

Raynes Park Community Forum Wednesday 8 March 2017 Chair's Report

The meeting was held in Raynes Park Library Hall, and chaired by Councillor Gilli Lewis-Lavender, with Chris Edge from the Raynes Park Association (RPA). Approximately 45 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

Martin Way Allotments Association

The Martin Way Allotments Association voiced disappointment and concern that the council, after handing over management responsibility of the allotments over to the association, never signed an agreement on the handover. Now that the council is ceding responsibility for all allotments in Merton to a third party, the association expressed concern about what might be expected from the contractor. Councillor Nick Draper agreed to take up the matter with the association after the meeting.

Prudential Ride London

It was noted that the next Ride London will be on Sunday 30th July, 2017.

Summer Fair

Tom Underwood, Chair of the My Raynes Park Festival noted that this is the eighth year of the festival, which will run from 23rd June to 2nd July, with a variety of events and entertainment, including comedians, book clubs and children's events. Sponsorship from businesses is welcome, and volunteers are also required: contact tom@myraynespark.co.uk to register interest.

Christmas Fair

David Hurst informed residents that the Raynes Park Christmas Fair will take place on Friday 1st December from 3.30-7pm. It will be in part of the Waitrose car park, with traders, carols and a grotto. Sponsorship from local businesses would be welcome. Councillor Lewis-Lavender asked if Alpine Huts could be brought in for the fair.

Merton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

Abbas Mirza, the Lead on Patient and Public Engagement explained that the CCG is running a pre-engagement programme about "choosing wisely". The proposals refer to possible changes to prescribing over-the-counter medicines, the provision of gluten free products, IVF provision, and guidance on ensuring patients are surgery ready, including advice for smokers and those with a high BMI.

A presentation on the programme can be viewed on the [Raynes Park Community Forum web page](#). Pre-engagement will run until 22nd March and groups can request meetings with Abbas before then to discuss the proposals. The deadline for completing a [survey](#) on the matter is 20th March.

Asked how the CCG will find the required savings of £13m, it was explained that many options are being explored, including merging Merton CCG's management team with Wandsworth's. Savings might also be made through Merton's pharmacies and the CCG's property portfolio, as well as by encouraging people who use the NHS to change their behaviour, for example, not going to hospital if they do not need to.

In response to a question about NHS funding being protected, Abbas explained that further money is needed, particularly due to people living longer.

It was acknowledged that Social Care needs to be looked at in light of absence of adequate care leading to bed-blocking, and consequently cancellations of operations.

Residents commented that the current NHS structure is unsustainable and a serious debate is needed. They also felt that prevention should be explored further, for example, preventing Type 2 diabetes. Abbas acknowledged that behavioural change in patients and food companies is needed. Public Health Merton is doing a lot of work around prevention and changes, such as a sugar tax, are being implemented.

As Dr Andrew Murray was unable to attend the forum to talk about the Five-Year South West London Plan, he will be invited to the next meeting on 15 June.

Community Police Update

Police Sergeant Nick Toohar gave an update on crime and police activity in Merton.

From 1st April, there will be two permanent police officers per ward, as well as a PCSO.

Merton is in the top five safest boroughs in London. Burglary is currently the biggest issue, so residents were asked to be vigilant. Free property marking kits are being handed out in certain wards to combat the problem and there is crime prevention advice on the [Met Police website](#).

The other main issue in the borough currently is theft of motor vehicles, especially scooters, therefore it is recommended to use a ground anchor and get a tracker fitted for motorbikes. With regard to pursuing stolen motor vehicles, to some extent the police are guided by Health and Safety regulations; not just the health and safety of those being pursued, but also that of residents. It is an offence of corporate manslaughter if someone is killed by a police officer in chase.

The 'Balaclava Burglar' has not yet been caught. Any burglaries where he is suspected are treated as a priority.

Asked about what resources there are for checking the speed of vehicles, PS Toohar said that apart from speed cameras, there are two officers on the Safe Transport team working on speed watch initiatives.

Residents were encouraged to vote in favour of alleygates if given the opportunity. They are funded up to 45% by the council and help to stop burglaries which often take place from the rear of properties.

PS Tooher explained that he issues warnings when cyclists ride on pavements; however the police unfortunately do not have the time to hand out fines for this. Additionally, in some circumstances, it is in the interests of safety that cyclists are allowed to ride on pavements, for example young children.

The police were invited to return to future forum meetings.

Counter Terrorism

Matt Bryan from the Counter Terrorism division at Merton Police spoke to residents about Counter Terrorism Awareness. Merton is a Tier Three Borough, which means it is at low risk for terrorism, but London is currently at severe level for a terror threat. Local communities can help to reduce the risk of an attack by being aware and reporting anything suspicious.

It was agreed that Matt will return to the next forum on 15th June to show a video about Counter Terrorism Awareness.

Current and anticipated planning applications

James McGinlay, Assistant Director for Sustainable Communities at Merton Council, updated the meeting on local planning and other issues.

- Officers at the council are aware of flooding on Edna Road due to storm drains being blocked. The contractor for gully cleaning is about to change, so the drains will be cleaned once the new contractor is in place, after April. James agreed to look into whether the cause of the blocked drains has been identified; if it's because of cement being mixed on the pavement, the council will issue paperwork to builders to warn that this is illegal.
- The removal of the bins south of the Skew Arch has been agreed and will take place sometime within the next couple of weeks. James will look into whether the north side bins will also be removed or not.
- Footpath outside the station – the transfer of land is progressing, with documentation being currently prepared and a meeting taking place next week between the local MP and Future Merton.
- South side of Wyke Road – the application has been refused by the council and is now at appeal. The planning inspector has not ruled out the possibility of residential development on the site.
- Manuplastics – discussions on a mixed-use development continue.
- 641 Kingston Road – a planning application for a hotel on the site of the vacant pub is likely to planning committee within the next month or so.
- 577 Kingston Road (Dundonald Church) – an application for residential development has been submitted to the council.

- 80-86 Bushy Road (Times Square Clock Tower) – planning permission has been granted and it's now with the National Casework Unit. Progress is being made in the meantime with a Section 106 agreement.
- Albany House, Burlington Road – discussions continue over affordable housing within the Section 106 agreement.
- Rainbow Estate – early discussions are taking place about further development on the site, which would be subject to a planning application and consultation. The previous application is still valid.
- Former Lesser Sports Ground, off Grand Drive – no change on the open space.
- Surcharge for parking of diesel vehicles – consultation was undertaken on the traffic management order, and as a result, the order was approved. Merton's Overview and Scrutiny panel will call in the decision on 15th March. A resident spoke out against the surcharge, arguing that the council has been hasty in its decision: a new report by the World Health Organisation is due to say that direct injected petrol engines are more toxic than diesel. The resident asked that the council wait for the report to be published before taking further action on the levy.
- James agreed to look into the status of a very large application that was submitted on the Wilson site, as there appears to have been no progress since consultation on the application.

Anti-wheelie bins campaign

Helen Alexander-Allen spoke to residents about her campaign against the introduction of wheelie bins in Merton. A new [website](#) is now live where further information about the campaign can be found and residents who oppose wheelie bins can sign a petition. Ms Alexander-Allen asked for supporters to donate towards the campaign and also said that celebrity support for it would be welcomed.

Councillor Lewis-Lavender asked for a show of hands from those who:

- Opposed fortnightly collections; and
- Opposed wheelie bins

In each case, approximately two-thirds of the people in the room raised their hands.

A resident asked how many other councils have wheelie bins. He stated that there are many more important issues in local government. Whilst he agreed that aesthetically the bins do not look nice, they keep rubbish contained and save money. Councillor Dean responded by saying that the bins blow over more, therefore are less likely to keep rubbish contained, and that their cost is actually higher.

Another resident commented that single occupier households do not need such large bins and a bin for mixed-recycling would be preferred to separate containers for each type of recycling.

Councillor Nick Draper said that the service Merton is proposing is based on the one run in Kingston, which appears to be working. Some residents felt Kingston's housing stock was more conducive to wheelie bins than Merton's.

The Chair thanked residents for attending and closed the meeting.

Dates of future meetings all at 7.15pm, in the Library Hall: 15 June 2017

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