

## BALSALL HEATH WEST WARD MEETING NOTES

<b>WARD:</b> Balsall Heath West	<b>DATE:</b> Saturday 27 <sup>th</sup> May 2023
<b>VENUE:</b> Balsall Heath Church Centre, Mary Street B12 9JU	<b>START/FINISH TIMES:</b> 11am – 12.25pm
<b>COUNCILLOR</b> Shehla Moledina	<b>NOs OF ATTENDEES:</b> 11
<b>OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:</b> Selina Ellis, Love Your Streets Rachel West, Community Governance Manager Maria Lopresti-Saunders, Neighbourhood Action Co-ordinator Kay Thomas, Community Governance Manager	

<b>WARD PRIORITIES:</b>
1. 2. 3. 4.

<b>MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING INCLUDING LOCAL CONCERNS:</b>
1. <b>Welcome and Introductions from Councillor Moledina</b>
2. <b>Notice of Recording</b> – Councillor Moledina advised that press/public could record/take photographs of the meeting except where there were confidential/exempt items. It was also noted that, at the request of Councillor Moledina, Councillor Bi was recording aspects of the meeting and no objections were raised
3. <b>Ward Action Planning</b> Councillor Moledina explained the ward planning process and that priorities, goals and actions needed to be identified to help residents, organisations and councillors work better together to achieve local solutions.

A local resident commented on ward boundaries, stating that these were not necessarily seen by the community and therefore facilities that they used were sometimes in a neighbouring ward but viewed as a local asset.

The meeting then split into groups to discuss the issues that they felt needed addressing as a priority and how solutions could be found. Following this there was a general discussion on the matters that had been identified –

- a) Community Safety – including speeding vehicles, anti-social behaviour, drug taking, discarded drug paraphernalia. Some of the roads specifically identified included Clevedon Road, Alexandra Road, Balsall Heath Road. Former college site off Pershore Road excessive speeding at night. Concern regarding beggars and prostitution. Traffic calming/speed bumps would slow down traffic speeds. Drug paraphernalia was not removed when reported to the council and litter picking groups did not want to pick up therefore request for action by the council. Better response from the police when issues around prostitution, drug taking, begging reported.
- b) Exempt Accommodation/HMO properties – proliferation of properties and numbers increasing. Vulnerable people in the accommodation were not receiving adequate support or supervision resulting in anti-social behaviour, litter, anti-social activities in Calthorpe Park. Licensing for properties to ensure landlords provided adequate support to tenants and planning enforcement to ensure regulations were complied with might help alleviate some problems. The concentration of multiple occupied properties in such a small area impacted on existing residents therefore action to prevent further such properties opening needed to be taken.
- c) Local Services – street cleaning, rubbish removal, parks maintenance, grass cutting – no regular services provided across the ward and lack of communication with the community. Street cleaning programme requested so that community groups could co-ordinate litter picking etc but no response received. Grass cutting – rubbish not cleared first so cuttings and churned up rubbish strewn over pavements etc – groups would clear rubbish prior to cutting if there was communication from the council. The community was willing to help the council and could help make the environment better if the council would communicate and work with the community. CCTV in hot spot areas would also assist in improving the environment.
- d) Shopping Centre, Edward Road – should be a focal point for the community. Community litter picks etc happening but there needed to be a clean up behind the shops and improvements to the shop fronts. Also suggested that the river be cleaned and opened up as a focal point. Residents felt the shopping centre should be a positive in the ward plan and there was opportunity to make it a better place.
- e) Litter/rubbish – community groups making good progress but culture of rubbish dumping on street corners needed enforcement/education to stop and show it was unacceptable. Amount of litter/rubbish attracting vermin – more street cleaning required to address this and help tidy the streets to instil community pride.
- f) Parking/ traffic flow – eg Willow Road – too much traffic for narrow roads. LTN's suggested. Match day parking Edgbaston Cricket Club had a knock-on effect in neighbouring roads as did parking charges introduced at Cannon Hill Park
- g) Retro-fitting properties – lots of scope for properties in Balsall Heath but process too 'top down' and restrictive. All properties could be retro fitted to Zero Carbon standards and solar panels/heat pumps installed.

- h) Health, Education & Participation – focus on young people. Number of take-aways not conducive to healthy eating and major cause of litter. Encourage work around healthy eating through schools etc so message taken back to parents. Youth and community lead governance rather than involvement – street-by-street community meals inviting all to participate.
- i) Begging – concern for welfare of those begging but also made residents feel unsafe and beggars were in the road so concern about potential traffic accidents.
- j) Police were key to solutions around a number of priorities. There needed to be better communication between police & community and attendance at ward meetings could be a place to start.

ACTION	WHO	BY WHEN
1. Ward plan to be drafted and regularly reviewed at ward meetings	1. Councillor Moledina	1. ASAP
2. Ward meetings going forward to consider identified priorities (one per meeting) and work with invited officers to find solutions	2. Councillor Moledina/Kay Thomas	2. at ward meetings
3. Councillor Moledina to include details from this meeting in newsletter	3. Councillor Moledina	3.