

WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

ST MARY'S PARK WARD "LET'S TALK" MEETING

held at Dimson Lodge, 141 Battersea Church Road, SW11 3NR
on Tuesday, 4th February 2014 at 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT:

Council Members

Councillor Ellis (Cabinet member for Housing – in the Chair); Councillor Osborn (Leader of the Opposition); Councillors Davies, Hallmark and Mrs Strickland (St Mary's Park Ward Members).

Council Officers

Mr. Dave Cochrane – Group Engineer (Environment & Community Services
Department)
Mr. Tom Crawley – Deputy Area Housing Manager (Housing Department)
Mr. Tim Cronin – Head of Development Control (Environment & Community
Services Department)
Mr. Andrew Jolly – Assistant Community Safety Officer (Administration
Department)
Ms. Liz Rayment-Pickard – Head of Performance and Standards (Children's
Services Department)
Mr. Mike Singham – Waste Policy Manager (Environment & Community
Services Department)
Mr. Geoff Mills – Committee Secretary (Administration Department)
Mr. Frankie Belloli - Committee Secretary (Administration Department)

Residents

Approximately 55 members of the public.

INTRODUCTION

The Chairman, Councillor Ellis, welcomed residents to the meeting and introduced the Council Members and the officers.

Following brief statements by each of the councillors, the Chairman invited questions and comments from residents.

ISSUES, RESPONSES AND ACTION

1. Traffic Signals

Concern was raised about TfL changing the timings on traffic signals such that pedestrians, particularly those with mobility problems, were given too short an

opportunity to cross the road. Another example was given of a set of traffic signals being wrongly configured so that the green pedestrian phase appeared for a time along with the green vehicle phase.

Response - these matters would be raised with TfL, though representations had already been made on changed timings, including via the Greater London Assembly Member. Councillor Mrs Strickland agreed to chase this up with Richard Tracey AM. It was noted that TfL were to introduce the “countdown” facility for pedestrian phases across the capital.

(Action: Mr. Cochrane/Councillor Mrs Strickland)

2. Pedestrian Crossing – Westbridge Road/Battersea Church Road

A local parent suggested that a crossing was needed to improve pedestrian safety, particularly in view of the number of schools nearby; if this could not be provided, then she proposed a 20mph speed limit in the area.

Response – Mr Cochrane confirmed that a traffic survey had been undertaken and initial findings suggested that these volumes and speed of traffic did not meet the usual criteria for the installation of a crossing. However, consideration was occasionally given to special circumstances outside the normal criteria. Councillor Osborn said that he and the other Labour Council Members favoured a more general approach to 20mph zoning across the Borough, as distinct from the area-based approach of the Council.

3. Barrier – Simpson Street

A number of residents raised their concerns over the receipt of a leaflet from the Council advising that there was to be a trial removal of the barrier in response to concerns expressed by local businesses over its impact of their trade. The residents considered that there would be no benefit to local businesses as a result of the barrier’s removal as there was very limited space for shoppers to park their cars; however, its removal would create untold problems for residents, with traffic congestion, unsafe vehicle manoeuvres, increased parking pressures and the potential for more crime and anti-social behaviour. It was pointed out that there were clear business benefits in local residents using the shops, particularly at weekends, and also other ways of promoting and sustaining businesses rather than assuming an additional vehicle access would assist and thereby alienating local residents who wanted to support the businesses. The residents were concerned that the Council appeared to have supported the principle of removal without consultation in the local area.

Response – Councillor Davies explained that consultation was now in hand and that there would be no removal of the barrier before the results of that consultation had been considered. Local councillors fully appreciated residents’ concerns about a barrier which had been in place for at least 20

years, and any new arrangement would have to be workable and genuinely beneficial. The consultation would seek to encompass all those residents affected by the possible trial removal, but residents were, in any event, free to make representations to local councillors and to the relevant Council department.

4. Car Free Developments and Initiatives

A resident asked about the traffic impact of the Sesame Apartments development and pedestrianisation of part of Battersea High Street.

Response – It was understood that the Sesame Apartments development was car free in that no parking spaces could be provided as a condition of planning permission. With respect to High Street pedestrianisation, Mr Cochrane advised that a number of different options were being considered as part of streetscape improvement proposals for the area and this could be investigated further but nothing had been finalised at this stage.

5. Summer Project

A resident drew attention to a summer scheme for disabled young people in which she was involved. She refer to the Providence House Youth Club becoming independent and to the Council's reconfiguration of youth clubs based on four "hubs", and indicated some concern that services should not therefore be reduced.

Response – Councillor Mrs Strickland advised that the Council's intention was to maintain its offer to young people under the new arrangements and that the Devas facility should cater for local requirements.

6. Surrey Lane Estate

Residents queried when the window replacement programme on the Surrey Lane Estate would be completed.

Response – tender documents for the last phase were in the process of being prepared and the work should be completed by the end of 2015.

Another resident of Surrey Lane spoke about low standards of cleaning, particularly around the stairwells.

Response – the contractor was required to undertake cleaning to a set standard and if that was not thought to be the case, then the Estates Services Team should be informed.

A younger resident then spoke about the need to provide improved facilities for younger people at the Surrey Lane Estate "pen" so they can play football

and undertake other recreational activities in safety. Another resident who spoke about the pressure on existing facilities and the need to have more play areas, particularly for sports such as football.

Response – Councillor Mrs Strickland said the Council was already looking to upgrade the facilities at the pen. It was also suggested by a resident that Sport England should be approached as it had schemes through which small grants can be given to support sporting activities such as those described.

7. Waste Collection and Recycling

A number of questions were asked about waste collection and recycling. A resident from Sunbury Lane said there was an increasing problem with householders finding their waste bins being used by other people; therefore more bins were needed and/or the number of collections should be increased. This view was supported by residents from Jagger House.

Response – Councillor Hallmark said that caretakers were doing a good job and the use of padlocks to cut down on the unauthorised use of waste bins had helped to improve matters. However, he would though ask the Housing Department to look into these issues.

(Action: Mr. Crawley/Councillor Hallmark)

Questions were also raised about refuse collectors not taking sufficient care to keep recycled products separate when collecting from households and some people being unable to obtain recycling sacks.

Response – the Council did put pressure on the contractor and crews to improve recycling rates and also produced a leaflet which explained what could and could not be recycled. On the question of recycling sacks, the residents concerned seemed to be mainly from high rise properties which do not need recycling sacks as these properties have bulk bins. Also whilst stocks of recycling sacks were no longer available from libraries, residents of low rise properties could get these either from the Town Hall or through the Council's website.

8. Dog Fouling

Another resident then spoke about the need for the Council to take stronger action against dog owners who let their dogs run free and in Battersea Park and do not clear up any mess their dog makes. This view was echoed by a resident of Morgans Walk who said they suffered similar problems in their area. In response it was said it was not for the Council to designate areas where dogs had to be kept on leads but it did have 5 officers in its Dog

Control Unit which could take enforcement action against dog owners on highway or Wandsworth Council owned land.

9. Planning Issues

A question was then asked about the ratio of affordable housing that developers had to provide. In response it was said planning policies required developers to provide 33% affordable housing on developments of 10 houses or more. However, in the Nine Elms Opportunity Area, the ratio was 15% because of the significant transport and infrastructure costs that had to be funded. Councillor Osborn added that the criterion used for judging affordability was 80% of market value, which was high for many seeking accommodation.

10. Ganley Court, Winstanley Estate

A leaseholder resident of Ganley Court referred to the redevelopment proposals and suggested that leaseholders were being expected to consider shared ownership as a result.

Response – Councillor Osborn suggested that a “Leaseholders’ Charter” would be a way of addressing their particular circumstances. Councillor Ellis encouraged residents to come to a consultation meeting that Saturday at York Gardens Library to discuss the implications of the redevelopment.

11. River Thames Issues

In response to a query about the prospects of the pedestrian bridge project going ahead, Councillor Hallmark advised that while Wandsworth and Hammersmith & Fulham Councils had supported the proposal, funding of at least £70m had to be secured; he hoped the project would be able to proceed in about two years’ time.

In response to a query about the Plantation Wharf river bus stop, Councillor Mrs Strickland advised that the required dredging could not take place during the past year due to the fish breeding cycle; she would continue to push for the facility to be established.

In response to a query about an “eco-centre” to be developed on the northern bank of the river, Councillor Hallmark advised that construction could only take place during the winter and it was therefore hoped it would be built by early 2015.

A resident suggested the Council should support increased use of the river for transport in future, including taking advantage of the Battersea Power Station development. Councillor Osborn added that there were other waterways

which could be opened up and better used, such as the Wandle River and the culverted Falcon River.

12. Traffic Issues

A resident raised concerns about large lorries, including refuse vehicles from four different boroughs, using narrow roads around Battersea Square; he suggested this should be banned and that the lorries should be required to use major roads. Another resident raised the more general question of traffic surveys in the area and proposals for improved traffic management.

Response – there was no power for the Council to ban lorries in the way suggested, though efforts were made with various operators to encourage more considerate use of the road network (eg. redirection of skip lorries using the Western Riverside Waste Authority facility on the river). Mr Cochrane advised that there had been widespread investigation of traffic issues in the area and consultation with local residents and Transport for London, but no measures were progressed. Liaison continues with TfL regarding the Battersea Bridge Road junctions and there are ongoing investigations on a number of traffic issues along Battersea Church Road and the surrounding area.

13. Local Schools

A resident of Sunbury Lane reported that she was not impressed by the standards of local maintained primary schools and was instead considering school across the river and in the independent sector for her child.

Response – Councillor Mrs Strickland did not agree with this assessment of local schools, saying that Falconbrook and Sacred Heart Primary Schools were rated as “good” by Ofsted and reporting that the Chapel Street Trust were due to start operating Westbridge Primary School. Councillor Osborn agreed with the view that the Borough’s schools were good and he underlined the value of parents supporting local schools, as this factor was often influential in achieving improvements and maintaining standards.

14. Licensing Issues

A number of residents raised concerns about disturbance and anti-social behaviour arising from the operation of three local bars/clubs. The general view was that the license conditions granted to them were too generous (eg. operating until 2am on some days in this residential area) and as a result, it was common, particularly at weekends, for anti-social behaviour to occur, such as shouting, vomiting and collapsing in the street and damage to property (eg. bus shelters being kicked in).

Response – the councillors present confirmed they would support a review of the license for the “Doodlebar”, which was being monitored at present. The review would be considered by the Council’s Licensing Sub-Committee.

CLOSE OF MEETING

The councillors thanked for the residents for attending and invited the attendees to approach them or the officers immediately after the meeting with any individual matters.

The meeting ended at 9.06pm.

Geoff Mills (020 8871 6038)
Frankie Belloli (020 8871 6005)