

## Mitcham Community Forum 18 March 2015 Chair's Report

The meeting was held at Vestry Hall, and chaired by Councillor Ian Munn. 17 residents attended, as well as five other Councillors, and officers of the council and its partners. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **Dig Merton**

Michelle Kollettek from Sustainable Merton updated the meeting on the Dig Merton project. Work was taking place to improve Fieldgate Lane by removing fly tipping, and dog fouling and adding new trees, soft fruit bushes and a children's playground. Volunteers will be planting trees on Friday 20 March. There will also be a Big Dig day on Saturday at Phipps Bridge. Dig Merton have also been working with four local schools to provide gardening and cooking lessons. Sustainable Merton continues to look out for other disused public spaces that can be improved and can support communities to do so. Please see <http://www.sustainablemerton.org/> for further information.

### **Rediscover Mitcham update**

Anthony Bailey from the Future Merton team, Merton Council, updated the meeting on the works in Mitcham Town Centre. Work started in January with hoardings and signage being erected. The hoardings are there to store materials safely and securely. Works on the perimeter street were now taking place with a scheduled completion date of September. London Busses have confirmed support for the bus street and work is taking place to design the traffic lights for all the junctions.

In response to questions Anthony confirmed a commitment to a public toilet but the location is yet to be decided. Anthony confirmed that there were no plans to provide compensation for local businesses and there was no budget to do so. The team had met with all local businesses before works started and made them aware of potential impacts. Business rate relief is available for small businesses, but if companies can demonstrate evidence of hardship they can present this. There are currently no empty properties in the area.

The artwork on Iceland is a concern and has been discussed by the Mitcham Partnership. A build up of litter by the betting shop and fish shop has been reported to the enforcement team. The current maps on display aim to be a directory of businesses but the final version could include other features and will be brought back to be considered. Street lighting will largely remain as is but new posts with LED lights will be more efficient and there will be an increase in feature lighting. Landscaping will aim to include low maintenance planting but there will be new water points.

### **Planning Update**

Kris Witherington shared an update provided by colleagues.

**The Cricketers:** A new planning application has been received, 15/P0890, which is being dealt with by Leigh Harrington. This is for the demolition of existing buildings and construction of a part 2, part 3 storey building to provide 11 homes. The application is currently the subject of public consultation. Given the early stage of the application no date has yet been set at which it may be heard by Committee. Any application for this site or the old Fire station needs to take into account the relationship between these buildings, Vestry Hall and the War Memorial.

**The Burn Bullock:** A Listed Building Consent was granted for most of the works but officers were concerned about the section of the application which covers the Tudor part of the building so this was reserved for English Heritage advice and involvement. The car sales business has ceased in compliance with the requirements of a notice issued by the council. Cars have been removed from the front car park and the site tidied up but there are a significant number left in the rear car park. Prosecution will now be pursued subject to legal advice confirming that such action would satisfy the public interest requirement in light of recent developments.

**New Mitcham Fire station, Bishopsford Road:** Last condition has been discharged and the new Fire Station has opened.

**187 Commonside East (Site on corner of Cedars Avenue and Commonside East):** Council officers still in negotiation with applicant regarding improving the design of a current application for a 3 storey block of 6 flats, application number 14/P0792. Thames Water have cleared the recent damage caused to the Common by drainage issues.

**Y Cube modular housing scheme (site on corner of Clay Avenue and Woodstock Way):** Planning permission granted following the completion of a S106 planning agreement for the YMCA to deliver a 100% affordable housing scheme in the form of two inter connected three storey blocks of modular housing units. Work has now started on site.

**Sibthorpe Road Car Park:** A tendering process for the land to be developed into a cinema and restaurant has now closed.

In response to a question about planning enforcement and retrospective planning applications Councillor Munn said these issues are reported to the Planning Applications Committee.

### **Soapbox**

Residents raised concerns about the sale of land adjacent to the Ravensbury Pub; that some of the narrow footpaths in Mitcham were not appropriate for shared use with cyclists; more re-tarmacking was needed on Cricket Green; and that Cold Blows needed to be swept clean.

**Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 13 October 2015 at 7.15pm, at Vestry Hall.