

MITCHAM COMMUNITY FORUM

10 OCTOBER 2019

(7.15 pm - 9.00 pm)

PRESENT Councillors Councillor David Chung (in the Chair),

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (Agenda Item 1)

The meeting was held at Vestry Hall, and chaired by Councillor David Chung. 15 residents attended, as well as three other Councillors, and officers of the council and its partners. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 OPEN FORUM (Agenda Item 2)

A resident asked about the introduction of 20 MPH limits Cllr Alambritis said that this was a manifesto commitment, rolling out from East of borough. 20MPH limits are being introduced in many London boroughs as they are shown to reduce road deaths and injuries; there is no evidence that the limits increase air pollution. Enforcement of speed limits is the responsibility of the police but we can take up problems with Transport for London (TfL) if buses are speeding.

A resident said that the traffic lights at Fair Green are causing knock-on effect back to Cricket Green whilst another resident said the reduction in lanes at Three Kings Pond and new layout results in buses blocking junctions and making it dangerous for pedestrians. Cllr Alambritis said traffic lights are programmed by TfL so we can speak to them about the lights and to Highways officers about filter lane at Cricket Green and the road layout around the pond.

A representative from Keep Our St Helier (KOSH) said that the government was now proposing to spend £500m to downgrade the hospital and this will soon go to public consultation. They felt there has been a lack of engagement and scrutiny so far with no detailed plans presented. KOSH would like to meet with Cllr Alambritis to discuss their campaign. Cllr Alambritis agreed with the concerns raised by KOSH and the Council is clear we want to see all services retained at St Helier, including emergency and maternity services. We regularly raise concerns with Merton CCG and Siobhain McDonagh MP has raised this issue in Parliament and with the Secretary of State for Health. We will consider a judicial review as an option if the consultation is not satisfactory and will push for impact analysis for deprived areas. The Council will look at how to promote the consultation and encourage residents to engage.

A resident raised the issue of the six Clinical Commissioning Groups in south west London merging into a single organisation resulting small group controlling all health spend in the area. They said that Hammersmith and Fulham Council had raised concerns about the CCGs in their area not following the correct legal process.

A resident said that litter on the streets is a significant problem and there are huge issues with fly-tipping. They suggested that lids on recycling boxes would help and asked if fly-tipping had increased since charges for bulky waste had been re-introduced. Cllr Alambritis said that the changes have had some successes with financial savings and recycling up to 45%, with big reduction in the amount going to landfill. In some areas street cleaning is not good enough so we will continue to push Veolia to improve. We will be introducing a new fly-tipping strategy to increase the amount of enforcement. Fly-tipping is a national disgrace, so increasing the amount of enforcement and education was vital. We name and shame those who go to court as well as feature the issue in My Merton and can raise with Wimbledon News about covering this as well. Cllr Alambritis said bringing back charges for bulky waste was a difficult decision due to the financial constraints on the council. Cllr Joan Henry said she has been working with Street Champions to help educate local residents on what rubbish to put out and when.

Cllr Chung shared an update from Veolia on issues in Rowan Road & Rosemead Avenue following a site visit organised by Siobhain McDonagh MP:

“Previously, we only used one beat sweeper to cover this area. After several meetings with the Council Neighbourhood Client Team, we identified that our resource in this area for sweeping was not sufficient to manage with the volumes of litter accumulating on a weekly basis.

We have now facilitated an additional sweeper to this neighbourhood (3 weeks ago) and streets are now looking visibly cleaner than before the additional resource arrived.

We manage these sweepers, and meet them on-site throughout the week. We are confident that standards have improved and will continue to do so.

Fly-tip levels are very high in this neighbourhood but we are reassured by the work that the Merton Council Enforcement Team take to try and catch perpetrators and issue Fixed Penalty Notices. We task a fly-tip removal cage to this Ward on a daily basis.”

### 3 CLIMATE EMERGENCY (Agenda Item 4)

Katie Halter, Climate Officer for Merton Council informed residents about the Climate Emergency unanimously declared by the Council in July.

The declaration requires the borough to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Data from National Statistics indicate that Merton was responsible for emitting over half a million tonnes of greenhouse gases in 2018. Gas (50%) and electricity (25%) used in Merton's buildings, and the use of petrol and diesel transport (25%) were mainly responsible. The amount of greenhouse emissions could potentially double if you include emissions that arise from goods purchased in the Borough, or activities by Merton by residents outside the borough, such as flying.

There are three specific commitments in declaration

1. Specific dates to reduce emissions – Merton Council carbon neutral by 2030; the borough as a whole by 2050.
2. Create a Climate Emergency Action Plan by March 2020
3. Create a Climate Emergency Working group to gather evidence and ideas, which will contribute to the formation of the Action Plan.

The targets are challenging, it means 12% annual reduction to achieve this, which implies the decarbonisation of around 3000 properties improved a year and 2,500 of the 72,000 petrol and diesel cars registered in Merton will need to be replaced by electric or active travel per year. Merton Council responsible for 2.5% of emissions, the rest are from homes and businesses in the borough.

For more information on the Climate emergency declaration, please see:

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/sustainability-and-climate-change/climate-emergency>

Katie set out how residents could get involved

- Individual choices are critical – especially energy use, diet, and travel. [Sustainable Merton](#) has a helpful [checklist](#)
- Community Projects – the Council would like to support setting them up or hearing about them
- Climate action plan – please get involved in the consultation on the action plan when it begins in October, we welcome new ideas
- [Solar Power Together](#) – run by Mayor of London – they have vetted solar panel providers through collective bargaining power. Depending on how many sign up they will agree a supplier who will conduct a survey and agree a final price. Last year got 35% discount and they had good feedback on installations.
- Climate protests help move national policies have a huge impact so welcome pressure on politicians

A resident asked about Heathrow expansion plans, Cllr Alambritis said the Council was against expansion and had written to say so in response to the recent consultations.

Residents asked about changing cars to electric. Katie said that there are [grants available for purchasing electric cars](#) and studies show that to be carbon neutral removing cars/vehicles is essential, as is household energy use.

A resident said that moving St Helier's acute facility will result in more emissions including additional ambulance movements. Katie said they are working with Public Health estates group on how they can reduce emissions but majority of emissions come from cars rather than other sources like buses, ambulances, and HGVs.

A resident asked about engine idling and Katie said that the Air Quality Action Plan has already looked at this and we will be looking to see if we need to integrate some of those actions into the new climate change plans.

Katie also said that the action plan will focus on reducing emissions as much as possible but in some cases where this is too difficult or too expensive there may be a need to offset through activities like planting trees. Trees need to grow into maturity in order to lock in carbon, so welcome ideas to support tree maintenance. Katie explained that human exercise does not result in a net increase in emissions.

There was also a question about buses, and Katie responded that TfL have a plan to electrify all buses and we will encourage them to convert buses in Merton as soon as possible.

A resident said that the UK was not generating a big amount of emissions compared to bigger countries. Katie said that the UK produces 450m tonnes a year, and it is a high per capita production. We need to take personal responsibility and can't leave to others to take actions.

Katie said that if you install solar panels it would cost roughly, £3-4k for a 3-bed semi and generally the return is about 10 years.

UPDATE following the meeting: Residents can get involved by completing a [survey](#) so their ideas can be included or contact [future.merton@merton.gov.uk](mailto:future.merton@merton.gov.uk).

#### 4 COUNCIL UPDATE (Agenda Item 3)

Councillor Alambritis provided an anonymous case study of a 96-year-old man who lives independently but on his own. After a fall, he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's and already had Type 2 Diabetes. Merton Council's Reablement team has worked with the resident to create a Reablement Plan including four visits a day, with new equipment to make his home accessible, a MASCOT alarm, and referred him to Age UK Merton for support. The resident is now regaining his confidence and attending Wimbledon Guild to reduce his isolation. 45% of Merton Council controllable income goes on Adult Social Care and also supports groups like Wimbledon Guild and the

Warm and Well project with £1m for the voluntary sector. Committed in the July Principles in 2011 to prioritise vulnerable residents.

Raising revenue from regeneration schemes like AFC Wimbledon move to Plough Lane. Will also support Mitcham Cricket Club in similar way.

MyLondon rated Merton as 4<sup>th</sup> best borough for families, based on quality of schools, housing costs and services for families. Friends of the Earth rated Merton joint 2<sup>nd</sup> in London for tackling climate change.

Merton Council has decided to keep all libraries open, with a new library in Colliers Wood, despite 500 libraries closing nationally. Thanks to volunteers to are essential to providing services and keeping libraries Wimbledon is the busiest in borough with more than 200,000 visitors to Arts Space last year.

Nearly all schools in Merton are good or outstanding. 23 Primary schools expanded to address demand and a new secondary school in South Wimbledon is already oversubscribed. Four of our care leavers went on to University this year. Merton Council is looking at how we support students with special needs and lobbying the government to help fund this work. You can get involved in the [consultation](#) before 16 October. Adult Education also going from strength to strength under Merton College having saved the service from the impact from reduced central government funding.

A Brexit Task Group is looking at the implications especially of a no deal Brexit, and is meeting monthly. We have also updated our Risk Register and have been supporting the 24,000 EU residents in Merton to access Settled Status, through funding a support worker Merton and Lambeth CAB, based in Morden and providing a document scanning service at the registry office in Morden. We are also monitoring Hate Crime incidents and looking at challenge for social care in terms of recruiting staff.

Bishopford Road Bridge have insurance to cover the cost of either repairing or renewing the bridge depending on which is the best options. The latest news on the bridge is available from our [website](#).

A resident asked about the future of Mitcham Cricket Club and Stephen responded that they have already designated the pavilion as an Asset of Community Value and will use planning to protect the future of the pavilion and the club, as we did on the Plough Lane site.

A resident asked if the Clarion redevelopments include sufficient space for accessible facilities and Cllr Alambritis said those details would be looked at through the planning process.

A resident asked about the Kwick-Fit site and Cllr Alambritis said that the developer has three years under national rules to start on the scheme following planning application so it is disappointing they are sitting on the site.

A resident asked about income thresholds for care costs and Cllr Alambritis responded that we have been waiting for some time for the Government Green Paper on social care as these thresholds are set nationally.

#### 5 DATE OF NEXT MEETING (Agenda Item 5)

Kris Witherington, Merton Council reminded residents about the Canons Reminiscence project; and the annual Safer Merton consultation

Councillor Chung thanked residents for attending and closed the meeting.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 27 February 2020 at 7.15pm in Vestry Hall.