

Quinton Ward Forum Meeting Notes
Tuesday 17 January 2023
7.00pm – 9.00pm
Christ Church, Quinton
773 Hagley Road West
B32 1AJ

COUNCILLORS:

Sam Forsyth and Lauren Rainbow

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Marie Brown – Districts Engineer, South

Mel Coton, Community Support & Development Officer,
Neighbourhood Development & Support Unit (NDSU)

Beverly Edmead, Community Governance Manager, Neighbourhood
Development & Support Unit (NDSU)

Stacey Kettner – Neighbourhood Action Co-ordinator, Quinton and
Harborne Wards

No of Attendees – approx. 35

Cllr Sam Forsyth in the Chair

1. Notice of Recording

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

Cllr Forsyth welcomed everyone to the meeting, and Council Officers present were asked to introduce themselves, so residents knew who they were.

Neighbourhood Action Coordinator Role

Following introductions, Stacey Kettner, Neighbourhood Action Coordinator briefly advised of her role the Neighbourhood Action Co-ordinator for Quinton and Harborne Wards which was to:-

- To work with Elected Members (Ward Cllrs) in their local leadership role, to empower communities to take action to improve their community, and to help find solutions to issues/concerns identified in their respective ward.
- Act as an Enabler to connect residents and council services – ‘unblocking the blockages’ where possible
- Enable and/or enhance co-ordinated action across services and communities to benefit local neighbourhoods
- Develop community-led action plans based on local priorities
- Set up a small Steering Group and administer a small funding budget of approx. £10,000 per ward to help deliver locally based activities

2. Quinton Ward Action Plan 2022 – 2026

Following on from discussions at the last meeting, Cllr Forsyth proposed that consideration was given to completing the first draft of the Ward Action Plan based on the priorities and key concerns identified and discussed at the last meeting, and that the Plan remained a working document that should be reviewed and amended as necessary.

The priorities agreed were:-

Young People/Effective Provision for Young People Crime, Disorder and Community Safety Cleaner, Greener Quinton

Priority 1 – Young People/Effective Provision for Young People

Cllr Forsyth briefly advised of discussions held earlier with Jan Collymore, Area Youth Officer regarding the lack of youth provision in Quinton ward. Further discussions with Youth Services and appropriate partner agencies would be arranged to look at identifying need, the availability of funding and suitable facilities (indoors and outdoors). Recreational and social activities would be included in discussions as well as physical activities to encourage as many young people as possible to engage and to get their views on what they felt was needed. Youth Services were also quite keen to learn more about the work of B32 CommUNITY Hub (Kerry and Becky) and to support them work in the ward. In addition, Youth Services were seeking to recruit a Detached Youth Worker to work in Quinton and neighbouring wards.

There would also be the opportunity for volunteers/interested residents to get involved/ find out more; training and support would be

given. Residents interested should contact Cllr Forsyth or Cllr Rainbow following the meeting.

The following comments were made by residents:-

- Quinton was blessed with lots of green open spaces – some of which was unused and/or not well maintained by the City Council. These could be used by all age groups and providers for youth activities – weather permitting.
- Involvement and engagement of young people from all backgrounds was essential and should be encouraged; conversations and discussions should be included and led by them, and their comments and views listened to.
- Recognising that ‘one -size does not fit all’ – not all young people are sports orientated – creativity, musical/theatrical abilities/ IT etc were all skills and talents that should be encouraged. Local entrepreneur Dominic briefly advised of the activities carried out by his company and offered to help in any way that he could.
- Use of current social media trends to engage/reach young people – local schools also need to be included.
- Engaging with organisations currently providing youth facilities locally to see what’s being provided and if partnership working was appropriate– e.g. St. Boniface Church
- Some young people were at risk of being taken advantage of/exploited/ getting into acts of criminality when left to find their own source of activity – the need to find a way to engage with them was essential.
- Accepting that some young people may not want to get involved in programmed activities, and that working with/providing youth provision was not always straight forward.
- A Youth Summit/Conference would be a good starting point

Priority 2 – Crime, Disorder and Community Safety

- Lack of police attendance at Ward Forum Meetings - the new local Sgt had not attended this evening’s meeting despite confirming that he would.
- PACT Meetings – police had agreed to reinstate – times and dates needed to be widely advertised to enable residents to attend if the wished to do so.
- Increase in crime, burglaries and thefts, some of which could be attributed to the impact of the current cost of living crisis as well as the lack of visible police officers in the ward. Theft from retail premises – especially supermarkets and verbal abuse/treats to staff had increased; Co-op stores had recently been targeted.
- Many residents were left feeling fearful of being a victim of crime and felt that more visible patrols were needed, particularly in hot spot areas.
- Tackling excessive speeding/dangerous driving and parking behaviours and a more proactive approach/robust enforcement action

needed to tackle the issues – including naming and shaming where prosecutions were successful.

- Speed-Watch and Street-Watch initiatives were actively encouraged and supported by the police – more volunteers/residents needed to sign up; training and support was given by the PCSO(s), who also carried out patrols and speed monitoring activities with the respective groups.
- Police talks/meetings in schools with teachers/parents/pupils should also be considered – parents may not be aware of what their child/ren could be involved with to/from school. Peer pressure could also be a factor within and outside school.
- Preventative/proactive work carried out by local police teams with potential offenders should be better promoted. Encouraging young people who have been deterred/discouraged from acts of criminality to speak to their peers/become youth community leaders and/or have an input in helping to shape youth provision and development.
- Acknowledging that crime happens and will probably never be completely eradicated – adopting practices, methods and behaviours to address and tackle crime, and to provide the best possible support for victims of crime.

Priority 3 – Cleaner, Greener Quinton

- Fly-tipping continued to be an ongoing problem and nuisance in some parts of the ward; however, there were visible improvements due to vigilance/ better reporting by residents and Cllrs, and faster responses and removal by the collection crews.
- The use of the Mobile Household Recycling Centre Vehicles also enabled residents to dispose of unwanted items locally without having to travel to Lifford Lane HRC
- Middle Leasow/Simmons Drive – green space was a regular dumping hotspot, with items fly-tipped as soon fast as it was cleared – CCTV cameras should be installed, along with the appropriate signage
- Faraday shops – more litter bins needed and once installed, must be emptied on a regular basis
- Shops/business premises- checks should be made by Trade Waste/Enforcement Officers to ensure that appropriate trade waste arrangements were in place, and action taken if this was not the case
- Irregular household bin collections for the new homes built close to the former bowling alley site.
- More proactive action needed to prevent/deter fly-tipping and to trace perpetrators. Cllrs were actively working to secure mobile CCTV cameras for hot spot areas in the ward. An increase in Enforcement Officers to tackle fly-tipping in hotspot areas citywide was also being considered by Cabinet. A 'Wall of Shame'/Name and Shame those successfully prosecuted for fly-tipping should also be at the forefront of tackling fly-tipping.
- Making green/open spaces more deterrent-proof and encouraging a community approach to deter unwanted /illegal trespassing – e.g. raised planters/encouraging businesses/schools/local groups to 'adopt and maintain' a space and/or "beautifying' a local spot or area.
- Work with Love Your Streets/Love Your Environment initiatives to help keep streets clean. Also supporting local groups/individual

residents currently carrying out regular litter-picking activities by providing equipment and arranging for bags to be collected without the 'hassle and bureaucracy'. Cllrs have arranged a Love Your Streets Day every three months- these were not advertised in advance so not to encourage dumping/fly-tipping or residents leaving items out in advance.

- Mapping the green areas/open spaces in the ward – nature recovery essential and needed in all green spaces. Existing community groups like Quinton Meadows Consultative Committee (QMCC) and Friends of Pitts Wood currently doing a fantastic job, but more volunteers needed from all sections of the community – young and old should be actively encouraged to take an interest.
- Encourage more volunteers/residents to get involved – setting up Friends Of Groups were a good starting point - training and support offered by Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (BOSF).
- Encourage residents to 'adopt a 'green or open space'- some residents may have an interest in keeping their local space clean and tidy without being part of a recognised group and may be happier working alone or with friends /neighbours on an 'as and when' basis.
- Newly planted trees and shrubs needed to be cared for – everyone needs to be encouraged to water/care for them along with the services responsible for doing so (Parks, Kier Highways etc). Trees recently planted at Howley Grange Recreation Ground were watered and cared for by volunteers
- Loss of front gardens and grass verges – being replaced with tarmac/drives as homeowners created off road parking had a visual impact on the greenery of some local roads.
- Encourage residents to consider window boxes, small planters outside their home; re-wilding and managing some green spaces/areas to attract bees/butterflies/ladybirds etc.
- Better use of notice boards to advertise 'local green activities' and how to get involved.

3. Councillors Updates

Residents were advised of the following:-

- Mobile HRC would be back in the ward on Thurs 19th March at Faraday Avenue and Thursday 9th February on Green Lane, 7am – 12pm on both days.
- Several Community Pantries and Food Banks operating locally - including Faraday Avenue and St. Boniface Church. Community Pantries gave those using the service the opportunity to choose products better suited to their family needs rather than the donations given at food banks – however both were set up to help people in difficult and were very much appreciated. Barry added there was still a lot of renovation work to be carried out to the rear of premises in Faraday Avenue. A meeting with contractors Fortem had been arranged to see how the issues -including damp could be addressed.
- No Mow May had been proposed across parts of the city in a bid to encourage wildlife/enhance the fauna and flora. If residents were in favour of the proposal, it would be across the whole ward and an acceptance that grass cutting normally carried out in May would

be delayed for the first few weeks. Roundabouts /dual carriageways etc however would continue to be maintained so driver visibility was not adversely affected.

The proposal was largely welcomed by residents if it was managed properly and normal grass cutting services resumed after May.

Further clarity was sought regarding the maintenance of recreational areas (football/cricket pitches etc) during this time.

Cllr Rainbow agreed to raise the matter and advise residents accordingly.

- An increase in the number of applications for HMOs and Exempt Accommodation in the ward – the latest being in Higgins Lane, which was refused. Residents reminded to let Cllrs know of any issues/concerns they had regarding these types of accommodation, especially where they were poorly managed.
- West Boulevard/Wolverhampton Road South – petition had been submitted to reduce the current road speed limit to 30mph. A request to have the pavements lowered outside the retirement home by Hadley Croft was also submitted.
- Clean Air Zone (CAZ) funding – the ward was due to receive £40,000 which was ring-fenced to Active Travel measures – e.g. walking/cycling /use of public transport/safer roads etc. This would be discussed at a future ward meeting once more information regarding how the funds could be spent was made available.
- Changes to Bus Services: Number 10 Bus Service – would now be running Monday – Fridays only; new Number 55 Bus Service running from Tesco Quinton to Longbridge Monday – Saturday. Residents advised that the consultation process was very poor – not widely advertised or promoted and inaccessible online.

4. Other Local News and Updates

i) Quinton Meadows Consultative Committee

Copies of the report were circulated at the meeting. Peter Beck, Secretary briefly advised of the following:

- The installation of three benches in the Local Nature Reserve on 5 January 2023 funded by Threadneedle (owners of the Business Park)
- Discussions currently ongoing with Bennetts (landscaping contractors) regarding improvements to the access path using funding provided by Threadneedle
- Discussions ongoing with Simon Atkinson, Head of Conservation, Birmingham & Black County Wildlife Trust to see if the Local Nature Reserve could be included as part of the National Highways Clean Rivers Project
- Howley Grange Recreation Ground – litter bin still to be installed. Meeting to be held with Dudley MBC to look at the damaged fencing alongside the path between the Recreation Ground and the Business Park
- The revised Constitution to allow younger residents (aged 16 – 25) as well as individual residents to be part of QMCC was still to be ratified by the City Council
- King Charles III Coronation Event – event being considered by Quinton Methodist Church on Sat 6th or Sunday 7th May 2023. QMCC

invited to take part

ii) Friends of Pitts Wood (FoPW)

Clare Sandercock, Chair briefly advised that Preet Gill MP had been in contact with the Education Dept regarding the transfer of the lease from the Academy Trust back to the City Council. The process was moving in the right direction.

iii) Friends of Woodgate Valley Country Park

Copies of the report were circulated at the meeting. Vina Campbell briefly advised of celebrations to mark the 40th anniversary of Woodgate Valley being designated as a Country Park. Events would include:-

- Dawn Chorus 30th April – time, possibly 5am – tbc – all welcome
- Bird Watch – tbc
- Brumbats – dates and times to be agreed
- A new trail in memory of the late Park Ranger Leo McKeivitt
- Visitors Centre – event planning was in the early stages

The proposed parking charges would no longer be introduced at the Country Park (or at Sheldon and Lickey Hills Country Parks) following strong objections from residents/park users during the consultation process.

Other Issues

- The Active Wellbeing Society (TAWS)

Responding to a request from Elliot for an information update, Cllr Forsyth advised this would now be a formal investigation and was unable to provide an update or comment at this time. This would be given in due course.

5. Dates and Agenda Items for Future Meetings

Weds 29th March, 7pm - suggested venue Quinborne Centre, Ridgacre Road

Councillors Forsyth and Rainbow thanked residents for their attendance and active participation in the meeting.

Meeting closed at 8.52pm