

WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

WANDSWORTH COMMON WARD 'LET'S TALK' MEETING

held at Beatrix Potter Primary School, Magdalen Road, SW18
on Monday, 7th December 2015 at 7.30pm

PRESENT:

Council Members

Councillor Senior (Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Resources) in the Chair); Councillors Mrs. Clay, Heaster and Mrs. Tracey (the Wandsworth Common Ward Members); and Councillor Osborn (Leader of the Opposition).

Council officers

Frankie Belloli - Head of Executive and Committee Services
(Administration Department)
Martin Byrne- Area Housing Manager (Housing and Community Services
Department)
Graham Collins – Committee Secretary (Administration Department)
Adama Fregiste – Neighbourhood Officer (Community Safety Section,
Administration Department)
Steve Lane -.Senior Parking Policy Officer (Housing and Community
Services Department)
Mark Maciver – Principal Enforcement Officer (Housing and Community
Services Department)
Carol Payne – Head of Special Needs and Children with Disabilities
(Education and Social Services Department)
Elen Richards – Area Planning Group Leader (West) (Housing and
Community Services Department)
Michael Singham – Waste Strategy Manager (Housing and Community
Services Department)
John Stone – Head of Spatial Planning and Transportation (Housing and
Community Services Department)
David Tidley - Group Leader (Transportation) (Housing and Community
Services Department)

Residents

Approximately 30 members of the public.

INTRODUCTION

Councillor Senior presented an apology for absence from Councillor Govindia (Leader of the Council). He then welcomed residents to the meeting. The other Council Members and the officers present then introduced themselves, following which the Chairman invited questions and comments from residents.

ISSUES, RESPONSES AND ACTIONS

1. Phone kiosks

A resident complained about misuse of telephone kiosks, particularly in Fieldview, and problems regarding the abuse of disabled parking bays.

Response – Councillor Mrs Tracey said that efforts have been made to encourage service providers to remove them but they were not obliged to do so.

Mr Lane explained the arrangements for provision and removal of disabled parking bays and the stipulations relating to marked bays and dropped kerbs. He indicated that the Council had powers to enforce any contravention of the parking rules relating to dropped kerbs and that laying down white lines to prevent inappropriate parking was a quicker solution than yellow lines as the latter involved a statutory consultation process before being able to implement.

It was noted that this was a marked issue at the corners of Tilehurst Road and Godley Gardens.

2. Heathfield Square - Groom Crescent

A resident said that there were concerns that planning permission might soon be granted for the development of the open space at Heathfield Square/Groom Crescent (behind Wandsworth Prison).

Response – Councillor Mrs Tracey explained that she thought it was virtually impossible for anyone to gain planning permission to develop this site as it was a designated public open space and, as such, had various statutory protections. She added that the site was viewed as being a valued open space amenity and the officers confirmed that no such planning application had been received.

3. Dorlcote and Baskerville Roads

Mr P. Alexander requested the reinstatement of the yellow lines on the corners of Dorlcote and Baskerville Roads which used to be in situ before the road repair works some two years ago. He said that parking abuse was frequently taking place there on the basis that they could “get away with it”.

Response: Mr. Lane undertook to check the terms of the Traffic Management Order that gave rise to these missing yellow lines and, if there were no obstacles, he would make arrangements for the lines to be reinstated as soon as possible.

(Action: Mr. S. Lane)

4. Parking

Mrs D. Settle said that in January residents resident/business occupiers of Tilehurst Road, Brightman Road, Godley Road, 227-271 Burntwood Lane, and Gunners Road, SW18 had voted on whether they wanted a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) introduced for their area. Although she understood that the voting had been Against, she was concerned that the details of the voting had not been disclosed.

Response: Mr. Lane explained that the officers had submitted a report on the outcome of the parking consultation to the meetings of the Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) and the Executive held on 16th and 29th June 2015 (Paper No 15-241); the report had included a detailed analysis of the results and, with the support of the OSC, the Executive had agreed that the introduction of a CPZ in the consultation area was not required at this time and that officers should carry out a further review when appropriate, should there be evidence that residents' parking conditions have deteriorated due to changing local circumstances such as new developments.

Residents added that a follow-up letter had indicated that the matter would be revisited in the context of the plans for redeveloping the Springfield Hospital site.

Response: Councillor Mrs Clay said that she had discussed this matter at some length with the lead petitioner; she considered that the large area proposed for controlled parking was an important factor in the assessment about whether it should proceed.

5. Wandsworth Common

Mr. Justin Harris said that, despite his numerous contacts with Ward councillors, the Safer Neighbourhood Team, the Met. Police, etc., - with little, if any, response - there was a continuing problem of several youths (who appeared to be school and college students) frequently spending as many eight hours - almost daily – on part of the Common. He reported that they regularly purchase alcohol from Sainsbury's in Bellevue Road and, as the hours go by, they habitually move from relatively harmless activity to smoking what appears to be drugs (cannabis) and their behaviour deteriorates, with excessive litter (including nitrous oxide capsules, broken glass and packets) being strewn on the grass. He showed evidence of what he had collected from their discarded items and contended that the situation was harmful to the area and a safety hazard to children and other users of the Common. He complained that neither the Council nor the Police had taken any meaningful action to address the situation and that he had witnessed police officers watching from their cars but not engaging with the youths to deter them from returning after being moved on. He said that residents had observed that the youths do not throw bottles around when the police are seen and he was concerned that allowing the situation to continue unabated could lead to the locality becoming more widely known to other youths as an area where this

type of behaviour went unchecked, with the potential for a more serious sequence of criminal acts beyond the scope of anti-social behaviour.

Mr. Harris, reiterating a point made earlier in the meeting, also mentioned that he had attempted to contact Council officers but had been unable to get past the Town Hall's automated switchboard as it would not register what he wished to speak about.

Response: Councillor Mrs Tracey said that she had been aware of this issue over several years and was able to confirm that officers of the Parks Section (Events and Parks Police) had reported evidence of boisterous school-age youths frequenting the area. However, she emphasised that it was important to avoid any exaggeration of the situation and that she was very clear that this was not a 'gang' problem; persons could not be banned from the Common and she was satisfied that the youths had 'moved on' when requested to do so.

Councillor Mrs Clay said that she recognised the need for the problem regarding the switchboard to be taken up.

(Action: Councillor Mrs. Clay)

Adama Fregiste said that fixed penalty notices had been issued in connection with litter and a considerable amount of attention had been given to this issue by the previous Police Sergeant who also ensured that his Police officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) patrolled the Common as often as they could. The police had also spoken to the Headteacher of one of the local secondary schools and it was hoped that a pro-active approach would be adopted by the school towards urging their students to conduct themselves appropriately especially around the post-examination period of celebrations in June/July.

Councillor Mrs Tracey undertook to look again at what further actions could be taken, including developing a programme of briefings for schools. Councillor Osborn said the PCSOs could play a useful part in seeking to engage with youths and he recommended that residents should make contact with the local Safer Neighbourhood Team with their concerns. He added that recent experience in Tooting had shown that Designated Public Place Orders gave the police certain useful powers, but that these were not a panacea for the problem.

(Action: Councillor Mrs. Tracey)

6. Baskerville Road - Subsistence

A resident complained that heavy lorries were causing an increasing amount of subsistence in Baskerville Road.

Response: Mr. Lane said that he would investigate.

(Action: Mr. S. Lane)

7. Proposed nursery at Neal's Lodge, Wandsworth Common

A resident expressed concern that, following improvement works by the Council to the Neal's Lodge residential premises, there were now proposals to let the premises for use as a day nursery for approx. 66 children, requiring up to 15 staff. He queried whether this should be subject to a planning consent for change to commercial use and expressed concern at the commercial use of public resources and at the prospect of numerous additional vehicles causing daily congestion in nearby roads.

Response: Councillor Mrs Tracey said that she was aware that the same nursery organisation encountered fierce opposition to a similar proposal in the Wimbledon area and there would be opportunity for residents to express their views on this proposal as part of the formal consultation process; in addition, "Toastrack" residents would be able to question the nursery organisers on their proposals at a public meeting to be held shortly. She indicated that she believed their intention was to retain the open space on the site. She then emphasised that the Council's difficulties in maintaining a low Council tax and avoiding cuts in services wherever possible, had necessitated detailed examination of its property portfolio with a view to maximising income.

Councillor Heaster said that the proposals would require a decision of the Planning Applications Committee which would examine its likely impact.

Councillor Osborn said that the Opposition Group were aware of the Council's difficult financial position and, if in control, they also would need to carefully review all financial options across the board but nevertheless the Opposition disagreed with common land being used for commercial purposes and therefore the Council should seek to identify an arrangement whereby income could be achieved for this site without involving a commercial solution.

8. Springfield Hospital

A resident asked about the long term future of Springfield Hospital with particular reference to their proposed Park Strategy and any commercial use of those parts of the site that were currently designated as Metropolitan Open Space, and to whether any consideration had been given to the possibility of enhanced provision of sports facilities in the locality which would be of benefit especially to the additional numbers of children expected to be on the site in due course.

Response: Councillors Mrs Clay said that the future of the site was still uncertain. Councillor Mrs Tracey said that playing fields on the site would require appropriate management; she was aware that Battersea Ironsides, on the northern side of Burntwood Lane, catered for large numbers of young persons and was understood to have one of the largest youth memberships of rugby clubs in Europe.

Councillor Heaster said that a report had been published today for consideration at the next meeting of the Planning Applications Committee, to be held on 15th December 2015, on a planning application in respect of a proposed Parks Strategy for the site. He said that the approach that the applicants had taken was to seek agreement for the overarching principles of what should be provided within the park, and to provide a workable framework within which to develop the submission of a second level of detailed design at a later stage; its intention was not to provide a prescriptive final layout or detailed design, and therefore does not, for example, include the provision of any specific formal sports facilities at this stage. Councillor Heaster said that the application was a broad framework and hence it lacked detail; it was envisaged that further applications would be coming forward regarding the detail.

9. Cross Rail 2 Works

A resident referred to recent reports that the two ventilation and emergency access shafts that previously had been sited at Trinity Playing Field and Baskerville Road have been removed but that there remained a requirement for one or two shafts in the Wandsworth Common area. The resident expressed concern at the prospect of traffic congestion arising from the works especially with regard to large trucks removing soil, etc.

Response: Mr. J. Stone said that it was too early to gauge the extent of disruption that might occur, but the Council was working hard to minimise this.

10. Illuminated signs on bridge across Trinity Road underpass.

Mr. H. Waddingham (Chairman of the Wandsworth Society's Roads and Transport Committee) said that he was appalled at the Council's willingness to allow the recent erection of an 11.5 metre high illuminated advertising hoarding on the north-east corner of East Hill, at the junction with Trinity Road. He contended that, among other things, it was hazardous because it resulted in drivers taking their eyes off the road.

11. Skip trucks in Magdalene Road

Mr. Waddingham complained that skip trucks were regularly travelling at excessive speed over the humps up Magdalene Road from about 6 am, to the extent that their empty skips literally jumped up and then crashed down on the flatbed of the trucks causing severe noise nuisance to residents. He asked what steps the Council could take to stop this happening.

Response: Councillor Mrs Tracey said that the trucks were thought to be mainly those coming up from the Cappagh's site on the western side of Garratt Lane. Mr. Stone advised that consideration could be given to installing the different profile of hump that has been introduced in some other locations in the Borough; its smoother run-on/run-off would be likely to reduce the 'jump' effect but would have a lesser impact on reducing vehicular speeds. He also mentioned the possibility of seeking some form of modified

designation of Magdalen Road as a Quietway. under the Mayor of London's Quietways Programme possibly in conjunction with a 20 m.p.h zone.

Councillor Mrs Clay suggested that consideration could also be given to installing width-restrictions.

12. Quietways

In response to a resident's question, and in relation to Mr. Waddingham's enquiry (above), Mr. Stone outlined the Mayor of London's Quietways Programme; this involved development of a network of "Quietway" routes for cyclists, envisaged as high-quality guided routes on low-traffic backstreets and other routes so that different kinds of cyclists, including family groups, can choose the routes which suit them; Quietways are intended to be direct, clearly signed, and delivered as whole routes without gaps in difficult places. It was expected that one of the Quietway routes would be from Clapham Common – through Wandsworth - to New Malden, as described in Paper No. 15-458 to the Community Services OSC on 24th November 2015.

Councillor Mrs Clay suggested that residents might wish to respond to the Quietways consultation in January 2016 by calling for Magdalen Road to become a Quietway. Similarly residents could make their views known on whether they support the proposals for the route to use the Cat's Back Bridge on Wandsworth Common.

13. Basement conversions

A resident asked for clarification of the Council's planning policies with regard to basement conversions, expressing concern that they could pose risks to other properties in a terrace and lead to flooding problems.

Response: Elen Richards briefly outlined the Council's policy by reference to the Council's approved Spatial Planning Document (SPD). She indicated that the approach would normally be to retain garden areas although basement conversions were not normally considered as being external to a dwelling. She advised that there were Building Control requirements to provide safeguards in terms of the construction of basement extensions, and there were also various obligations on property owners such as the Party Wall Act requirements.

CLOSE OF MEETING

Councillor Senior thanked residents for attending the meeting and invited them to stay and speak further with Councillors and officers about matters they had raised or to approach them with individual queries, etc. He asked residents to make sure they left their contact details with officers where they had raised specific enquiries.

The meeting ended at 9.05p.m.

Frankie Belloli/Graham Collins (020 8871 6005/6021)
11th December 2015