

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

**WEDNESDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2022**

**6.00PM – 8.00PM**

**ST. EDBURGHAS CHURCH SCHOOL**

**CHURCH ROAD**

**YARDLEY**

**B33 8PD**

**MEETING NOTES**

**COUNCILLORS:**

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

**Deborah Harries (Yardley West)**

**NOs OF ATTENDEES: Approx. 30**

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Sgt Laura Burke – Local Police Team, WMP

James Carless – Senior Planning Officer, Inclusive Growth  
Directorate, BCC

Beverly Edmead - Community Governance Team, BCC

Mark Gamble – Head of East Birmingham Development, Inclusive  
Growth Directorate, BCC

Kevin Gibbon – Kier Highway Services

Imran Khan – Principal Local Engineer, BCC

## **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. Police Matters – including an update on Yardley East Speedwatch**

Following introductions, Sgt Lorna Burke gave details of the WMP policing priorities for the local neighbourhood team – these included:-

- Youth Violence (under 25yrs)
- Gang Tension
- Domestic Violence
- Offender Management
- Motor Vehicle thefts and 'Chop-Shops'
- Drug Dealing

Sgt Burke further advised of the current police initiative 'Operation Intrusive' due to be carried out by the local policing team. This would be 'ring-fenced' specifically to neighbourhood policing issues, which unfortunately had not been prioritised due to an increase in demands on the service. The Operation would include 3hrs daily patrols in hotspot areas around Stechford Retail Park, Frederick, Lyttleton and neighbouring roads.

Residents were actively encouraged to report incidents, noting the times and dates and as much information as possible so that hotspot areas could be identified and included. Sgt Burke added that the Live Webchat on WMP website was a very quick and effective way of reporting issues.

In the discussions that followed, residents advised of concerns regarding several HMOs (Homes of Multiple Occupancy) where anti-social behaviour, alcohol abuse, drug-dealing and acts of criminality were a regular occurrence; these included several on Frederick and Church Roads , Jennifer Walk and Yardley Guest House – all were particularly problematic with little or no support or supervision from the owners of the properties and the impact on residents living in close proximity/wider community continued to be challenging and detrimental. Residents also advised of an increase in drug dealing around St. Edburgha's Conservation Area and Old Yardley Park – often in broad daylight.

Concerns were also expressed regarding a property in Richmond Road that was attracting teenagers/young people and being used for numerous illegal activities, including drug-dealing, gambling and selling alcohol without a licence on a daily basis.

Responding to residents' concerns, Sgt Burke advised that patrols in these areas would be increased and stressed that residents must continue to report incidents. The Local Police Team was also aware of the issues regarding the property in Richmond Road and agreed to discuss the matter further with the residents concerned and Cllr Baz outside of the meeting.

### **Speeding and Speedwatch**

Residents advised of the increase in excessive speeding and dangerous driving across the ward, with some of the worst offences committed on the following roads:-

Bordesley Green East – including ignoring and speeding in the bus lane

The Meadway

Station Road/Stoney Lane

Church Road – including pavement parking and on zig-zag lines; access on pavement regularly blocked

Barrows Lane

Queens Road

Yew Tree Shopping Centre -parking on double yellow lines/zig-zag markings outside the Wetherspoon was also a daily occurrence.

Sgt Burke advised the roads mentioned had already been identified and included on the list for targeted action.

Sgt Burke added that several residents had expressed interest in learning more about Speedwatch and that PCSO Ken Walters would be arranging a meeting for 6 July for residents/volunteers to learn more about Speedwatch, the equipment available to monitor traffic speed and the training and support that would be given. It was agreed that the contact details for the local police team and PCSO

Walters would be circulated to residents following the meeting.

#### **4. Highway Maintenance - Kier Highway Services**

Kevin Gibbon, Highway Steward, Kier Highway Services briefly advised of the role of Kier Highway Services in managing, maintaining and repairing the roads and pavements across the city on behalf of the City Council. They also worked very closely with the Local District Engineers to identify and address highway issues locally. Tree/shrub pruning and management were also included if they were on the highway.

Locally, Queens Road was due to be resurfaced – details would be made available in due course.

Residents should continue to report highway repairs – including potholes, missing manhole covers, lighting issues via the City Council website or Ward Councillor.

Residents and Councillors thanked Kevin for his attendance and update.

#### **5. Highway Improvements**

Imran Khan, Principal Local Engineer briefly gave details of his role, working locally with residents and Kier Highway Stewards to address highway issues and where appropriate, design and implement traffic calming measures. Each ward was allocated a Ward Minor Transport Measures (WMTM) budget of approx. £10,000 per year to tackle some of the traffic/highway concerns raised by residents and the Ward Cllr(s) and prioritised accordingly. He also advised of the WMTM programmed works for 2021/2022 due to be delivered for Yardley East in the next few months and that the WMTM works for schemes in Yardley West had been delivered.

It was agreed that copies of the works for both wards would be circulated to residents following the meeting.

Responding to residents concerns regarding the increase in speeding, dangerous driving and obstructive parking, Imran Kan explained that speed signs, double yellow lines and speed cushions were amongst some of the things that could be considered under the Ward Minor Transport Measures. For larger or more detailed traffic calming measures or schemes, a Business Case would have to be submitted to the Cabinet Member for consideration and funding as the WMTM would not be able to fund these schemes due to the costs.

Residents advised of the following:-

- A cycle junction box at Bordesley Green Road and Victoria Street would be useful
- Sedgemere Road and Cockshut Hill – speeding had significantly increased and had become an accident hotspot since the speed humps were installed, which seemed to have the opposite effect to what they were supposed to do.
- Barrows Lane and Moat Lane – speeding had also increased along these roads

Responding to residents' comments, Imran Khan agreed to carry out a site visit to see if a cycle junction box was appropriate. He also advised that two speed signs were to be installed on Moat Lane and a further site visit was planned to Cockshut Hill/Sedgemere Road to see if some realignment of the road could be considered.

Councillors and residents thanked Imran Khan for his attendance and update.

## **6. East Birmingham Development**

Following introductions, Mark Gamble, Head of East Birmingham Development and James Carless, Senior Planning Officer, Inclusive Growth Directorate gave details of the East Birmingham Inclusive Growth Strategy launched in the spring of 2022.

Mark Gamble explained that Strategy had been developed in response to tackling the neglect and steady decline of areas in the wider Yardley and Hodge Hill constituencies over the years and working with key stakeholders and partner agencies like HS2, Tyseley Energy Park, Midland Metro and South and City Colleges across the East Birmingham Corridor provided a great opportunity for change, improvement and regeneration of these areas; increase job opportunities/prospects for local people as well as provision of additional homes. He added that many comments and suggestions had been made by residents during the consultation/discussion process, several had been taken onboard and both he and James Carless would be working with the local community to help develop ideas and projects together.

James Carless added that the City Council had also published a City of Nature Vision Strategy would be working with both the National and Wildlife Trusts to develop a Green Strategy for its parks and open spaces and to secure funding to help with mapping of the assets.

Residents advised of the following issues and concerns:-

- Frances Road Allotments – concerns raised by plot-holders at recent meeting held by the Allotment Committee regarding the new lease arrangements which appeared to assign all responsibilities to plot holders. Members of the National Allotment Association

who were present at the meeting advised plot-holders against signing the new lease whilst they were currently looking into the matter. Concerns were also raised regarding the whether the spare allotment by Richmond Way could be let, and whether the Covenant on Yardley Fields Open Space would be honoured and protected.

Mark Gamble agreed to raise the matter with the City's Allotments Team

Residents sought an update on the former Cascade site which had been vacant for approx. 3 years and its future use was still unclear despite residents wishes for the site to be retained for community use.

Mark Gamble explained that the Council's decision to dispose of the site on the open market had been put on hold as the YMCA and Stechford Baptist Church had expressed an interest in obtaining the site; however both decided not to pursue the matter any further or make an offer for the site. He further advised that the site and specification for its future use was included in the Birmingham Urban Strategy Framework.

Whilst it had been acknowledged that affordable housing and community facilities in the ward was very much needed, Cllr Ian Ward, Leader of the City Council was still to decide if the site should go back onto the open market for disposal. Residents and Ward Cllrs would continue to be kept informed.

Residents and Councillors thanked Mark Gamble and James Carless for their attendance and updates.

## **7. Local Updates/Residents News/Open Forum**

Residents advised of the following:-

- Supported Housing Accommodation – safety concerns for LGBT residents living in some of these premises. Cllr Harries agreed to discuss the matter further with residents affected outside of the meeting.
- Grass verges/re-wilding – wildflowers planted in the grass verges along Bordesley Green East towards the Meadway had been mowed/removed by staff which was very disappointing. In addition, litter had not been removed prior to mowing, so this remained scattered and embedded in the grass cuttings which also had not been collected. Cllr Harries agreed to raise the matter with the Parks staff.
- Frederick Road/Station Road – littering remained a problem, particularly in the alleyways behind the shops on Station Road
- Dog fouling in Old Yardley Park had increased as dog owners were not picking up their dog's mess. Cllr Harries agreed to contact the

Dog Warden to see if targeted action could be carried out.

- St Edburgha's Conservation Area – drug dealing had increased, particularly around Old Yardley Park. Sgt Burke confirmed this was one of the hot spot areas identified for increased patrols.
- Stuarts Road – increase in fly-tipping by the BT building and the gate outside children's nursery. Cllr Baz agreed to investigate and raise the issue with the local cleaning team.
- Croft Road/Yew Tree Road – increase in littering/general clean up needed. Cllr Harries agreed to investigate

Cllr Harries gave details of organised litter picks being carried out in the ward at Station Road on the first Saturday of the month, 10am – 12pm; Old Yardley Park on the second Saturday of the month, 10am -12pm. Volunteers were always welcome.

#### **Special Thank You**

Cllrs Harries and Baz thanked residents and volunteers for their hard work and support with litter-picking and helping to keep their local area clean and tidy – as individuals or groups.

#### **8. 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**