

NECHELLS WARD MEETING NOTES

WARD: Nechells	DATE: 25th May 2023
VENUE The POD, Oliver Street B7 4NX	START/FINISH TIMES: 6.30pm – 8pm
COUNCILLOR Lee Marsham	NOs OF ATTENDEES: 14
OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Sergeant Jason Walters Pat Whyte, Community Support & Development Officer Kay Thomas, Community Governance Manager	

WARD PRIORITIES:

1. A Cleaner Nechells
2. A Safer Nechells
3. A Greener Nechells
4. A Healthier & Better Connected Nechells

MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING INCLUDING LOCAL CONCERNS:

1. Welcome & Notice of Recording:

Councillor Marsham welcomed all to the meeting and advised that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there were confidential or exempt items

5. City of Nature & Local Parks

Councillor Marsham advised the meeting that funding had been allocated for parks and open spaces across Birmingham and as Nechells fell into the bottom 3 wards with accessible green spaces, would receive the money later this year. Ideas/plans of improvements for the parks across the ward

were shared with residents at the meeting and Councillor Marsham explained this was the first of a series of consultations to find out what residents thought of the plans and to hear their own ideas/thoughts. Councillor Marsham also referred to other local funding, Community Chest, Brum Breaths, that was available to wards for local spend. Details of costings were also shared.

There followed a general discussion –

What's wrong with our Parks?

- Lack of lighting, litter, lack of bins, general lack of maintenance, lack of grass cutting
- Parks not fit for purpose – too much concrete, no benches for elderly/disabled, no facilities
- No play equipment for children 10+
- Limited play equipment and some equipment removed but not replaced
- Different parks were used by different demographic therefore consultation should be local to the park in question
- Proposals put forward not what residents would choose – need to be what actual park users would like to see, cater for different age groups – funding needs to be used wisely to make parks useable and not just made to look good
- Loxton Park not on BCC website & not maintained

What do we like in the proposals?

- Outdoor gym equipment, notice boards (if maintained)
- Sensory garden
- Finger sign posting
- Green waste at Salford Park
- Some residents thought the events area good as a focus point while others thought it would not be used and then would fall into disrepair
- Funding for local parks and the opportunity to make improvements and get the areas back into use was welcomed

What do we want in our parks?

- Create more Friends of Parks groups
- Outdoor exercise equipment suitable for all ages
- Jogging lanes in Bloomsbury Park
- More trees
- Cricket pitches, volley ball courts etc – ask children in schools
- Carry out own local feasibility study by speaking to residents, groups, schools etc and create an action plan for each space.
- Put Parks details on BCC website.
- Use youth groups, Free@Last and the POD to reach and consult with people.

- Mix of amenities in each area
- Before spending money on new amenities BCC should clean up the parks, repair and maintain so parks were clean and tidy and ready for people to use and encourage more use ahead of the improvements

6. Ward Plan

Councillor Marsham shared the final draft of the Nechells Ward Plan that the meeting agreed and added that the plan could be reviewed at any time and any new priorities added.

7. Councillor Updates/Local Issues

a) Police Update

Sergeant Jason Walters introduced himself as the new sergeant for the ward. He stated that he wanted to find out from the local community what the main priorities were rather than base assumptions on the data he received. Sergeant Walters said that theft from motor vehicles appeared the top priority and residents agreed but added that issues around the tower blocks were hot spots. Sergeant Walters said that from the data it appeared Nechells had a low crime rate but he believed this to reflect under reporting of offences.

Residents said that the main priority was for the police to build confidence with the local community as there was now no relationship with the local team and residents had stopped communicating with the police due to lack of continuity of officers, promises made and not kept and lack of response. Residents were more likely to contact Councillor Marsham with police issues than report to the police as experienced showed that on most occasions no response was received/action taken.

The following hot spots were reported

- High rise blocks – asb, drug activity
- Duddeston Manor – drug activity
- Car crime/car cannibalism across the ward, Cromwell Street highlighted

Sergeant Walters acknowledged the points raised and said he would welcome direct contact with him and his officers. He urged residents to report crimes as this had an impact on resources in the ward. He also promoted WMNow as a way of keeping connected, explained how it worked and recommended residents sign up, undertaking to send officers into the community to explain and help people get involved.

b) Councillor Updates

Councillor Marsham said the next meeting would take place in September and welcomed suggestions for future agenda. Residents suggested the Leader be invited in response to the Future City Plan 2040 and the Cabinet Member for Housing. In view of the poor condition of roads around the area a discussion around highways was also suggested.