

Raynes Park Community Forum Thursday 14 September 2017 Chair's Report

The meeting was held in Raynes Park Library Hall, and chaired by Councillor Brian Lewis-Lavender, with Chris Edge from the Raynes Park Association (RPA). Approximately 30 residents attended, as well as Merton Councillors, and officers from the council and its partners. Chris Edge opened the meeting, welcoming everyone and introducing Councillor Lewis-Lavender as the Chair.

Open Forum

Nell Allen reported that following the submission of the No Wheelies Please petition to the Council the response has not adequately addressed the proposals that had been and as a result she planned to escalate this to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.

Nell had a meeting with Veolia where they were in favour of her suggestions that:

1. All Merton's future bins and recycling boxes should be one colour (brown)
2. All bins should be without a Merton Council logo
3. Stickers should be provided that residents can place on each bin to establish content.

A clear majority of those present agreed that these suggestions will now be put to the Council in a motion in conjunction with the Wimbledon Community Forum.

Councillor Suzanne Grocott provided an update following a recent Street stall to talk to residents. A number of street lights were out and need fixing; cycling on the pavement under the Arch remains an issue; a filter on the traffic lights on Grand Drive into Bushey Road could be suggested and the phasing of the lights could be adjusted. Councillor Grocott has raised these issues with the Council. A resident suggested a roundabout at the Grand Drive junction would be helpful. Another resident commented that a resolution to the cycling on pavement issue would be to improve cycling safety on the road.

A resident raised concerns about a recent spate of burglaries in the area, especially on the Apostles. The local Safer Neighbourhood Team had provided some crime prevention advice including making use of the Alley-gates scheme and joining Neighbourhood Watch. It was agreed to invite the SNT to a future meeting.

Flooding in Raynes Park area

Carl Leadbeater from Thames Water attended the forum to provide an update on the issues raised at the last meeting and the flooding on Abbot Avenue in July. Following the last meeting Thames Water has begun a catchment study to understand the hydraulic issues that are causing the problems.

In response to questions from residents Carl said that blocked gullies maybe a factor but until the study was complete they could not be certain. Recent price increases in water bills have been in-line with inflation and many customers found they could reduce their bills by installing a water meter. Water pressure is maintained at 1 bar as that is the requirement for most domestic appliances whilst higher pressure

increases the risk of leaks. If pressures are not at this level, please report to Thames Water.

Thames Water agreed to come back to a future Raynes Park Community Forum meetings to provide further updates.

Stephen Hammond MP

Wimbledon Police Station closure – Stephen will be taking this up with the Borough Commander at a meeting as well as writing to the Mayor of London. The Consultation Institute said this had been the worst consultation of 2017. Stephen said that the decision should be reconsidered on operational grounds, including the impact on shift patterns; the close access to the night time economy; and joint use by British Transport Police.

Crossrail 2 – discussions on the funding package is on-going. The timing of when money from TfL is available is the critical element at the moment.

South Western Railway – residents said the new franchisee has so far not been an improvement with a number of strikes scheduled as well. Stephen responded that it was unfortunate the new franchise started at the same time as the major works at Waterloo but there remains an ongoing issue with a shortage of drivers. They should soon be providing longer trains and improved frequency, especially at weekends.

Boundary Commission Review – the revised proposals in October included a complete Wimbledon constituency and Stephen thanked all those who had responded to the previous consultation. After the current consultation concludes the Commission will finalise their proposals and report to Parliament in autumn 2018.

Raynes Park Station – Stephen would be meeting with Network Rail along with the Raynes Park Association in mid-February.

Jerusalem – In answer to a question Stephen said the UK Government's position is clear. We recognise and believe that Tel Aviv should remain Israel's capital. Donald Trump's suggestion/ recognition of Jerusalem as the capital was surprising and likely to impede any peace negotiations. The UK Government did not agree with the President's comments.

Feedback

Christmas Fair

Raynes Park Christmas Fair took place on Friday 1 December and Nick Coke provided an update. This was the best attended Christmas event to date with more than 800 estimated to have come along; as well as more stalls and activities. Nick wanted to thank the 15 local businesses who had supported the event and the many volunteers who were crucial in managing such a large crowd. Nick asked residents for their feedback and comments included dry weather helping increase the crowd; a lack of signage on the south side of the Arch. Nick explained that Merton Council pay for the tree and its installation but local volunteers decorate it. In Wimbledon their tree is paid for by Wimbledon BID.

Town centre

Tony Edwards wanted to draw resident's attention to the consultation on the draft London Plan. This could have an impact on the height of new developments and density around stations. Details can be found at <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/london-plan/new-london-plan>

Volunteers have weeded planting areas and used Tesco funding to improve them. Astro turf has been laid where the bins have been removed and additional seating might be installed in the summer. Tony agree to check on the access around the Astro turf.

Negotiations with Network Rail are ongoing over access to the embankment but no progress to date.

If the parking space outside Man's Chinese Restaurant was removed there would be room for an island to improve road safety but further discussions were needed on this.

Reviewing the CPZs was due and it should be possible to make the timings more flexible. Tony said there would be a need for public meetings to discuss the options.

Crossrail 2

Chris Curtis from Network Rail provided an update on Crossrail 2. This slides from his presentation can be found at

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/council-and-local-democracy/community-forums/raynes-park-community-forum>

Network Rail will be responsible for the sections of the route that are above ground, including south of Wimbledon. Work is already underway to increase capacity in the area, with the upgrade of Waterloo meaning longer trains from December 2017; a new wider concourse from December 2018 and new 10 coach trains from 2019/20. Even after this work there will still be a need to increase capacity as London and South East continue to grow. The benefits of Crossrail 2 will extend as far as Portsmouth and Southampton.

The issue of level crossings is a significant challenge. With the increased frequency of trains, the current crossings will not be adequate, so work continues to find an appropriate solution, the first priority will be to not take any homes. Building bridges could resolve congestion caused by closing level crossings.

The new trains will also require changes at Raynes Park station with longer, straighter platforms and all stations on the route will be step free. Whilst these works could be delivered in the early stages of construction it would not be viable to introduce step free access before Crossrail 2.

The funding arrangements currently require 50% of the construction costs to be met during the construction phase. Routes have been reviewed but it should be noted that the route south of Wimbledon accounts for 5% of the cost of the project but 30-40% of the benefit.

Chris agreed with residents that Crossrail 2 could offer an opportunity to provide wider improvements to public realm in Raynes Park and said that one of the lessons from Crossrail was the importance of working with local authorities and communities.

The next consultation should take place in 2018, the Hybrid Bill completed by 2023 and then a ten-year construction period would take place.

Merton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

Hannah Pearson from Merton CCG updated the forum on future commissioning intentions. The slides from her presentation can be found at:

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/council-and-local-democracy/community-forums/raynes-park-community-forum>

In response to questions from residents Hannah said Mental Health policy is a high priority for the CCG and there had been a number of recent improvements to local mental health services including:

- Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (**IAPT**) service – provides support for anxiety, depression and other conditions
- Merton Rapid Intervention service – a multi-disciplinary team that includes Mental Health professionals and aims to prevent hospital admissions
- Crisis Cafés – informal, drop-in support service.

Feedback from LBM Raynes Park Champion

Neil Milligan was unable to attend the meeting but said there was nothing significant to report. Following concerns raised he is looking in the advert at 1 Durham Road.

The Chair thanked residents for attending and closed the meeting.

Date of next meeting: 8 March 2018 7.15pm, in the Library Hall.