that he would refer this to parking enforcement.

Questions were raised about whether there was the opportunity to have a 20 min free period outside businesses across the Borough, and whether there was also an opportunity to simplify the free parking times across the borough to make it easier for residents to know what they were. Sara W advised that once the outcomes of the survey were discussed, there would be a report to Committee where these kinds of options could be considered.

A resident noted that it was difficult to find parking in the town centre and expressed concern about the future redevelopment of the car park next to

Morrison's which was very well used and that if it was developed it should include a basement car park.

### **Soap Box**

Was a Borough-wide 20 mph speed limit being considered? Residents were advised that there were no plans for this but that where residents wanted a 20mph limit they would be supported.

Is a moratorium on business rates possible in certain areas? Sara W advised that money was available for cases of hardship and also to assist with empty properties and that the criteria for accessing the funding was being developed. Also some of the rates can be kept and there is some flexibility on the rates set.

What can be done about bikes on pavements? They can be fined, but more often they are asked to dismount. The police can issue on the spot fines if they witness the offence.

How is the level of residents' parking determined in new developments? It is related to levels of public transport accessibility, and that where a CPZ exists and there is good access to public transport and facilities, the planning department will seek to make the development permit free through a legal agreement, which runs with the land.

### **Planning Update**

Sue Wright, the Development Control North Team Leader for LBM provided an update on planning applications as well as a summary of the main changes to the permitted development rights that came into force in May.

- Hotel application, 153-165 The Broadway – refused at April Planning Applications Committee on grounds of unsuitable design, height, bulk and massing
- 1a Leopold Road – new owners have submitted plans which pull back the front building line, reduce massing and reduce the amount of render on the building. Officers are providing comments on these revisions prior to submission of a planning application.
- Theatre Car park. Consideration of disposal had been deferred by the Council. Councillor Nelless advised that a request has been made to consider the car park as a community asset.

### Changes to Permitted Development Rights

The Government has made a number of key changes to permitted development rights, affecting what does and does not require planning permission. These changes came into force on the 30<sup>th</sup> May 2013. The full text of the new legislation is available on the Planning page of The Council's website along with further guidance on the changes.

The 3 most important changes are  
New Class J - the allowing of changes of use from office to residential for the next 3 years up until May 2016 (exceptions include City of London and some



limited parts of a small number of boroughs- Merton does not benefit from any exceptions ). This is provided that the authorised use was as an office on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2013.

New Class D - the allowing the change of use from shops(Use Class A1), financial and professional services (A2) restaurants and cafes (A3), bars and pubs (A4) takeaways (A5) office (b1) non-residential institutions such as nurseries or libraries (D1) or leisure uses (D2) to A1, A2, A3 or B1 i.e. shops, professional services, café/restaurants and offices

Changes to Class A outside of conservation areas, larger single storey rear extensions becoming permitted development for a 3 year period up until May 2016 subject to neighbours not objecting

These changes are subject to a number of caveats

For changes of use from office to residential there is no limit on floorspace – they are only subject to a prior approval process which requires the developer to notify the Council about a proposed change from office to residential, which the Council can only assess on 3 issues - transport/highway impacts, flooding and contamination. If these aspects are acceptable then the change of use can take place. The Council has 56 days to assess this type of application. It would be publicised by a site notice. The Council's concerns would be for the loss of important scattered employment sites as well as larger office sites, particularly in town centres where they add to the vitality of the daytime uses.

For the flexible use class, whereby for example a shop could become a café or restaurant for a period of up to 2 years, the floorspace may not be greater than 150 square metres. All that is required is that the Council is notified of the date when the new flexible use starts and that if it changes to one of the other permitted flexible uses, the Council is notified again. It is conditioned that the site reverts to its previous lawful use at the end of the period of flexible use. It is hard to see how this would operate in practice. Concerns are for what this will do to the character of neighbourhood parades, smaller and larger shopping centres where the Council is trying to resist an imbalance in key A1 shops to estate agent, café and restaurant uses.

For the larger household extensions, the changes do not apply to flats or houses in Conservation Areas. They allow semi-detached and terraced houses to extend at single storey up to maximum of 6m without needing planning permission instead of the current 3m and detached houses to extend up to 8m without planning permission instead of the current limit of 4m. This is subject to a prior approval process whereby the Council notifies neighbours. The Council will only assess the impact of the extension if objections from neighbours are received and must issue a prior approval decision within 42 days, otherwise prior approval is deemed to be given.

There is currently no fee for any of these processes so the Planning authority will experience a loss of income with no real decrease in workload due to the prior approval processes that it is required to administer.

Other changes affecting business uses in force up until May 2016 are

- larger extensions to industrial and warehouse buildings without permission if they are far enough away from the site perimeter and not above a certain height
- larger extensions to office space without permission provided not CA, not within 5 metres of a boundary and not over certain height restrictions but need to notify us when complete and only up to May 2016
- larger shop extensions without permission provided not conservation area, not within 2m of the boundary and not over 4m in height

These latter changes are unlikely to have much effect in tight urban areas

A resident asked if someone other than the adjoining neighbour objected to prior approval for a rear extension, would that be considered. Sue W were advised that only an objection from an adjoining neighbour would trigger consideration of whether or not prior approval would be granted.

Councillor Diane Neil Mills asked for information about changes to telecommunication - Sue W advised that she would provide her with a consolidated version of the GPDO and explain the changes

An update was requested in relation to the planning situation at Spur House, Morden Road and whether the planning permission had expired or been kept alive by making a valid start on site.

(It has subsequently been confirmed to Councillor Nelles that the planning permission was lawfully implemented (thus preserving the life of the permission) before expiry of the permission on 11th May 2013 by virtue of sufficient groundworks having taken place to constitute commencement of development)

### **Date of next meeting**

26<sup>th</sup> September 2013

Wimbledon Methodist Church, Griffiths Road, Wimbledon SW19 1SP

65 People were in attendance.

Meeting chaired by Cllr Margaret Brierly

Chris Larkman made a statement that three local councillors are no longer under the Conservative whip. Cllr Rod Scott has joined UKIP, Cllrs Linda Scott & Chris Edge are now independent councillors. They will continue to serve people in their wards as before.

**1) Health.** Dr Conor Malony (Lambton Road Practice) confirmed that the new practice was now up and running and the teething problems with the phone system resolved. Dr Sion Gibby representing the local district of the Clinical Commissioning Board confirmed that proposals will be brought for consultation under the 'Better Service, Better Value' review of hospitals in the South West London Region. Bal Chohan-Rai from Kingston hospital gave a presentation on the services now being provided by Kingston Hospital in the Raynes Park Medical Centre.

**2) Raynes Park Post Office.** Simon Burnham from the Post Office spoke about future options for a Post Office in Raynes Park. He explained that the current post office was costing twice what was made in profit. As such they are trying to outsource the service to a franchisee, which will be based in Raynes Park. If they fail to find a franchisee, they will continue to offer the existing service.

**3) Safer Neighbourhood Team.** Sgt Graham Chapman spoke about the reduction in the staffing for the Safer Neighbourhood Teams, but that they will continue to operate an effective locality service.

**4) Graffiti Art in the Skew Arch.** At the previous Forum, Natalie Ramtohul, a local art student, presented ideas for some artwork in the Skew Arch. Whilst both people attending the Forum and the Council were happy with the idea, Network Rail have refused permission. Their concerns are about the upkeep and also that it could attract other unwanted graffiti.

**5) London Bike Ride through Raynes Park.** Kevin Nash & James Taylor from 'Ride London' and Chris Parsloe from LB Merton gave a presentation on the bike

events taking place over the weekend of 3 and 4 August through Raynes Park. This will mean traffic will be excluded from Raynes Park on 4 August. However, the event will be an opportunity for local people to come out and enjoy the spectacle.

**6) Raynes Park Festival.** Mark Williamson gave out information on the Raynes Park Festival, which is taking place from 14-23 June.

## **7) Planning Matters.**

- Tara Butler, LB Merton, said that they were about to issue updated plans for the Rainbow Estate site, having taken into account observations made by local people. The proposals include a mixture of residential units and industrial space.
- The owners of the Emma Hamilton pub have won appeals which will now allow them to build residential units on the site.
- The land on the corner of Kingston Road opposite the Chase has been sold for residential development
- In terms of the Enhancement Plan, the priorities for the coming pieces of work have been agreed. This will include West Barnes Lane & Lambton Road.
- Chris Larkman confirmed that Stephen Hammond MP has obtained a commitment from Network Rail to paint the exterior of the station and the footbridge. However, there is no timescale. Currently the platforms are being lengthened to provide for 10 carriage trains.
- The new CPZs have caused problems in the north of Raynes Park for people living in the streets beyond the controlled streets. A public meeting of people living in the eastern end of the area (e.g. the last 4 'Apostle' roads, Abbott Avenue) resulted in an evenly balance between those in favour and those against controls. (Burstow Road & Dennis Park Crescent – most of whom have cross-overs – are against controls.)
- A Safety Audit has been requested of the vehicular, cycling & pedestrian movements between Waitrose and Sainsbury's. The request to move the 200 Bus Stand remains with TFL.