

**HIGHTERS HEATH WARD MEETING
NOTES**

WARD: Highters Heath	DATE: 29 July 2019
VENUE: Warstock Community Centre, Daisy Farm Road B14 4QA	START/FINISH TIMES: 7pm – 8.35pm
COUNCILLOR Adam Higgs	NOs OF ATTENDEES: 26
OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Stuart Cross, Amey Highway Steward Iqbal Singh Sangha, Dennis Bennett, Richard Campbell, Drainage Team Andrew Daw, Emergency Planning Team Sergeant Karen Hunn & PCSO Julie Jefferies, West Midlands Police Kay Thomas, Community Governance Manager	Apology from Inspector Noeleen Murrin

MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING:

1. Police Update

Sergeant Hunn reported on crime figures for June 2019 compared to same time 2018 which showed a slight increase but she assured residents this was not a cause for concern. Burglary and theft from motor vehicles had reduced slightly. There had been a focus on anti-social behaviour around William Hill and a recent arrest associated with local burglaries. Three convicted burglars had recently been sentenced to a total of 47 years which was a huge success for the police in trying to break criminal groups. Residents could see the good work being done by the Billesley team on their Twitter account.

2. Flooding in the Ward

Residents stressed that the flooding earlier in the year had not been caused by rubbish in the brook as it was regularly cleared by allotment members. Prior to the last meeting an inspector from the drainage team had visited residents and promised flood defence work for the allotments to be completed by spring but no work had been undertaken and no further contact made.

The meeting was advised that the officer who had visited had not made it clear that funding for such measures had to be applied for from government as the council did not have a budget to undertake the work itself.

In response to comments regarding a pollution incident residents informed officers that this had been traced to a manhole located at the new properties and as a goodwill gesture Sainsbury had spent £38k dredging and clearing the manhole although the issue had not been of their making. The officer who had visited residents had said that the funding for the defence work had to be found from the Allotment Trustees and completed by spring but had made no further contact.

Iqbal Sangha advised that they had applied for government funding for funds to build a bund and a full business case had been submitted for modelling work. Property flooding resilience was also being investigated eg special air bricks, doors etc and there had been a discussion with the allotment trustees. The meeting was advised that an allotment had already been taken out of cultivation to allow access.

Reference was made to the new care home built in Maypole Grove and that the drains were supposed to have been cleaned but this had not happened. Residents had cleaned the drains but proper cleaning was required. Stuart Cross undertook to take that up. Reference also made to a raised manhole cover that had been reported but no action taken. Stuart undertook to follow up with Severn Trent.

A resident from Henlow Road advised that one of the difficulties when the flooding happened was contacting Amey or the Council and communication failings between the two. Residents had to clean debris from the drains to allow flood water to flow away, however proper cleaning of the drains was needed to clear of leaves and other debris. Since Sainsbury had been built the natural drainage system had been affected and no account had been taken of the ability of the drainage system to cope with all the new development and this coupled with the lack of cleaning meant that a bund would be ineffectual.

Stuart Cross advised he had been on a walkabout of the area with Councillor Higgs and the gullies had been cleaned in November 2018 and in June 2019 to alleviate flooding. He would undertake a further inspection in October with a view to further cleaning. Residents stressed that visual inspections were not sufficient as drains that appeared clear flooded when it rained indicating the problem was at a point that could not be seen during a visual inspection eg junction at Hawkhurst Rd, Jct Stotfold/Hendlow Rds. Stuart undertook to pursue. The Drainage Team also undertook to speak with Severn Trent as it appeared that there was a capacity issue with the drains in the area although it was probable that the water authority would view the storms as exceptional.

During the course of discussion on the way forward some residents advised that a Flood Action Group could assist and an interest was expressed in forming a group. Andrew Daw advised that the Environment Agency was no longer offering help but he would be willing to assist if residents could come together, form a group and provide him with the contact details of the key members of the group who he could liaise with. It was noted that residents affected by flooding were already working together and if this could be formalised a FLAG could be established. He offered to provide contact phone numbers etc to assist. Residents asked that Councillor Higgs arrange a meeting so that residents interested in a FLAG could come together.

Residents also requested that a ward meeting be held every 3 to 4 months.

In response to the S19 Report residents did not feel this gave an accurate depiction of the situation in Highters Heath. Several residents affected by flooding had not received questionnaires and therefore the list of those affected was not complete and there should be at least a further 3 properties included. Flooding had occurred when there had been a storm but also when there had been rain for 4 continuous days.

- Action:**
- a) Commitment made by Drainage Team to undertake some flood prevention work, subject to approval for funding.
 - b) Residents to form a Flood Action Group with assistance from Emergency Planning Team (Andrew Daw)
 - c) Update to be provided to the next ward meeting

3. Highways

- a) Shops, Prince of Wales Lane – resident advised that Amey had spent 2 days putting down top soil & grass seed that had then been ruined by large lorries parking and causing deep ruts. It was queried what preventative action could be taken. The meeting was advised that the Local Engineer was looking into double kerbing for that area.
- b) Prince of Wales Lane, footpaths - it was reported that when Amey had re-laid the pavements insufficient dropped kerbs had been installed for wheelchair users. Many of the paving slabs were badly in need of repair. Stuart Cross advised he was meeting with Severn Trent regarding the possible presence of an underground stream and then would sort out the broken slabs. He would take up the issue of the dropped kerbs with the Local Engineer.
- c) Immanuel Church, Highters Heath Lane – complaints regarding cars parking on the footpath causing difficulties for the school crossing warden crossing children across the road. Councillor Higgs said he had put forward schools in the area for the car exclusion zone pilot, in particular Hollywood Primary
- d) Alcester Road South – opposite E57 Social Club digital sign previously dormant for number of years had been showing ‘testing’ and it was queried whether this would now be an operational speed sign. Stuart Cross undertook to investigate and added that he was also trying to have A frames removed from that area.

4. Residents Have Your Say

- a) Rubbish - In response to concerns raised regarding rubbish from chip shop and flats on Prince of Wales Lane full details to be sent to Councillor Higgs for action.
- b) Better Streets Community Fund – Councillor Higgs requested resident’s ideas for the West Midlands Mayor’s Better Streets Community Fund and undertook to provide further details at the conclusion of the meeting.

Councillors (s) Signed:

Councillor(s) Name(s) (please print):