

Raynes Park Community Forum 9 December 2014 Chair's Report

The meeting was held in Raynes Park Library Hall, and chaired by Councillor David Dean (in place of Councillor Suzanne Grocott who was ill), assisted by Chris Larkman, Chair of the Raynes Park Association. More than 40 residents attended, as well as eight Merton Councillors, and officers from the council and its partners. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Management of Parks and Other Local Issues

Councillor Andrew Judge, Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration, provided an update on issues raised at the last meeting and gave an overview of proposals for the future management of Merton's parks (a summary note is available at <http://www.merton.gov.uk/community-living/communityforums/raynesparkcommunityforum.htm>).

In response to questions on the management of Merton's parks, Councillor Judge explained that outsourcing the management contract will be done on approximately a 25-year basis, to encourage bidding companies to invest in parks; however, break clauses will be included to allow early termination of the contract if the contractor underperforms. In addition to parks, any bidder will need expertise in sports grounds and grounds maintenance.

The Parks contract will be a single one, between both Sutton and Merton; however, each borough will have its own team managing the parks in its area. Current Parks staff will be transferred over via TUPE to the successful bidder. Consultation on the subject continues, including with Friends of Parks groups.

Councillor David Dean is working on a social enterprise bid with unions, parks staff and Friends of Parks for the contract.

On other local issues, following the sale of 28 maisonettes on Grand Drive that were police properties, Councillor Judge led a petition which has resulted in a change to policy on the sale of police properties. Any such properties with sitting tenants will now have to be sold to social landlords, giving tenants security of tenure.

A decision has been made to implement a residents' Controlled Parking Zone in the Cambridge Road area of Raynes Park.

Health

Dr Sion Gibby said the St George's Hospital had been appointed as the provider of services at the Nelson, which is on schedule to open on 1 April 2015.

All 25 GP practices in Merton are forming a federation of practices, which will allow patients to access various services from different practices; they are bidding for government money to provide more services in the borough.

Kingston Hospital's car park is no longer pay and display, but pay on exit. Customers can also now pay by credit card and there are more spaces. The hospital's Audiology service has been accredited; and audiology will also be provided at Raynes Park.

A tour of the day unit at Kingston Hospital is being held on 11 February and is open to all.

Ride London

Ride London 2015 will take place, passing through Merton on Sunday 2 August. The format will be the same as Ride London 2014, with hand-cycling, the mass participation event, and the professionals' race, which the BBC will televise. The proposed route will be the same, with the same road closures.

James Taylor from Ride London and Christine Parsloe, Merton Council's Leisure and Culture Development Manager explained that they are meeting with community groups in Merton to look at how management of the event can be improved and to fix the problems that occurred during Ride London 2014. This included using a new stewarding company in 2015 and looking at improving access and egress around the route for residents.

Communications around the event will commence in the New Year. Leaflets will be distributed to the whole area in the summer, highlighting where access points will be. The Ride London team is also happy to work in advance with anyone who may need access arranged for specific reasons such as health concerns, a wedding or holidays. There is a dedicated telephone number and email address on Ride London's website for this.

Current and Anticipated Planning Applications, including the Rainbow Estate

Neil Milligan, the Development Control Section Manager at Merton Council, provided an update on planning applications:

- An application has been submitted for the Rainbow Estate. The reference number is 14/P4287FUL. A five-week consultation will be carried out on the application, which is likely to go to committee around April 2015.
- The reference number for an application for associated works adjacent to Raynes Park station is 14/P4288.
- Applications for an indoor tennis facility and a new covering for court 1 by the AELTC was scheduled to go to committee on 11 December 2014.
- Signage for a hotel in Raynes Park is about to be approved; the hotel is scheduled to open in February 2015.
- The council is looking at proposals for new signage/hoardings at West Barnes Lane.
- A planning application for a health unit at 14-16 Coombe Lane has been queried by the council based on the issue of natural light in rooms. If the issue is not addressed, the application may be refused. Councillor Jill West informed residents that they can object to the application online. Reference number 14/P0346.

- A planning application for turning Phoenix House/West Wimbledon College into flats is still being assessed by the council and is not yet scheduled for committee.
- The council is investigating unauthorised advertising hoardings going up on roads.
- It is unclear what will be built on the old Manoplastics site. The site has permission for a self storage centre and other business uses. Local councillors worked with the owner to get a state or free school on the site and the Department of Education have approached the site owner with regard to a Free, senior school. However, the department cannot compulsory purchase the site; for educational purposes, only the council can do so, which it has declined to do. The site cannot be used for housing and councillors continue to ensure that idea doesn't happen.

The Raynes Park Christmas Festival

Overall feedback on this year's festival was positive.

Suggestions for next year included: extending the festival later into Friday evening or running it on a Saturday to allow those who work to attend; greater continued activity at The Bellmouth; a parade with floats; lights that connect The Bellmouth and Waitrose; the involvement of some of the local chains such as Starbucks; more food to be made available/sold by the local restaurants; banners and pedestrian barriers should be more discreet.

Churches Together would like the festival to run again. More stewards are needed; anyone willing to sign up for this can do so via the Churches Together Facebook page or Twitter.

The Summer My Raynes Park Festival will run from 5-14 June 2015.

Raynes Park Bereavement Service Launch

A free bereavement service has been launched, run by trained volunteers across Raynes Park. Contact 07914 263420 or raynesparkbereavement@gmail.com.

Open Forum

Residents complained that rubbish is not being collected from residential areas and the streets are not being regularly swept. Such issues can be reported to the council via its 'Report it' web page.

Customers are using the back entrance of Tesco to enter the store. Residents and councillors have approached the store about the matter and have been told by Tesco that they are redesigning the exit, but nothing has been put forward. Neil Milligan said that the council has also spoken to Tesco on the matter and was told a redesign would be submitted; the council will approach Tesco again to discuss.

Tree wardens will be planting at Raynes Park Sports Ground on Thursday 11, Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 December. Residents were invited to come along and help.

A resident asked that a microphone be used by all speakers and questioners at future forum meetings.

Dates of future meetings all at 7.15pm, in the Library Hall:
Wednesday 25 March 2015