

ACOCKS GREEN WARD FORUM MEETING NOTES

Wednesday 19th April 2023

7pm – 8.30pm

Fox Hollies Forum

Greenwood Avenue

B27 7RA

COUNCILLORS: Roger Harmer and Penny Wagg

NOs OF ATTENDEES: 11

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Acocks Green Police Team – PCSO G Bannister & PC Plislecki

Beverly Edmead – Community Governance Team

Jennifer Gray - Political Assistant, Lib Dem Group (Observer)

Debbie White – Neighbourhood Action Coordinator, Acocks Green
and Glebe Farm & Tile Cross Wards

Apologies

None

MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING:

Cllr Roger Harmer in the Chair

1. Notice of Recording

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

2. Ward Action Plan 2022 – 2026 Update

Copies of the Ward Action Plan to be submitted were circulated to residents at the meeting. Cllr Harmer reminded residents that the Ward Action Plan was a working document, to be reviewed, updated and amended over time as issues and concerns changed.

Parks and Green Spaces

Residents advised that anti-social behaviour in Fox Hollies Park remained a huge problem – CCTV cameras would be a useful deterrent. PC Plislecki explained that requested has been made for mobile CCTV cameras to be deployed in hotspot/problem areas; in the meantime, the local police team would continue to do what they could to tackle the issues – which could also include a specially targeted operation. Officers would also be looking to engage more with schools and parents as with the summer season fast approaching, certain behaviours and nuisance needed to be tackled.

Cllr Harmer added that the play area was due to be completed soon, gates were also to be installed off Pool Farm Road; it was hoped the latter would minimise the nuisance caused by motorbikes/off road bikes/ scooters etc.

Community Safety

Residents advised of the increase in quad bike/off road bike use across the ward – they were a real nuisance and danger to pedestrians and drivers, and grass verges/parks and open green spaces being increasingly destroyed. Alleged perpetrators were known to be from the Gospel Oak Estate – details had been given on several occasions, however little or no action appeared to be taken.

PC Plislecki advised that where identified, visits would be made to the alleged perpetrator and agreed to raise the issues with the traffic team for possible targeted action.

Local Shopping Centres

Debbie White, Neighbourhood Action Coordinator had visited all businesses in the village to seek their views on safety and the possible reinstatement of Acocks Green Business Improvement District (BID). Questionnaires were issued and due to returned/collected within the next week. Most appeared positive and keen to reinstate the BID as they did not realise the security/links would no longer be provided and were ultimately responsible for their own arrangements; however, the process was not a swift or straightforward one. The questionnaire and ballot would have to be for the original BID area.

Kier Highways - roads/pavements/lights/trees

Oxford Road to be resurfaced in June – dates to be confirmed.

Full programme/timetable of works would be made available later in the year. Highway schemes not yet completed during 2022 – 2023 programme would be rolled over to 2023/2024

Speeding remained a problem – Dolphin Lane area was a real concern; CCTV cameras, clearer traffic signage and traffic calming measures were needed, particularly at the junction with Thornfield Road if a serious accident was to be prevented. Overall, a more

holistic approach to traffic calming/safety measures in Dolphin Lane and surrounding roads was needed rather than an ad-hoc consideration and approach.

Cllr Harmer advised that a new strategy and approach to traffic calming and road safety concerns, particularly around schools was discussed at the recent meeting of City Council – significant major funding would be needed to improve road safety for everyone.

Alexander Road/Douglas Road junction -drivers regular speeding along the stretch of road; signage needed to indicate there was a sharp right turn into Douglas Road.

Action: Cllr Harmer to ask District Engineers to investigate

Housing

Exempt/Supported Housing – Bill currently going through Parliament and was expected to be heard after the summer recess. Residents would continue to be kept informed.

Energy efficiency – over 250 council owned properties were due to be improved as part of the retrofit scheme. The programme was due to commence at the end of July 2023.

Young People

Work still ongoing to develop/establish a Youth Council

Transport

Westley Road Bus Garage – parking had significantly increased around the site. Daily patrols and enforcement action carried out by PCSO. Residents advised they could send photographs of obstructive parking to the police – fines/warning letters would be sent to the vehicle owner in the post. Residents felt that tickets/fines should still be displayed on vehicles as it gave reassurance that some action had been taken.

Transport Summit to take place in the Council House on Weds 26th April – City Council and West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) were involved.

Support Community Groups

Debbie White, NAC gave details of the small grants fund available to community/voluntary groups in the ward to help tackle/address some of the concerns included in the Ward Action Plan. Groups could apply for up to £2,000.

Volunteers were still needed to sit on the Steering Group to agree the funding applications. Interested residents should contact Debbie following the meeting,

Cllr Harmer advised of other local funding streams to be devolved to wards in the forthcoming municipal year – these included:-

Community Chest - £10,000 per Cllr

Clean Air Zone/Brum Breathes - £20,000 per Cllr

Beyond Birmingham 2022 – Celebrating Communities Fund £35,000

A Ward Action Plan must be in place and the applications to the funding streams must be linked to the Ward Action Plan priorities.

Cllr Harmer added that the changes to Birmingham's Ward Boundaries and number of Elected Members in 2018 following the Kerslake report meant it was unlikely the formal nature and powers of the former Ward Committees would return.

3. Local Updates

Acocks Green Police Team

PC Plislecki advised of the following:-

- New Operating Model to be introduced by the new Chief Constable. The new policing model would see seven new Local Policing Areas (LPAs) which would provide a local, visible police service and more resources to areas, allowing officers to engage more in neighbourhood policing.
- Locally, the policing priorities continued to focus on key priorities including offender management, vehicle crime, burglaries, domestic violence/abuse

Residents advised an increase in drug dealing around Clifton House, Fox Hollies Road; vehicles used often had false number plates or were rentals PC Plislecki agreed to discuss this within the team and investigate accordingly and reminded residents of the need to continue to report all incidents as prioritising and deploying of officers to problem areas was very much driven by data/logging of calls.

Ward Councillors

Cllr Harmer advised of the recent passing of former Ward Councillor David Osbourne who had also served in the old South Yardley and North Yardley and Stechford Wards. Several tributes were paid to former Cllr Osbourne and condolences offered to his family.

Acocks Green Neighbourhood Forum Meeting to take place Tuesday 25th April 7.30pm, Acocks Green Baptist Church

Friends of Acocks Green Recreation Ground AGM to take place on Thursday 27th April, 7pm, The Grange

Residents Issues/Concerns/News and Update

None raised.

Acocks Green Neighbourhood Forum (AGNF)

David Treadwell, MBE, Chair shared his ongoing concerns regarding the changes to the once thriving shopping centre, its changing face and slow demise. More needed to be done to attract new business and to limit the number of fast-food takeaway and outlets – many offering the same/similar type of food.

4. Date of Next Meeting

Weds 28th June 2023, 7pm – 8.30pm, Fox Hollies Forum.

Meeting closed at 8.30pm