

NEWTOWN WARD MEETING NOTES

WARD: Newtown	DATE: 10th October 2023
VENUE: St Georges Church Centre, Bridge Street West, B19 2YX	START/FINISH TIMES: 6.30pm – 8.15pm
COUNCILLOR Ziaul Islam	NOs OF ATTENDEES: 18
OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Carla Bates, Senior Service Manager, Housing Inspector Gary Everitt & Sergeant Akeel Akhtar, West Midlands Police Kay Thomas, Community Governance Manager	

CURRENT WARD ACTION PLAN PRIORITIES:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Bold Prosperous Newtown 2. A Bold Prosperous Newtown 3. A Bold Prosperous Newtown 4. A Bold Prosperous Newtown 5. A Bold Prosperous Newtown 6. A Bold Prosperous Newtown

MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING INCLUDING LOCAL CONCERNS:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcome & Notice of Recording Councillor Islam welcomed all to the meeting and advised that members of the public/press could record or take photographs of the meeting except where there were exempt or confidential items. 2. Police Update Inspector Everitt introduced new sergeant for the area, Sergeant Akeel Akhtar who was one of 2 new appointments for the Newtown/Aston area. Inspector Everitt updated on changes to West Midlands Police management structure and said that by November it was hoped to see more

neighbourhood policing.

The main issues affecting Newtown were –

- Street drinkers at Newtown shops
- Student accommodation and links to County Lines drug offences. Police were working closely with university and accommodation staff and evictions were made swiftly where issues were identified. Several arrests had also been made.
- New Public Space Protection Order in process of application to enable better management of anti-social behaviour etc.
- Main crime statistics – robberies increased but mainly around student accommodation in the Lancaster Circus vicinity; vehicle crime reduced.
- Youth Endowment Fund (organisation committed to preventing children/young people becoming involved in violence) was working in the area through a £1m project over 3 years, supported by AVFC Foundation to bring community groups together, assist with bid writing, legal advice, admin etc.

In response to residents' concerns regarding abandoned cars along Bridge Street West/Hospital Street, Inspector Everitt advised police could deal with an abandoned vehicle and if untaxed the DVLA could assist. If the vehicles were taxed, insured and MOT'd no action could be taken unless causing an obstruction. The police did work with Trading Standards regarding education of businesses and being 'good neighbours' and Inspector Everitt undertook to look at Bridge Street West/Hospital Street. It was also reported that commercial waste bins were encroaching into the road obscuring the view for motorists. Inspector Everitt said he would ask a PCSO to have a look and Councillor Islam said he would raise with waste management.

3. Housing Issues

After a brief introduction, Carla Bates made the following responses to issues raised by residents –

- Leaseholders – issue of services charged and paid for not being received. Statements received from BCC but did not contain a phone number to contact re queries. No cleaning around maisonettes since before the pandemic, no grass cutting schedule, no tree/shrub pruning, (some bushes were so overgrown windows were obscured) etc was all having a detrimental effect on the area. Carla undertook to investigate the cleaning issue, chase up grounds maintenance regarding grass cutting etc and find out how customers contacted the leaseholder team.
- Fly tipping around tower blocks and in bin stores – meeting advised that bin stores should be locked, therefore fly tippers needed to be identified. Residents advised that the fly tipping had been reported and details of those responsible, who were council tenants provided. Carla advised there was a process if there was evidence that the person responsible was a council tenant and would speak to Councillor Islam regarding the information that had been reported. Waste Management should report to housing if tenants were involved. All caretakers and estate managers were trained in bag searches and could engage with tenants.

- Repairs – number of repair issues reported, included repair to barrier to the rear of the Huda Centre that Carla undertook to take up.
- Travellers – meeting advised of the process followed to move traveller encampments from council land and that more transit camp sites were being sought. Inspector Everitt advised travellers gaining access to parks/POS be reported via 101 if there was anti-social behaviour, nuisance
- Issues of overcrowding raised, and Councillor Islam undertook to invite the Strategic Director of Housing to the next meeting and advised that he was undertaking a walkabout with the Cabinet Member for Housing around the tower blocks in the ward.
- Drug dealers – reports of activity happening in residential streets, including violence and burglaries. Inspector Everitt undertook to take details at conclusion of the meeting.

4. Councillor Updates

Councillor Islam reported the following –

- **Beyond Birmingham 2022 Grant applications from**
- **Fezstaevent CIC – bringing People Together for Sport - £6,000 & VOWS Community Enterprise – The Wish Project - £6,000 - had been recommended for approval.**
- Newtown Parks maintenance reported.
- Overgrown trees end property Ventnor Avenue required urgent pruning and had been reported. Also requested alleyway cleaning Hospital Street/Frankfurt Street
- Attenborough Close alleyway lights obscured by trees attracting homeless people/drug use. Carla to report to Street Scene team.

5. Update from Chairs of Burbury & Central Neighbourhood Forums

Burbury Park Neighbourhood Forum – Sonia reported that generally things were going well, fly tipping was under control and crime appeared reduced as neighbours were communicating more. Frequent requests were made for better lighting and CCTV. The Forum would continue with its walkabouts and litter picks and would include St Georges but more equipment was required. Carla Bates undertook to speak to Sonia at the conclusion of the meeting so that housing officers could arrange to get involved with the litter picks and have the rubbish collected removed. Inspector Everitt undertook to look into Community Payback Scheme and arrange additional help in the area.

Central Newtown Neighbourhood Forum – Valerie reported on a walkabout undertaken where the overgrown trees in Markford Walk had been identified. Carla Bates undertook to look into the issue. The Neighbourhood Forum held monthly meetings and more volunteers were still needed. Attendance by a housing officer would also be welcomed. Refence made to the LTN's in Lozells which were having a knock-on effect on traffic in Newtown, bus timings etc. Porchester Drive fly tipping was repeatedly reported, cleared and then returned and there were piles of black bags around

Farm Street maisonettes. Carla Bates undertook to speak to the Street Scene team to engage with residents in the maisonettes as a hot spot area.

ACTIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS MADE	WHO	BY WHEN
1. Parking issues Bridge Street West/Hospital Street	1. Police	
2. Commercial bins in road – Bridge Street West, obscuring view for motorists	2. Police/Cllr Islam	
3. Housing issues – leaseholder issues, repairs, fly tipping, overcrowding, over grown trees/shrubs	3. Carla Bates/ Cllr Islam Cllr Islam to invite Director of Housing to future mtg	
4. Beyond Birmingham 2022 Grant applications recommended for approval		