



MERTON PARK WARD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Open Committee Meeting

2ND APRIL 2019

MINUTES

1: Welcome from Hubert Child, Chairman and Apologies for absence.

Present: Councillor Peter Southgate, Councillor Edward Foley, Councillor Dickie Wilkinson, Hubert Child, Bryan Anderson, Pauline Southgate, David Merriman, Ian Garbett, Desé Child, Graham Clark, Patrick McNamara, Stephen Mercer.

Apologies: Jolanta Novak, Chris Stutt, Fred Rayner, Greg Bryant, Henry Wood, Philippa Foskett, Katherine Welch, Ingrid Holtz.

2: Minutes of last meeting/matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting dated 13th March 2019 had been circulated agreed and signed.

3: Merton's Fire Service: Speaker-Daren Tulley – Borough Commander

Daren Tulley opened by explaining the areas he was responsible for were protection, prevention and response, and how it affects residents. He has been in the service for over 24 years. Recruitment and selection is very gender neutral and many of the senior officers are female. Merton is a very good borough to work with and the main reason is because the communication with the Council is good. It is easy to get the message and proposed initiatives done. He said he enjoys the work hugely.

Prevention is all about community safety: stopping fires. This is a prime area of interest. Fires have decreased by 50% over the past 10 years. Fatalities have also dropped significantly. The fire stations he is responsible for are Mitcham and Wimbledon. Darren went on to explain the different pieces of kit available and where they are. He was proud of the kit available especially the pump lift ladder and Merton would be getting the tallest in the country. He expressed excitement at the prospect. Historically, there were more fire stations, which often now converted into other uses, such as the restaurant in Wimbledon Village. The fire engines would no longer fit into it. He explained their response times were the fastest in the country compared to other emergency service. London was well covered by fire stations. The stations are crewed 24 hours a day and are ready to go anywhere needed, including Grenfell, the Purley way fire and others. The logistics were complicated.

Another responsibility Darren has is checking homes for building regulation compliance and dealing with complaints. As a borough commander, Darren has senior responsibility for giving initiatives to prevent fire deaths and sees every single death as a personal responsibility.

Home fire safety visit. There are many free fire prevention equipment pieces of kit that can be given out during a check visit. Smoke alarms are fitted wherever a risk is seen.

The biggest cause of fire in London, was cooking followed by electrical and then smoking. The major issue with electrical fires is overloading sockets. Kettles, toasters, irons and curling tongs and other pieces with high wattage. Residents were advised not to put extensions onto extensions. Candles and incense sticks are another cause. Halogen heaters do not always trip when they fall over and these will easily cause a fire. Halogen lights are also a risk and the modern LED lights are cheaper to run.

There were some additional services that the Fire Service were starting to offer including linking health, such as Atrial Fibrillation into the service. Social services is another consideration.

There is a big drive for Fire Station Open Days to improve public relations. Darren was pleased to receive any other suggestions from the public.

He then took questions:

Q: How can residents best prevent arson through letter boxes?

A: Darren discussed this and said specific advice was targeted to those who have been victims of this crime. If residents were worried, placing an inflammable bag around the letterbox would prevent fire spreading out.

Q: Where should smoke detectors be placed.

A: The modern smoke detectors are both cheap and efficient. They should be placed at least a meter away from the wall with the top of the stairs probably the optimal place.

Q: A new kitchen did not put a smoke alarm in but a smoke detector.

A: This is normal and considered safer.

Hubert thanked Darren for his time. Darren said the online services covered all matters very well and encouraged residents to contact him personally if they had further questions.

4. Neighbourhood Watch & Police Liaison Report

There being no police presence when Darren had finished his talk, Hubert suggested a coffee break.

There was no police presence after coffee.

5. Councillors' Reports and Question Time

Cllr Dickie Wilkinson

Dickie opened by explaining his attendance at Merton's Best Business Awards, which prevented his coming to the meeting last month.

Fly tipping. Veolia are trying to identify those responsible. His view was that we should be naming and shaming. There were proposals to do this a short time ago and his view was that this should be pushed again and we should be doing more to stop this.

There was some considerable time spent talking in council meetings about what Councillors do. There were proposals to reduce hours. Merton may be losing one Ward. At this stage there were only discussions as to the number of Councillors. As Independents, it would be less easy to cover the Ward properly with less than three Councillors. At the moment there are 60 Councillors – 3 each for 20 Wards. The

Independents voted with Labour for 57 Councillors, whereas the Conservatives proposed 48. This would be discussed again on 23rd April.

Questions from the floor covered the following topics:

The Boundary Commission are trying to create parity between Boroughs. At present some have 3,000 – 4,000 residents per Councillor whereas Merton has an average of 2,600. per Councillor.

The only decision regarding boundaries at this stage will be the number of Councillors. The voting boundary lines for voting was scheduled for 23rd April – July and residents were expected to be consulted. It was not expected that Merton Park Ward would change much as our figures are pretty much spot on to the expected target of 2,600 residents per Councillor.

There is no evidence that the number of fly tippers has gone up now that charges are made for bulky waste collections. Residents are reporting these matters much more. Veolia claim it is improving.

There is a short 10 question survey on the new Car Parking Fees on the MPWRA website, which residents were encouraged to complete.

Cllr Ed Foley

Ed apologised for not being around for some time and explained about his unwell wife and other council appointments. He also thanks the many residents who had dropped off cards, cakes, meals and kind wishes.

There will be a new Head Teacher at Rutlish in September, Laura Howarth. She comes very well qualified with very good credentials. Previous recruitment drives had not come up with anyone suitable. The school governors were confident.

Ed reaffirmed the Councillors were working closely with essential services. He is also trying to sort the persistent Fly Tipping problems. There were some specific areas that are being targeted. Putting up CCTV cameras are costly and time consuming. There are a few mobile cameras. There were also issues with tree foliage coving the sight lines from cameras. Kenley Road and the Co-op were big problems with more fly tips appearing as fast as they could be cleared. Our Ward is better than some other parts of the Borough which have even worse and more frequent problems.

Cllr Peter Southgate:

The main aim of Transport Implementation Plan (LIP3 - currently out to consultation to 12th April) was to encourage more use of walking and bicycles and other sustainable means of transport and to improve air quality. Direct access from Dorset Road to the Morden Road Tram stop was discussed and would be pushed by Peter. The funding came broadly from TfL to Merton. The Consultation document proved the possibility was there. (see point 5.17 of the LIP3 plan). It said the estimated cost was £0.2m of which £20,000 was already secured from a S.106 agreement. Residents can add to the discussions by following the MPWRA website link before 12th April and it would help if people wrote in to support proposal 5.17.

There was discussion about transporting bicycles across the railway lines with a small child.

Residents' views were being sought on the Ward by Ward Small Financial Allocation scheme. Each Ward was being offered £15K over 3 years for improvement projects. Examples given including bins and seating in parks, painting fences, pavement cleaning. Not covered would be removal of chewing gum, or tree planting. These were covered by other budgets. Bids needed to be through Ward Councillors.

The much larger Neighbourhood Fund had more funds available and examples of successful projects in the past included shop front parade improvements, "Rediscovering Mitcham" and a new scout hut. Residents were asked to let Peter know very quickly if they had any ideas as bids had to be in by 7th May. Opening the Dorset Road tram stop route was one suggestion, and another was replacement of the lavatories at Morden station. Peter said TfL should be the ones to pick up the tab for that rather than other budgets. There was no other terminus that has no lavatories and the need was even greatest now the Northern Line ran a 24-hour service at the week-ends. Improving the children's area in Mostyn Gardens and solar lighting in Kenley Road were also suggested.

The results of the CPZ consultation were available and Windermere Avenue voted against coming into the CPZ but Grasmere Avenue and Kenley Road both voted to come in by large margins. The Cabinet Member's decision made was to put parking restrictions Monday to Saturday for both roads. Peter asked for the decision to be called in and as a result Grasmere will now be controlled Monday to Sunday 8.30 – 6.00 and Kenley Road Monday to Friday 10.00 – 4.00 in accordance with the preferences expressed in the results of the consultation.

Planning applications were submitted for a tidying up measures for the Wimbledon Stadium development. More flats to be built for shared ownership. Changes to the shape of the stadium were thought to be mostly with the aim of saving money. There was also a decision on the application for a hotel in Hartfield Road to replace the small parade of shops which included the second-hand book shop and Chutneys. The service road access for the hotel would be a one way from Beulah Road into Graham Road. Opposite there was an application to demolish The Slug & Lettuce and to redevelop it as another multi storey large building. The whole of that area would be much altered despite fears about it becoming a concrete canyon.

There is an open day for Age UK Merton on 10th May 2019.

Peter is currently working on road safety around schools and issues such as parents dropping off children on zig-zag lines, leaving engines running and other problems etc. Ed pointed out that Vehicle Idling Action have a web site (idlingaction.com) that co-ordinates action to stop these behaviours with some success.

6. Questions, Updates and Any other business

There being no further questions, Hubert closed the meeting.

Date of Next Meeting – Tues 7th May 2019 at Merton Park Primary.

Topic on the agenda – 90th Anniversary of Cranleigh Tennis Club

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