

Report for the JCC on the Safer Neighbourhood Board held 05/07/2017

To Stop and Search: There was good discussion on this issue at the last meeting in July. The chair of Stop and Search was not in attendance, hence no report to see how Merton is doing in comparison with other Boroughs. The view of certain communities is that “if you are black, you are at least six times as likely to be stopped and searched as a white person and if you are an Asian you are around twice as likely to be stopped and searched as a white person”. Steve Wallace (Acting Borough Commander) tried to give a balance view of such exercise, stating that as a result of stop and search 12 drugs warrants were carried out in the last six months resulting in 11 been positive, finding both class A and class B.

From stop and search the police were also able to track down two dealers, one in Morden and another in Rose Hill where a large amount of crack cocaine and thousands of pounds in cash were recovered from both suspects.

Other Crimes: The two challenging crimes for the Police are burglary in homes and theft of mopeds. The police appears to be making an impact of about 50% crime reduction in these areas but remain anxious of an ongoing issue with the Wimbledon prowler (someone who moves around quietly in a place, trying not to be seen, often before committing a crime). A suspect was arrested but later released pending further investigation. The police have strongly advised that all Merton communities must be vigilant and inform the police of any person acting strangely or not familiar within their locality.

There was a serious discussion about how the police powers and methods used in chasing those on stolen mopeds whether they are able to do so safely without endangering lives, particularly most of these are not wearing helmets. The Acting Borough Commander commented that his officer are trained and use their judgment to chase or not. If they do and the rider refused to stop at every warning, signs and shouts are used as a last resort, they bump the rider of the road. In so doing, they are balancing the welfare of the rider and bearing in mind the need to protect the public.

Another issue discussed was that of street drinking and anti-social behaviour particularly in the Merton area. Nearly every pocket in Mitcham you will find group of people drinking leaving litter particularly in Mitcham Fair Green. The Police have issued about 12 Community Protection Notice (CPN) warnings to about 12 problematic, prolific and persistent drinkers. However, measures are being taken but members believe this is a phenomenon that cannot be sustained.

In agreeing with the police, members voiced their uneasiness of possible fatal consequences, were a determined thief would not stop at any measure. However, members felt the police should look for a better and safer way rather than bumping moped riders off the road. Present actions include leafleting local residents, working with residents associations and ward meetings.

At the close of the meeting, the chair reminded community representatives of the prime function of the SNB, to hold the police to account. He strongly recommended representatives to come with feedback to every meeting about what matters to their

community regarding their welfare, security etc. I therefore urge everyone to let me know what affects or threatens his or her livelihood or environment.

ABAYEH SAVAGE (BAME Representative)