

NECHELLS WARD MEETING NOTES

WARD: Nechells	DATE: 1 st February 2024
VENUE: Free@Last, Nechells Park Road, B7 5PR	START/FINISH TIMES: 6.30pm – 7.35pm
COUNCILLOR Lee Marsham	NOs OF ATTENDEES: 20
OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Pat Whyte, Community Support & Development Officer Kay Thomas, Community Governance Manager	VISITING SPEAKER: Councillor Majid Mahmood, Cabinet Member for Environment Yvonne Wager, Birmingham Open Spaces Forum

CURRENT WARD ACTION PLAN PRIORITIES:

1. A Cleaner Nechells
2. A Safer Nechells
3. A Greener Nechells
4. A Healthier & Better Connected Nechells

MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING INCLUDING LOCAL CONCERNS:

1. Welcome & Notice of Recording

Councillor Marsham welcomed all to the meeting and advised that members of the press/public could record and take photographs except where there were confidential or exempt items.

2. Update from Councillor Majid Mahmood, Cabinet Member for Environment

Councillor Majid Mahmood outlined his role and responsibilities as Cabinet Member for Environment and made the following comments –

- Thanks extended to all litter picking groups in Nechells.
- Missed collections service had improved over the past 12 months.
- Recycling rates in the area could be better but it was hoped that weekly food recycling collection, set to be introduced in 2026 would improve figures.

- Meeting advised that a second recycling bin could be provided upon request. Collected paper was sold to Smurfit Kappa. A second bin for rubbish could also be provided for larger households.
- Fly tipping across the city had reduced, assisted by introduction of the MHRC.
- The Perry Barr HRC was now open and bookings were available. The numbers of bays had increased and new items such as ink cartridges, coffee pods were being taken. The city as a whole needed to recycle more.
- Recycling from commercial bins and flats needed to be sorted out and education work was being undertaken with housing and their duty to separate glass & paper recycling. There was also a conversation with Smurfit Kappa regarding provision of bins for charities, community organisations etc.
- It was acknowledged that the siting of such bins required consideration so as to not attract side waste, black bags and dumped rubbish. Education was key.
- It was confirmed that wet paper (side waste) could not be taken for recycling, so residents were urged to request an additional bin if storage space was available. It was not BCC policy to take side waste except at Christmas/Ramadan.
- Residents were urged to report businesses that were not clearing up as they should. All businesses should have a trade waste contract (not necessarily with BCC) and periodic checks were undertaken with fines reported to the Licensing & Public Protection Committee.
- Equipment was available for litter picking groups and bags of rubbish would be collected. In response to concerns raised regarding a factory in Elliott Street, Councillor Mahmood requested that the details be provided to him at the conclusion of the meeting.

3. Parks, Open Spaces and Friends of Parks Groups

Councillor Marsham advised that he wanted to create a Friends of North Nechells Parks group to help look after the parks and public open spaces in the ward and assist with funding applications.

Yvonne Wager explained Birmingham Open Spaces Forum helped Friends Groups to come together and bring in funding to the groups that BCC was unable to access. In addition to BCC services, Friends of Groups supplemented park services with litter picking, planting, gardening, playgrounds etc. BOSF also provided insurance cover for the groups.

Councillor Mahmood added that BOSF received a grant from BCC to enable them to assist Friends of Groups and employ a bid writer to help groups access funding. Friends Groups also provided a point of contact for the council and park users. Nechells ward was part of the City of Nature programme receiving upgrades to parks in the area. Birmingham Tree People were planting trees across the city, including in Nechells to increase the tree canopy to

the suggested level, bringing health benefits and better air quality.

In response to queries, Councillor Marsham said he had forwarded a funding application form to St Josephs Church and Councillor Mahmood suggested contacting Birmingham Tree People with suggestions for tree planning locations.

Residents expressed opposition to the suggestion in the plans for parks to install notice boards as it was felt the money could be better spent. Councillor Mahmood said that notice boards would promote general information, park activities, even waste collection information could be displayed, and the community also help use them.

The meeting was advised that the youth club had hoped to hold some activities in the local park but were unable to do so as the grass had not been cut. Councillor Mahmood asked that the details be reported to him, and he would ensure the grass was cut for the event. Councillor Marsham added further benefits of a Friends Group were that it would be a local voice and the first point of contact for the community and could comment on planning applications and request conditions relating to parks.

John Street, Free@Last, said the Friends of North Nechells Parks Group had been set up to ensure the community had a say in what happened in local parks. The parks between Nechells Academy Primary School and Free@Last would be covered by the group who could then help support groups for Bloomsbury Park etc. Smurfit Kappa and some local businesses had also expressed an interest and could help with local fund raising. The group was due to hold a meeting to elect a chair etc then would be a constituted group. Councillor Marsham added that under 16-year-olds with parents or through schools could also join in and Councillor Mahmood suggested contacting the newly formed Friends of Hodge Hill Common for advice and support.

In response to queries about bin collections in parks, residents were asked to report where increased frequency was required and Councillors Marsham/Mahmood undertook to take away as an action for Bloomsbury Park. It was also requested that grass cutting in Bloomsbury Park be undertaken in time for half term and Easter holidays.

- 4. AOB** – in response to queries Councillor Marsham suggested inviting a representative of the Canals & Rivers Trust to a future meeting.

ACTIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS MADE	WHO	BY WHEN
1. Request increased bin emptying frequency Bloomsbury Park 2. Regular grass cutting request for Bloomsbury Park 3. Canals & Rivers Trust invite to future meeting	1. Cllr Marsham/Cllr Mahmood 2. Cllrs Marsham & Mahmood 3. Cllr Marsham	1. asap 2. In time for half term and Easter school holidays 3. Future meeting