

## NEWTOWN WARD MEETING NOTES

<b>WARD:</b> Newtown	<b>DATE:</b> 25 <sup>th</sup> October 2022
<b>VENUE:</b> Pannel Croft Extra Care Village, Hospital Street B19 2XY	<b>START/FINISH TIMES:</b> 6.30pm – 8.15pm
<b>COUNCILLOR</b> Ziaul Islam	<b>NOs OF ATTENDEES:</b> 20
<b>OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:</b> Selena Ellis, Love Your Streets Mary Kennedy, Birmingham Open Spaces Forum PC Curtis, West Midlands Police Pat Whyte, Community Development & Support Officer Kay Thomas, Community Governance Manager	

### MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING:

#### **1. Welcome & Notice of Recording**

Councillor Islam welcomed all to the meeting and advised that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there are confidential or exempt items

#### **2. Love Your Streets Initiative**

Selena Ellis, Engagement & Enforcement Officer, outlined the details of the Love Your Streets initiative and added that there had not been an all-out day in Newtown yet but would welcome, from residents, suggestions of hot spots in the ward that required attention. Selena said that she could support litter picking groups with equipment and clearing rubbish.

Residents were concerned about fly tipping and the amount of rubbish affecting Newtown. Although this was regularly cleared by the council the rubbish returned almost immediately and Selena was asked how this could be tackled. Selena advised that she could arrange for enforcement teams to come to where the fly tipping occurred and could look at installing CCTV at hot spots to gather evidence. The Waste Prevention Team could also offer advice and having the MHRC in the ward was part of efforts to reduce rubbish dumping.

In response to residents reporting those responsible for rubbish dumping, the meeting was advised that evidence had to be presented at court so residents would have to be willing to write a statement and appear as a witness for a prosecution to go forward.

Residents said that there was a problem with vermin in Yellow Park due to people feeding the birds and asked for signs to be erected and there was a request for Selena to meet residents at Burberry Park for a walk about to see the issues and engage with the local community. Selena advised that bird feeding in parks was a city- wide issue and the Parks Department was looking at ways to tackle it. She undertook to meet with residents at Burberry Park as requested.

In response to questions from Councillor Islam the meeting was advised that the Love Your Streets team was working with residents to create some sustainability from within the community after the initial clean up had been undertaken by the team. There was an increased enforcement team working to bring more prosecutions, but the courts did need statements and witnesses. Councillor Islam asked if he could suggest an area for a Love Your Street all out day and Selena advised he contact her with details.

Residents expressed disappointment as this was not a new scheme and similar had been tried before and still the amount of fly tipping and rubbish was not decreasing and the community was not receiving the service it deserved as the initiative had been set up but not given any real power to take direct action. The councillor was responsible to the community but no improvements were being seen. Residents also expressed concern that there were no road sweepers seen in the area despite regular sweeping occurring along Constitution Hill and Great Hampton Row but the cleaning did not extend to Newtown. Pat Whyte advised there was a schedule for street cleaning and suggested Councillor Islam request the schedule and that residents make note of where street cleaning was taking place to assist Councillor Islam.

A resident queried whether it was possible for the council to review small areas of land that were unused to assist roads where parking was a particular problem with parked cars causing obstruction because there were no alternative places to park. For example, where there was a small piece of land that could be used to park cars and ease pressure. Councillor Islam advised that a petition to this effect had been started in respect of Guild Croft and submitted to the City Council meeting.

### **3. Birmingham Open Spaces Forum**

Mary Kennedy, Operations Manager explained the work of BOSF and how they helped residents form local groups to look after their local parks and green spaces. BOSF worked closely with the council and would help with attracting funding, equipment, first aid training etc. Anyone wishing to form a friends of group should contact BOSF so that an initial meeting could be arranged to help establish the group and support going forward.

#### **4. Police Update**

PC Curtis gave a local police update. Youth violence and ASB in the area was being addressed around Constitution Hill, Summer Lane and Bridge Street. The team was also aware of parking issues in the area, especially around St Georges. With regard to year on year crime figures – domestic abuse, youth violence, knife crime and theft from the person had all seen a reduction while burglary and vehicle crime had increased although this followed Force wide patterns. There was a specific team focusing on motor crime and burglary was also a force wide priority that would receive officer attendance. The noticeable reduction in youth violence had been a result of a government funded operation.

#### **5. Ward Planning**

Pat Whyte outlined the purpose of the ward plan that involved the community, community groups, stakeholders and partners coming together to look at ward issues and priorities and solutions. It was proposed to hold another meeting to discuss the plan in more detail. There was some discussion and Councillor Islam asked for resident's ideas on the main priorities for the ward.

The following suggestions were made –

- Lack of facilities eg swimming pool & community centre closed
- Rubbish/fly tipping and how to clean up the environment in Newtown
- St Georges Park improvements
- Parking – suggestion that small areas of land that had no purpose be turned into parking areas to relieve congestion on roads eg Geach Street, Guild Croft (Cllr Islam to investigate)
- Encourage more Friends of Groups to look after and improve green spaces and reduce rubbish dumping
- Encourage community engagement through Forums and more resident involvement

## **6. Resident/ Councillor Updates**

**a) Central Newtown & Burberry Park Community Forums** – thanks to Pat Whyte and Councillor Islam for their hard work and support. Through using Fix My Streets repairs across the Burberry Park area were being undertaken and also Councillor Islam had been successful in helping the group have the shrubbery in Markford Walk and Porchester Drive cut back. More volunteers to assist with the community forums were required.

### **b) Councillor Islam updated as follows –**

- The next MHRC would be in Park Lane on 11 November 7am – 12. The following location would be Great King Street and the date would be announced shortly. Any other suggestions for locations to be suggested to Cllr Islam
- Petition re Summer Lane Housing Project – use as a community centre for Newtown being investigated with funding from Commonwealth Games legacy
- Fly tipping – several walkabouts undertaken to identify hot spots and rubbish cleared
- NACRO building – investigations being made to use this building for community use
- Visited high rise blocks around St Georges and numerous housing issues identified. Arranging a meeting between senior housing manager and residents in respect of the condition of flats

### **c) The Active Well Being Society**

The role of TAWS was explained and help offered to residents to support any community activity such as litter picking, street closures for street parties/activities, events such as fun days etc. TAWS was able to leaflet drop in advance of any event and visit residents. The Taws website provided details of events in local neighbourhoods.