

MITCHAM COMMUNITY FORUM  
6 OCTOBER 2022

(7.15 pm - 9.00 pm)

PRESENT Councillors Councillor Aidan Mundy (in the Chair),

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (Agenda Item 1)

The meeting was held at the New Horizon Centre and chaired by Councillor Aidan Mundy. 10 residents and five councillors attended with 78 additional views on YouTube. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained how the meeting would work.

2 OPEN FORUM (Agenda Item 2)

A resident raised several local issues.

- Issues with street drinkers. Individuals feel abandoned and need help and there were inconsistencies with how off-licence premises serve these individuals.
- There are fly-tipping in Town Centre and subsequent rodent infestation in main car park. The Public Space team had responded that there has been engagement with businesses regarding wastes produced; engagement with residential properties above the shops regarding waste presentation; clearance of wastes from alley behind black railing; litter picking along the alley; Sibthorpe Car Park bins removed, signage put "fly-tip aware"; regular monitoring of all areas, and reporting of any waste relating issues over to Veolia for them to address.
- Appointment of Town Centre Manager, the Future Merton team had responded that there is no funding currently to do so
- Car Park by Morrisons and Farmfood has an infestation by pigeons

3 COUNCIL UPDATE (Agenda Item 3)

Cllr Billy Christie, Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services, on behalf of Leader Cllr Ross Garrod. Cllr Christie said that following the elections in May this was a new administration with new leader and many new councillors. The administration's top objective is rebuilding pride in Merton so that everyone has a stake in making Merton through investing in people, places and services .

The administration has three main priorities:

- Civic pride:
  - This includes pride in our communities, places, and town centres, as well as our cultural facilities and community sector.
  - We want to make it easier for residents to be active in local communities and to invest in our town centres.
  - We also want to focus on basics like keeping street scene, which is why we are recommending not renewing Veolia contract
- Sustainable Future
  - We want to encourage active travel and sustainable transport including making Merton the best place to own an electric car or e-bike.
  - We want a shift in planning policy to get energy efficient new homes.
  - We want to build 400 affordable properties on Council land by 2026
- Creating a borough of sport
  - Merton has a huge amount of sporting heritage, including both national and local facilities.
  - We want to get more investment into grassroots sport.
  - We want residents to have healthier lifestyles.

We know residents want to see improvements in street cleaning, as a result we have agreed an Improvement Action Plan with Veolia including a night-time response team. We have also recruited ten additional enforcement officers to prevent littering and fine those that do. There is also a new emergency response vehicle to respond to fly-tipping. The Action plan is being regularly reviewed and monitored. We have also partnered with [Fix My Street](#), a free App to make it easier for residents to report fly tipping and other problems. At Cabinet we will be deciding whether to extend the Veolia contract or not. If we do not extend we will be looking how to improve services

We have introduced the [Merton Local App](#) to support local businesses and this has already been downloaded more than 4000 times. Other achievements include:

- Funding already secured from GLA for 93 new homes
- 250 new EV charging points secured through funding from Net Zero
- £2m added to climate emergency fund
- £1m investment into local sports facilities including 40 tennis courts being refurbished
- £2m fund being used to help people hit the hardest by the Cost-of-living crisis. We already have the most generous CT support schemes. We have held four [cost of Living events](#), another one taking place at Pollards Hill on 29 October. We are also providing vouchers for school meals during holidays.

A resident asked what the definition of Affordable housing is, Cllr Christie explained that there is a national definition of 80% of market rent but the plan in Merton is to build social rent which is much lower.

A resident asked about naming and shaming fly-tippers, whilst another said we also need to look at causes of this crime. Cllr Christie said we need to do more to tackle fly-tipping and have launched our [Wall of Shame](#) featuring CCTV footage to help identify individuals. There is a difference between commercial fly-tippers and individuals, but we will prosecute wherever we can.

A resident asked about using waste food and it was pointed out that the [Community Fridge](#) did this.

#### 4 LONDON ASSEMBLY UPDATE (Agenda Item 4)

Leonie Cooper, Assembly Member for Merton and Wandsworth, provided an update on the work of the London Assembly. The Assembly consists of 25 members, and Leonie was elected in 2016 and 2020 to represent Merton and Wandsworth. The Assembly's role is to hold the Mayor of London to account in the areas where he has responsibility. This can include areas where the Mayor has budget, for example housing, or has a decision making role like larger planning applications. Leonie is able to speak directly to the Deputy Mayor for Housing to help investment locally, or Deputy Mayor about larger planning applications such as Mitcham gasworks.

Leonie explains that she sits on Environment Committee, Housing Committee, Fire and Resilience Committee. There is also a monthly three hour question time for the Mayor.

The Mayor is also responsible for the Metropolitan Police, which has been in spotlight following the Chris Kabba killing and scandals involving WhatsApp messages. The new Commissioner will need to appear before committee soon. Louise Casey is undertaking a review of culture in the Met Police and there is also a review by His Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary. We expect more and more of officers, so they are under stress. A Home Office assessment says Met should receive £194m more in funding than it does.

London Fire brigade dealt with 4000 calls in July due to grass fires, including one in Morden Hall Park caused by disposable BBQs.

Transport for London had drop in fare income due to COVID and whilst the government has funded other transport providers it has been giving TfL short term deals with lots of conditions. Funding is now secured until 2023 and hopefully finances will start to recover. TfL has consulted on cutting buses in central London and on extending the Ultra-Low Emission Zone. They are still analysing results of these consultations.

The Business Improvement District in Wimbledon is paid for by local shops so it would be up to Mitcham businesses if they wanted to do the same.

A resident asked about the ULEZ and congestion charging cost businesses working in London. Leonie said residents should always check any fines to make sure it is correct or could be cloned plates.

A resident asked about ventilation on the Underground. Leonie said TfL still needed to agree capital funding with government so this would need to cover big ventilation projects. It is difficult to increase capacity significantly on the underground, but the Elizabeth Line is a distinct improvement with air conditioning.

## 5 CLIMATE ACTION UPDATE (Agenda Item 5)

Amy Mallett, Climate Engagement Officer provided an update on the Climate Action Plan. In 2019 Merton Council declared a climate emergency with a target of achieving net zero for the Council by 2030 and borough by 2050. The Council is responsible for less than 2% of emissions. A [Climate Strategy and Action Plan](#) was agreed in 2020 and followed by two climate delivery plans.

There is a long way to go to meet targets and meeting them will require partnership working. There are other benefits to these actions including improving air quality, helping the local economy and jobs, as well as reducing fuel poverty.

[Climate Action Group](#) supports community action on climate in areas like buildings and energy, transport, green economy and greening Merton. Projects have included Merton Garden Streets, where residents and businesses have got involved in planting up their streets. So far 115 streets have signed up, with over 10,000 volunteer hours. Other projects include Energy Matters, promoting energy efficiency in schools, and the [Wheel](#) repair café, a chance for residents to bring goods that can be repaired. The Climate Action Group is looking for more volunteers and you can [email the team](#) if you want to get more involved.

The Council is developing a Climate Action Engagement Strategy to look at how best to engage residents and will be developing a survey for residents to take part.

The best way to keep in touch with that is happening is to sign-up to the [e-newsletter](#). You can also pledge to take action and share your story online using the hashtag #MertonClimateAction to encourage others to do the same. You can find lots of pledge ideas by looking up Merton climate pledges.

A resident asked about tackling air quality and pollution. Amy said that we have introduced 65 school streets to reduce pollution, can find out about other actions in the Action Plan. Transition to Electric Vehicles will help. Cllr Mundy said that 20 MPH limits were usually about road safety but can always be reviewed.

A resident said that planting more trees can help.

## 6 COST OF LIVING (Agenda Item 6)

Several local organisations attended the meeting to explain what services they offer and provide advice to residents. The organisations were:

[Mitcham Jobcentre Plus](#)

[Citizens Advice Merton](#)

[Commonside Development Trust](#)

[Merton Credit Union](#)

[London learning Consortium](#)

## 7 DATE OF NEXT MEETING (Agenda Item 7)

Cllr Mundy thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting so that residents could get advice from the organisations in attendance.

Date of next meeting:

Tuesday 21 February 2022 at 7.15pm, venue to be confirmed.