

**JOINT YARDLEY EAST AND YARDLEY WEST & STECHFORD WARD FORUM MEETING NOTES**

**THURSDAY 26<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2023**

**6.00PM – 8.00PM**

**ST. EDBURGH'S CHURCH SCHOOL**

**CHURCH ROAD**

**YARDLEY**

**B33 8PD**

**COUNCILLORS:**

**Baber Baz (Yardley West & Stechford)**

**Deborah Harries (Yardley West)**

**NOs OF ATTENDEES: approx. 35**

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Beverly Edmead - Community Governance Team, BCC

PC Stacey Hill – Stechford & Yardley North Police Team

PCSO Ken Walters – Stechford & Yardley North Police Team

**MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING:**

**Cllr Deborah Harries in the Chair**

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Following introductions, Cllr Harries welcomed residents from both Yardley East and Yardley West & Stechford Wards to the meeting.

**2. Notice of Recording**

Residents were advised that members of the press/public may record and/or take photographs of the meeting.

### **3. Local Updates**

#### **Police Matters**

Copies of the latest local police team newsletter were circulated at the meeting.

PCSO Ken Walters advised of the following:-

- StreetWatch and SpeedWatch activities – volunteers/residents were needed to help support the ongoing activities. Currently there were a small number of active residents involved with both. Training and equipment were provided and both activities were carried out with members from the local police team. Residents interested in taking part/finding out more should contact PCSO Walters or PC Hill after the meeting - both activities were roughly 2hrs each per month. Volunteers were really needed on this side of the ward.
- New Sgt for the local team due to start w/c 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023
- Moat Lane/Croft Lane – increase/spate of burglaries just before Christmas; local police team leafleted all properties in these roads to raise awareness and offer practical security advice as well as reassurance.
- Old Yardley Park – weapons sweep recently carried out – no weapons had been detected/found or seized which was good news, however everyone should remain vigilant and report any suspicions or concerns. However, concerns had been identified over in nearby Oaklands Recreation Ground – these were currently being investigated.
- Sedgemere/Millfields Road – increase in fly-tipping and other issues identified during routine StreetWatch Patrol – all reported to the City Council via the Fix My Street App, which was very useful for reporting issues identified during StreetWatch and SpeedWatch activities.
- Youth Violence (under 25yrs) – this continues to be an ongoing and increasing problem. Officers currently had powers to carry out Stop and Search – several hotspot areas had been identified, including Oaklands Park, which was a real cause for concern as several robberies and knife crime incidents had been carried out there. Regular surveillance of known repeat offenders was also ongoing.
- School Traffic Parking – zero tolerance approach being adopted to obstructive/dangerous parking and parkin on zig-zag lines outside schools. Officers would be carrying out visits to all schools in the ward over time and proactive enforcement action carried out to help reduce the problem.
- Obstructive/dangerous parking across the ward – several hotspot areas had been identified – including around Yew Tree Shopping centre, where there was an increase in pavement parking and on zig-zag markings. Visible patrols around the Yew Tree would be increased, however this would have to be managed along with the other priorities for the team. Local businesses had been asked to remind their customers to park appropriately. Residents could also upload/email pictures of inappropriate/obstructive parking to the local police team, with the time, date, and location – if it was safe for them to do so. Warning letters/fines would then be issued to drivers as appropriate.

- Bateman House – ongoing problems with youths congregating and causing anti-social behaviour in the hallway/landings. Unfortunately, no CCTV cameras are installed in the block – discussions ongoing with the building owners (Tesco & City Council) regarding better security for the block. In the meantime, regular patrols would continue to be carried out.
- Swan Shopping Centre/Open/Green Spaces- patrols and weapons sweep carried out on a regular basis
- Old Yardley Park – the local team were aware of the issues raised regarding an increase in the use of gas canister bottles/drug use and alcohol amongst other acts of anti-social behaviour and were responding to these concerns; however, many of the incidents were taking place after 11pm when the Team shift ended. Residents must continue to report incidents, giving as much detail as possible so that these could be logged, and resources/responses planned accordingly.
- Future activities/special operations to include Operation Intrusive and Neighbourhood Week – working closely with partner agencies to tackle/disrupt acts of criminality, including the close monitoring of known offenders. There was also a focus on shops/businesses selling illegal products to under-age young people; approx. 5 bags of illegal/harmful products had been seized by Trading Standards following an earlier operation.
- Residents reminded to remain vigilant, keep vehicles locked and not leave the car unattended with the engine running.

The following comments and concerns below were expressed by residents:-

- A general feeling/sense of neglect and abandonment by the local and wider police teams. Concerns had been reported to officers when they were seen out on patrols, however there was no follow up or acknowledgment of the concerns raised.
- An increase in school aged children smoking cannabis to and from school; what action was being taken by schools to deter/address this behaviour. Often peer pressure was not within the school but outside influences to and from school. More needed to be done to tackle this and reduce the pressure on/protect school children as they go about their daily routine and activities. Better engagement and partnership working with schools/School Liaison Officers was called for as well as parent involvement.
- Drug dealing openly carried out during the day – vehicle registration numbers/times and details of perpetrators had been reported to the police on a regular basis, but the problem was still ongoing. More visible patrols and proactive action, including covert surveillance was needed to disrupt the pattern of behaviour and where appropriate, the arrest of the perpetrator(s). Old Yardley Park/Conservation Area, Church Road and Francis Road were problematic hotspots
- Late evening patrols should also be considered as many of the unsavoury activities and acts of criminality took place after 10pm
- Francis/Albert Roads -drug dealing being carried out openly – no visible police patrols for a very long time
- Blakemere Avenue – ongoing problems with nuisance behaviour and acts of criminality, including a stabbing at one of the HMO

properties, and an alleged brothel above the barber shop.

- Church Road – cannabis factory at premises leased by Probation Services
- HMOs and Exempt/Supported Housing Accommodation users continued to be a major problem; street begging, drug taking/alcohol abuse being carried out openly with no support by the service providers. More needed to be done and pressure put on the service providers to carry out their duty of care. Normal residents were left feeling scared, vulnerable and unsupported by the authorities, and felt it was only a matter of time before vigilante groups took matters into their own hands.
- Yew Tree Local Shopping Centre – obstructive/double parking was commonplace – both traders and visitors paid no attention to the parking restrictions, signage or double yellow lines; the pay and display car park remained unused as drivers refused to pay to park. A more robust enforcement approach was needed, drivers fined and vehicles causing an obstruction towed away. A Traders Association should be encouraged and businesses taking a more coordinated approach to making the centre a safer place for users – pedestrians and drivers alike.
- Station Road – obstructive parking on both sides of the road outside Stechford Baths.
- Off road bikes and E-Scooter use on the roads continues to be a problem, many being used illegally. The Voi Scooters currently being trialled by West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) was also particularly problematic citywide. Reference was made to the recent fatality of a young person in Bordesley Green who had been involved in an accident whilst riding one of the scooters.
- The work and focus of the local police teams should be more on preventative and protection strategies rather than reactionary practices as it currently was.
- More visible patrols across both wards were needed on a regular basis, and more arrests made rather than moving the problem around the ward.

Responding to the comments and concerns made, PCSO Walters advised that residents must continue to report incidents to the police so that resources would be appropriately deployed, and acknowledged that whilst it was frustrating, it was essential if the issues raised were going to be tackled/addressed. Non urgent or dangerous incidents could be reported via live chat, email, 101 telephone services – 999 should always be used in an emergency.

PCSO Walters further advised of ongoing partnership working with several agencies, including schools where there was often a School Liaison Officer (SLO) and agreed to refer residents' concerns to the SLO. Cllr Harries also agreed to contact the School Head to advise of the concerns raised.

PCSO Walters gave details of the partnership working and patrols with officers from the respective outreach teams to tackle street begging/rough sleeping – advice, guidance, support etc constantly offered but not readily accepted by 'those in need'. Residents were

reminded not to give money directly to those begging but to donate to one of the many charities supporting rough sleepers and those battling alcohol/drug addiction.

Bringing the discussion to a close, Cllrs Baz and Harries thanked PCSO Walters and PC Hill for their attendance and updates.

- **Yardley Neighbourhood Network Scheme**  
Deferred – officers unable to attend
- **The Active Wellbeing Society (TAWS)**  
Deferred as officers did not attend

#### **4. Ward Action Plan 2022 - 2023**

Cllr Harries briefly advised of the need for every Ward Councillor to work together with residents to develop a Ward Action Plan based on priorities identified in their respective ward, and how these could be tackled/addressed.

The Ward Action plan was for the period 2022- 2026, the electoral term of office for each Councillor and was a working document to be reviewed/updated as necessary.

Cllr Baz added that the first draft of the Ward Action Plan for Yardley West and Stechford Ward was available and would be circulated to residents in the ward.

Cllr Harries advised that the priorities for Yardley East Ward Action Plan would be circulated for agreement from residents prior to the first draft of the Ward Action Plan

#### **5. Councillors Updates and Notices**

Residents were advised of the following:-

- Local funding for each ward included the Ward Minor Transport Budget, Community Chest and Clean Air Zone (CAZ); all were ring-fenced respectively to address issues and concerns. The criteria for the Community Chest and CAZ funds were still to be finalised – details would be made available in due course.

- A Love Your Environment activity to be carried out at the Yew Tree and Station Road on 9<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> February respectively - Cllr Harries agreed to contact the Trade Waste Team to request an enforcement exercise for business premises/traders.
- StreetWatch and litterpicking activities to take place in Yardley West & Stechford – Cllr Baz to deliver leaflets encouraging residents to take part, and to consider ‘adopting a street’ to carry out regular litter-picking with like-minded residents/neighbours on a regular basis/time suitable to them. Residents interested in taking part/finding out more should speak to Cllr Baz following the meeting.
- Mobile Household Recycling Centre (MHRC) would be back in Yardley West & Stechford Ward on Francis Road on 2 Feb and Clements Road on 28 March – 7am – 12pm for both visits.
- Clements Road – footway improvement works to be carried out from 30 January
- Love Your Street activity to take place on 14 February by the parade of shops/former Cascades site on Station Road
- SpeedWatch activity to take place on Wash Lane – more volunteers needed
- Leaf fall clearance due to start in Kestral Avenue and Stoney Lane
- 30 new trees planted across both wards with National Trust

## 6. Residents News/Updates/Concerns

Residents advised of the following concerns:-

- Stoney Lane – speeding on the service road; drivers also using the road as a cut-through and ignoring the one-way sign. CCTV cameras and/or speed humps needed or bollards for residents’ access only.  
**Action: Cllr Harries agreed to ask the Highways Engineer to investigate**
- Community SpeedWatch – Matt, local resident and speedwatch member stressed that more volunteers were needed to help with activities and encouraged residents to think about getting involved if a difference was going to be made to speeding on local roads.
- Queens Road/School Lane – asbestos garage roofs left by the flats/alleyways and in St. Edburgha’s Close by the park  
**Action: Cllr Harries currently dealing with the issue**
- Church Road/Meadway – drivers ignoring the one-way system – enforcement action needed  
**Action: Cllr Harries to raise with Highway Engineers**
- Barrows Lane/Church Road – pedestrian refuge/crossing needed – pedestrians faced lengthy wait/delays trying to cross the road  
**Action: Cllr Harries to raise with Highways Engineer**
- Bus Services No 11 Outer Circle and No 17 – ongoing problems with bus services  
**Action: Cllr Harries to discuss with residents affected**

- Old Yardley Park – densely planted saplings in the Rose Garden in need of thinning out

**Action: Cllr Harries to raise the issue with the Districts Parks Manager**

**7. Date of Next Meeting**

To be agreed and residents advised accordingly.

Cllrs Baz and Harries thanked residents for their attendance and active participation in the meeting.

**Meeting closed 8.05pm**