

## SOHO & JEWELLERY QUARTER WARD MEETING NOTES

<b>WARD:</b> Soho & Jewellery Quarter	<b>DATE:</b> 30 July 2019
<b>VENUE:</b> Bishop Latimer Church, Beeton Road B18 4QD	<b>START/FINISH TIMES:</b> 7pm – 8.40pm
<b>COUNCILLORS</b> Sybil Spence & Chaman Lal (Chair)	<b>NOs OF ATTENDEES:</b> 27
<b>OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:</b> Sergeant Matt Muldoon, West Midlands Police Tim Gibbons, Local Engineer Pat Whyte, Community Support & Development Officer Kay Thomas, Community Governance Manager	

### MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING:

#### 1. Councillors Updates

Councillor Lal referred to the All Out Day organised by the PCSO Lacey for Nineveh Road and involving Waste Management, Private Rented Sector, Trading Standards & Parking Enforcement. He said the day had been extremely successful and had dealt with a number of problems. Councillor Lal thanked everyone for their input and attendance on the day.

#### 2. Police Update

Sergeant Muldoon provided the following updates;

- Multi agency all day out days organised for the Soho Road & planned to be repeated every 9 weeks
- Prostitution – operations arranged to divert & change offender behaviour.
- PCSO's identifying, every 3 months, roads that were causing repeat demand.
- In the Jewellery Quarter work was continuing around rough sleepers/beggars. Exclusion Orders had largely worked and had led to work with a housing association to find housing for 2 people.
- Working with JQBID on funding for 7 cctv cameras & building relationships with JQ Academy, including knife arch work and

engaging with younger children

- Renewed reassurance patrols on St Marks Estate
- Meeting advised that Sgt Lawless was retiring at the end of the month

Councillor Lal expressed concern regarding the level of crime in the area, especially muggings in the Jewellery Quarter & shooting in George Street. Sgt Muldoon said these crimes were being investigated and were a priority. The shooting had not been random and arrests had been made.

With regard to the all-out day on Nineveh Road residents were concerned about the intention of the day as police had not spoken to them about issues in the area. Sgt Muldoon explained that it had been a day of action with partners to deal with highlighted issues. While recognising that parked cars were causing a nuisance it had not been a priority to deal with them on the all-out-day and there were different ways of reporting obstructive parking.

Residents from Hurdlow Avenue, off Lodge Road made strong representations about anti-social behaviour caused by a group of 50+ using the green space for drinking, drug taking, loud music and barbeques into the early hours. Cars were parked indiscriminately in the cul-de-sac preventing residents accessing their homes and following a fight between 2 groups residents were now too frightened to leave their homes when the groups were there. They could not allow their children to play in the park and some felt too intimidated to attend this meeting. A house in the avenue was being used for drug dealing with cars/taxis arriving at all times of the day & night and drug litter was strewn around. The police had been notified and had suggested bring the details to this meeting. Sgt Muldoon said that there needed to be some community work undertaken by the PCSO with a view to a possible community protection order and he undertook to take the details at the conclusion of the meeting and pass them onto the team. Councillor Lal undertook to follow up.

Resident raised the break-ins and thefts of IT equipment at Brookfield School and the efforts made by the police along with the community to fund raise to replace the equipment. The police were supporting/promoting neighbourhood watch but with limited resources the community was called upon to work together with the councillors and council to support the police against crime and anti-social behaviour.

Skips were situated on both sides of Wellington Street forcing pedestrians with children to walk in the road and a request to have at least one side cleared was made.

**Sergeant Alan Lawless – Councillor Lal and several residents paid tribute to the hard work Sgt Lawless had undertaken and the support provided to the residents of the Soho ward. His dedication to the area would be missed but the meeting wished him well in his retirement.**

### **3. Ward Plan & Priorities**

Councillor Lal advised that following a meeting with officers to look at the priorities that had been raised with councillors and through ward meetings the following had been the top 3;

- a) Parking
- b) Environment (Dirty Streets)
- c) Houses in Multiple Occupation

In relation to the first priority, Parking, Tim Gibbons, Local Engineer said that he was investigating the solutions identified – removal of footway build outs Markby, Preston & Willes Roads, parking signage and mapping hot spot areas, enforcement of illegal parking. Each member had £6,500 per year to carry out local highway work. Sgt Muldoon explained about Operation Park Safe as a way of residents helping with the problem.

The parking along James Turner Street was highlighted as dangerous and action requested, Sgt Muldoon said that Operation Park Safe would be useful to use in this case.

Environment – resident referred to clean-ups undertaken by Knightstone Neighbourhood Watch to keep the alleyways clean and that there was an agreement with the council to take away the rubbish collected. Recently this had been taking some time to collect. The general Neighbourhood Watch area was looking untidy with weeds, detritus etc and the street cleaning programme was questioned. Councillor Lal asked that he be sent details and he would follow up.

Houses in Multiple Occupation – residents expressed concern that the article 4 directive was not retrospective and that there were more than 3,000 HMO's in the ward already. Cllr Lal said that the legislation would assist the council in dealing with problem landlords/tenant. A local resident said that there had been the same issues plaguing the ward for the past 30 years and the situation was not improving. HMO's were increasing and bringing more problems to the area and it was therefore proposed that a Ward Board be set up for the area, similar to that in the Jewellery Quarter & Witton Lodge with residents and the councillors to help direct resources and hold the council to account. There was government legislation to enable this to happen.

Councillor Lal said that officers working for the ward were involved with the plan and working towards solutions and the community was

also needed to be on board and make the plan work.

**It was agreed to include the setting up of a Management Board in the ward plan as a further priority.**

**4. Residents News & Updates**

- a) **Soho First Environmental Work** – update provided on the Environmental Tasking Group that had received LIF funding and regularly undertook litter picks and with residents had created the Winson Green Peace Garden (Prison visitors centre), maintained it, entered in In Bloom & been interviewed by Radio 4. The group would be starting a new initiative in September working with Veolia to educate children on recycling/environment. The litter picks continued to encourage care of the environment and community cohesion and had also lead to a Street Watch to help create a safer community & reduce crime. A Whats App group & social group had been set up.
- b) **Soho First** – Chair of Soho First reported on Thriving Soho – a LIF funded project – that had held a number of workshops to look at priorities for the local economy and create a Plan & would be carrying out consultations with residents across the ward to assess views on the Plan eg local procurement; local employment; supporting the local economy; maker space for start-ups & social enterprises; local delivery of services by local people. Soho First was the lead for the Neighbourhood Network Scheme with Birmingham Settlement looking at working with older adults and linking to services & activities.
- c) **Planning Application Pitsford Street** – reference made to development on Pitsford Street with possible S106 money attached and it was suggested any available funds could be used to upgrade the park, including out –door gym equipment, at New Spring Street.
- d) **Grassmere Road** – area by tunnel by public walkway had been bought and turned into a tyre fitting/car wash business which was detrimental to a residential area and there were too many cars for such a small space. Councillor Lal said he was aware of the issue and having investigated found that there was no planning application yet submitted therefore action could be taken if the business persisted or objections could be made if an application was submitted. The land belonged to Rail Track & therefore permission had to be sought from them. The situation was being monitored.
- e) **Eva Road** – entry next to 114 was being used to dump rubbish. It was cleared regularly but the rubbish returned. Councillors undertook to take up the matter.