

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

PS Gary Lambe is the deputy for the sector inspector, Stuart Buchan, looking after the seven wards in the sector. Since the change from Safer Neighbourhoods to the Local Policing Model each ward as a PC and PCSC attached to it with a larger pool of officers available to be moved around the sector to meet demand.

Local priorities at the moment include tackling drugs, burglary, robber and theft from motor vehicles. Increased patrols in hot spot areas to displace crime as well as increase the chance of catching offenders. In addition there are monthly operations to enforce warrants and target motor vehicles of known offenders. For regular updates residents can follow PS Steve Burke on Twitter - @MPSMitchamSgt

In response to questions from the audience PS Lamb said that he was not sure when a current shortage of PCSOs would be resolved. He also said that a radar gun was used periodically to target speeding on roads where this was known to be a problem like Rowan Road. When asked about successful convictions PS Lamb said the current reporting system did not collect this information. Rev Andrew Wakefield said that the new Safer Neighbourhood Board would be asking the police for this information.

Rediscover Mitcham / OneMitcham update

Ross Mitchell 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>

Ross said the Heritage Lottery Funding had been secured to repair and restore the clock tower and this would take place whilst phase 1 works are completed in the summer.

In response to questions from the audience Ross said that there were no plans to bring in a farmers market but instead work would take place to improve the variety of market traders available permanently. Ross apologised for the quality of concrete base used for the new benches at Three Kings Pond, noting that this was an intermediate measure and would be much improves in the final scheme. Site investigations are currently taking place

and a final design will be made in the summer with works completed by the end of the year.

Ross confirmed the aspiration for toilets to form part of the redevelopment but they have not yet found the right design so would not form part of phase 1. Ross also said that the council do not have the powers to choose which shops come to the town centre but by increasing the footfall through the scheme this would act as an incentive for better quality retailers. Short term car parking introduced in phase 1 would be free to encourage more shoppers to the high street and market.

The changes in Majestic Way would aim to segregate cycling and pedestrian access, but detailed designs will follow. Ross would like to bring back to life the 'ghost' advertising sign on the flank wall of 213 London Road but will need to work with the freeholder, funder and designers to find an appropriate scheme. Ross agreed to approach the green grocer on Langdale Parade to see if they would stop driving over the grass verge.

Mega Recycle

Jane Alexander, Recycling Encouragement Manager for Merton Council, introduced the Mega Recycle Challenge. Jane will work in Merton for two years, funded by central government, to help increase the level of recycling and reduce the amount going to landfill. As part of this work the Mega Recycle challenge will be offering prizes to individuals and schools for increasing recycling. The challenge will be promoted door-to-door as well as with local community groups and schools. The challenge was launched on 24 March and the first prizes will be given out in May. To find out more and to register to take part please see: <http://www.merton.gov.uk/megarecycle>

Scrutiny topics

Councillor Munn informed the forum that the council's Overview and Scrutiny panels are looking for issues to examine in detail during 2014/15. The scrutiny panels are made up of councillors that gather evidence from experts and local communities to investigate key issues. To suggest topics for any of the panels you can complete an online form at <http://www.merton.gov.uk/council/decision-making/scrutiny.htm> or you can email scrutiny@merton.gov.uk

Residents suggested issues for consideration including support for childminders, flowers in town centres and fly-tipping.

Soapbox

Asked for an update on the Burn Bulloch Councillor Munn reported that the council has served a listed building notice to the owner and was working with the police and other agencies to tackle the illegal occupation.

Empty shops – Rev Wakefield said that Mitcham did not have as many empty shops as might be expected for similar town centres. Councillor Munn said that if residents were concerned about the number of book makers they could sign a petition to change planning rules.

There is an issue of people parking on crossovers in a way that blocks the pavement. What are the rules for this and how are they enforced?

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 14 October 2014, 7.15pm, at Vestry Hall.

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