

Raynes Park Community Forum Thursday 29 September 2016 Chair's Report

The meeting was held in Raynes Park Library Hall, and chaired by Councillor Stephen Crowe with Chris Edge from the Raynes Park Association (RPA). 50 residents attended, as well as five other Merton Councillors, and officers from the council and its partners. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited attendees to observe a minutes silence in memory of Jan Bailey.

Open Forum

Council Tax consultation

Clare Gummett, Chair of Age UK Merton, raised the current consultation on future Council Tax levels in Merton. Merton Council is consulting on the options for Council Tax in 2017 and 2018 in response to the introduction of a special 2% precept introduced in 2015 that can only be used to fund care services for older and vulnerable adults. This option was not taken up in 2016 resulting in greater cuts to spending. Clare encouraged residents to have their say in the consultation and consider the impact on older and vulnerable residents. A number of residents said they had not received My Merton and provided addresses to be followed up on after the meeting. The consultation is also available online and can be found at www.merton.gov.uk/consultations

Notice of planning applications

A resident raised concerns about the displaying of official site notices informing local communities about planning applications. In addition objections were no longer acknowledged and objectors were not being notified about the outcome of decisions.

In response Neil Milligan, Development Control Manager for Merton Council, said that site notices were not statutory but in Merton they are sent to the applicant to display locally as well as letters being sent to the neighbours of the scheme. Officers visit each site and will check if a site notice has been displayed. Information about all applications, including any objections, is published online and it is likely more and more communications will be switched to digital formats to reduce costs.

In response to questions Neil also said that the Planning Enforcement Team was currently at three officers with a fourth post currently being recruited too. The size of the team has not changed for a few years. Neil responded to a question about architectural quality by saying that appearance of applications was the number one issue that officers consider including visiting the site to understand the context. The views on the final outcome would be subjective but the process in Merton is not dissimilar from other boroughs.

Travelodge

A resident asked if this was being used by Merton Council to house homeless families and also what could be done to address night time noise and anti-social behaviour. This will need to be taken up with colleagues but any anti-social behaviour can be reported to the Council's anti-social behaviour unit by calling 020 8274 4907 or emailing asbunit@merton.gov.uk

Boundary Changes

There was a request that the proposed changes to parliamentary constituency boundaries be discussed at a future meeting as they would have a considerable impact on the area. Details of the current consultation can be found at <https://www.bce2018.org.uk/>

Raynes Park Christmas

Nick Cooke from the Salvation Army said that the 2016 Christmas festival will be on 2 December 3.30 – 7pm with the lights switched on at 5pm. Two stages will be set up, one outside the station and the other in Waitrose car park. There will be choirs performing and a live nativity with animals. More volunteers are needed to help, especially with 12 stewards needed for the large crowd. Contact nick.coke@salvationarmy.co.uk or chrislarkman@gmail.com if you can help.

Health Update

Clare Gummatt, Lay Board Member for Merton Clinical Commissioning Group, provided an update on local health issues:

- Adam Doyle, Chief Officer of Merton CCG, will be leaving the organisation as part of a local restructure. A new chief officer will jointly cover Kingston, Merton, Richmond, and Wandsworth from April 2017, with Sutton also joining at a later date.
- The 'Health Help Now' app is now available to Merton residents. This app helps identify which local services are available and includes voluntary sector as well as NHS provision.
- Merton CCG is working to reduce the problem of unused medicines as these costs around £1million each year. Patients are encouraged not to stockpile as any medicines taken from a pharmacy cannot be reused.
- Lambton Road Medical Practice is trying to address the issue of missed appointments. There were 312 in May this year so it has a huge impact. The surgery now sends text reminders, and there is a dedicated cancellation line. Following concerns over getting in touch with the surgery via the telephone for some considerable time, they are introducing a new phone system.

Bereavement Service

Chris Larkman explained that this volunteer led service originated from Christ Church but is open to any faiths. They provide support in sessions at the Nelson and Lambton Road centres by volunteers trained and supervised by a professional counsellor. Over 70 people have been supported and as a result of demand growing more volunteers are needed. Please contact raynesparkbereavement@gmail.com for further information.

Crossrail 2

Jerry Cuthbert is leading a sub-committee of the RPA to improve dialogue with TfL, Network Rail and Merton Council to help influence the planning of Crossrail 2. No proposals south of Wimbledon for either safeguarding or design have yet been consulted on but are expected to be available later in the autumn. RPA want to make the most of the opportunity to improve Raynes Park Station. In response to questions Jerry said there still seems to be political commitment to the project

despite the changes in the Cabinet. Jerry also explained that the previous consultation showed a 50% reduction in SW Trains services to Waterloo from Raynes Park but overall a 100% increase in the number of trains to London.

Current and anticipated planning applications

Neil Milligan, Development Control Manager, Merton Council updated the meeting on local planning and other issues.

- The bins south of the Skew Arch were not removed in the summer as originally planned. The programme was paused following concerns raised by residents so that a consultation could take place. This has not been completed so will be informing the final decision.
- Rainbow Estate and Kiss-and-Ride – there has been no further news from Workspace about the development. It is possible that they are waiting for more information from Crossrail 2 but they have three years under the current planning approval to begin works. This means no progress on the Kiss-and-Ride element of the work. Chris Larkman has met with Network Rail who are considering transferring land outside the station to Merton Council and this may create more space to improve access.
- Southey Road Bowling Club – the application was approved in July subject to a Section 106 agreement.
- Ride London - There was general agreement that Ride London 2016 had been a successful event in Raynes Park. The date for the 2017 event has been set for 30 July and as in previous years it is likely there will be road closures in the area. Details can be found at <https://www.prudentialridelondon.co.uk/>
- Flooding – The pump installed in the drains under the railway bridge had been unable to cope with the volume of water that fell in the summer. Work was ongoing to flush out drains to keep them clear. Several questions were asked about the frequency of gully clearance and this will need to be addressed at a future meeting. Information about flooding and how to get advice can be found on the council website at <http://www.merton.gov.uk/environment/flooding.htm>
- Wheelie Bins – a number of questions were asked about the proposed changes to refuse collection. The decision of Cabinet had been reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission but they decided not to ask Cabinet to reconsider. The councils involved are now negotiating with Viola to finalise the details of the contract before it is agreed. Issues raised at the meeting included the size and storage of wheelie bins; disposal of current bins; the impact of fortnightly collection on unsanitary waste; and the use of the bins by those with disabilities. This will need to be addressed at a future meeting.
- Road Safety – following the tour discussed at the last meeting the ideas put forward are still being considered by Highways Engineers.

The Chair thanked residents for attending and closed the meeting.

Dates of future meetings all at 7.15pm, in the Library Hall:

30 November 2016

8 March 2017

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