

SPARKHILL WARD MEETING

NOTES

WARD: Sparkhill	DATE: 30 January 2020
VENUE: St Johns Church, Stratford Road	START/FINISH TIMES: 7pm – 9.05pm
COUNCILLOR Nicky Brennan	NOs OF ATTENDEES: 15
OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Les Williams, Principal Operations Manager, Waste Management Kay Thomas, Community Governance Manager	Apology -Cllr Fazal & Sgt Ullah

MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING:

1. Flood Action Group

Steve Salter, Indestructible Paints reported on efforts made to establish a Flood Action Group to support the local community. A partner meeting and a community partnership meeting had been held and a FLAG was being supported by the Environment Agency as a flagship project to use to encourage more communities affected by flooding to create groups. This would also help raise the profile of flooding within Birmingham City Council and he would be attending the City Council to submit a question.

Steve outlined the actions the FLAG would be undertaking – monitor river levels, check for blockages, list vulnerable people/places, resilience training etc. Councillor Brennan had fully supported the group, had attended all meetings and now was working to make the council more aware of the problems. Flooding was included in the Ward Plan as a priority so the FLAG was progress towards the implementation of the plan. Percy Road/Formans Road was the most affected area but the FLAG would cover the whole area.

In response to a suggestion from a resident suggesting Greet School be involved with the Group, Councillor Brennan said that she was meeting with the Head Teacher and would invite Steve.

The meeting was advised that cameras were being installed to monitor the river levels and collect data so that residents would be better prepared at the next flood.

Residents commented on the side roads off Percy Road/Formans Road where drains were blocked and if cleaned would assist when flooding occurred. Also, a list of emergency numbers would be useful. Councillor Brennan said that because the FLAG had been set up the area could access sandbags, flood alerts and get drains cleaned. She suggested inviting an officer from the drainage team to a future meeting to discuss cleaning and also advice on what can/cannot be disposed of down drains. Hall Green North councillors were also lobbying to have that ward and Sparkhill prioritised.

2. Clean Streets

Les Williams gave a brief outline of the services provided by Waste Management and in response to comments made by residents regarding the state of the streets he acknowledged that they were poor in terms of cleanliness and rubbish/flytipping. He advised that he had walked around the area and had looked at the alleyway opposite Cravings Café and it had been cleared but the rubbish continued to be dumped. A gate could not be installed as there were businesses operating. Contact with businesses was being made and Waste Enforcement officers would be visiting premises along the Stratford Road to check Duty of Care orders were in place and were adequate.

In response to concerns regarding flats above shops Les said that the bins were inadequate and he was arranging for the Waste Prevention Team to visit and look at what arrangements could be made to get waste removed and prevent dumping. It had come to light that some of the flats were recorded as use for storage but obviously now had residents so the system needed to be updated to reflect this and so that waste collection could be catered for.

Residents said that repeated reports of fly tipping/dumped black bags were made but the rubbish continued to be dumped. Les advised that an experimental collection of black bags after the waste collection had been made daily along the Stratford Road in Sparkbrook/Sparkhill and a tonne of rubbish had been collected daily. This issue was being addressed and hot spot areas were being targeted.

Residents suggested that opposite Cravings Café was a local hot spot area and one of the reasons might be because people did not know where to leave their rubbish. There was a piece of land immediately before the alleyway belonging to the housing association that owned the flats and it was suggested that this be used to house industrial size bins with a regular waste collection to keep rubbish off the pavement/alleyway.

Les advised that he was open to local suggestions. That area of land had been considered but the road was narrow and posed a problem for vehicle access. There was high turn over of tenants which did not help but collections had been increased. However, Les undertook to speak to Midland Heart and arrange a meeting to discuss the situation and try to achieve a proactive solution.

During the course of discussion residents repeatedly said that they reported fly tipping, rubbish dumping, had provided evidence but the situation continued and businesses in particular continued to dispose of their rubbish inappropriately. Les commented that action against businesses without adequate duty of care orders had been stepped up and that an 'all out day' had been undertaken in Sparkhill with various agencies involved. He said that he felt residents felt they were being let down as they did not see any positive action being undertaken and therefore offered to join any Facebook/Whatsapp groups so that information could be shared. Les undertook to arrange this with Councillor Brennan.

There was some discussion regarding the recycling service and residents were advised that an additional bin could be provided free of charge. He added that he had noticed that there were not sufficient bins along the Stratford Road during his walk about and would look into more being provided and possible lamp post bins.

In response to a complaint regrading a pile of black bags on corner of Fernley Road, Les undertook to have them removed. Residents thanked him for this but said it was more about prevention and action such as fines was needed to stop people repeatedly dumping rubbish.

Les undertook to request the enforcement team to visit and take some action. Crews would now be able to report fly tipping and were being encouraged to do so and residents were asked to speak to the crews.

Residents commented on the number of fast food take aways in the area that exacerbated the litter problem combined with shops selling green grocery and other items from the pavement that blocked drains and brought down the look of the area. The meeting was advised that a beat sweeper had been requested for the gutters so the street sweeper could concentrate on the pavements. Action needed to be taken against street trading and encroachment. Councillor Brennan said there was a survey regarding street trading on her Facebook page and encouraged residents to complete it. Les advised that a night-time collection was being considered to deal with the night-time economy.

There was some discussion regrading bulky waste collections and residents suggested that the idea of sharing a collection should be promoted more widely and Les undertook to get a letter drop undertaken.

Residents thanked Les for attending the meeting, listening to their concerns and taking an interest in the area. They asked for action to be taken on the suggestions made and the issues raised so that improvements could be made to the environment. Residents expressed a willingness to work with officers if they would come into the area and start to take enforcement action so that residents could see that the council was serious about helping to clean up.

Les undertook to invite Councillor Brennan to the depot to meet local managers and discuss a plan for the ward that could be discussed at the next meeting.

ACTIONS:

a) Les Williams to discuss with Midland Heart residents suggestion to use piece of land opposite Cravings Café to

house bins for residents to dispose of rubbish to prevent fly tipping & build up of black bags in that particular hot spot.

- b) Information regarding prosecutions etc to be provided by Les to Councillor Brennan to include on Facebook page. Prosecutions report submitted to the Licensing & Public Protection Committee to also be included.
- c) Waste Prevention Team to be requested to letter drop hot spot streets in relation to dumping of furniture, large items etc (Les Williams)
- d) Les to arrange visit to depot for Cllr Brennan to discuss plan of action for the ward
- e) Action Plan to be prepared (Les Williams/Councillor Brennan) with top 3 priorities for action and solutions to be discussed the next meeting
- f) Les Williams to be invited to attend next meeting

3. Local Updates/News/Issues

- a) **Beggars** – Councillor Brennan reported that action was being taken by the police and she would ask for a report to the next meeting
- b) **Parking** – residents advised to report abandoned cars to the DVLA and to send photos to Councillor Brennan
- c) **Parking around English Martyrs School** – concerns raised regarding dangerous parking on the pavements, zig zag markings etc in Evelyn Road and that bollards or other measures were required to prevent parking. Councillor Brennan undertook to speak to the school about Mode Shift Stars and the police regarding enforcement. In response to similar concerns regarding the Olive School & St Johns School she undertook to do the same.
- d) **Police Tasking Meetings** – Councillor Brennan undertook to raise better advertising of the meetings with Sgt Ullah.