

NECHELLS WARD MEETING NOTES

WARD: Nechells	DATE: 16 th November 2023
VENUE: Free@Last, Nechells Park Road, B7 5PR	START/FINISH TIMES: 6.30pm – 8.15pm
COUNCILLOR Lee Marsham	NOs OF ATTENDEES: 18
OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Inspector Gary Everitt, West Midlands Police PC Hewitt & PC Styler, Traffic, West Midlands Police Pat Whyte, Community Support & Development Officer Kay Thomas, Community Governance Manager	

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:
<p>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.</p> <p>2. Police Update on Operation Hercules, Boy Racers and Local Policing Issues Councillor Marsham referred to the long-term issue of gatherings/speeding cars that had been blighting the area for some time. Operation Hercules was being run by the police to tackle the problem across the West Midlands and as discussed at previous meetings he had invited the police to discuss how this was being achieved.</p>

Inspector Everitt outlined the issues facing the police in tackling street racing that attracted hundred of spectators adding to problems faced by the police in controlling/policing these events. It was noted that the police could not chase vehicles and that often when the gatherings were stopped in Nechells they moved on elsewhere.

PC Hewitt said that street cruising was a problem across the Midlands and Operation Hercules had worked to address some of the associated problems. The meeting was advised of the various locations that attracted gatherings and that the police had worked with stores where car parks had been used to install CCTV so that fines could be issued. It was noted that the majority of cars were taxed and insured and therefore prosecutions had to be made for other law breaches. Saltley Gate to Heartlands/Nechells Parkway was a key location for large gatherings and the traffic team worked with the local team on intervention and used social media and information from local residents to gather intelligence.

There were a range of tactics that could be deployed, through the combined effort of WMP, BCC and local residents –

- Enforcement – car modifications, tyres, criminal traffic acts
- Positive engagement
- Moving on the gatherings and co-ordination with other Police Forces
- Record gatherings via body cams/police car dash cams to use for evidence gathering and potential prosecution via postal ticket
- Community Protection Orders – vehicle owners sent letters in respect of their behaviour, three letters required attendance at a diversionary road safety course, failure to do so resulted in further action being taken.
- Warning letters issued and repeated behaviour could lead to vehicle seizure and court action against the owner.
- Street Cruising Injunctions across Birmingham and the Black Country

In response to questions the meeting was advised that drivers were not necessarily local and often travelled from all over the country to attend meetings, were not all young drivers and had driving licences, insurance and road legal cars. Nechells was a hotspot for spectators, often attracting around 300 people. Insurance companies were contacted where vehicle modifications were identified but it was up to the companies to take up with the driver. Residents were assured that although not always visible the police were working to deter street racing.

Residents were urged to help the police by reporting street racing incidents via 101/chat, Crimestoppers or email the local team. Video footage could also be uploaded on the police website.

Residents made the point that the situation had been ongoing for a number of years and residents had been reporting the re-occurring incidents for a considerable time, but the issues continued. It was felt that CCTV would be the best deterrent and there needed to be better communication from the police to inform residents on what they could do to assist.

Councillor Marsham suggested running young adult road safety courses and PC Hewitt said he could look into that suggestion and rolling them out to

schools as part of the road safety scheme and input into safe driving. Councillor Marsham welcomed a pilot scheme in Nechells.

Local Police Update – Inspector Everitt provided the following update –

- Nechells police station was being retained. It would not be a front facing station but would allow for more officers to be stationed in the area.
- A new PCSO would be joining the Nechells team in the New Year and there were a number of student officers also new to the team.
- Teams were changing so there would be a Ladywood East Team (rather than Nechells, Aston & Newtown teams) and this would ensure that there was always a team on duty.
- Vehicle crime statistics were improving, and work was being done around car cannibalism in specific areas working with partners
- Residents were encouraged to report crimes.

Councillor Marsham and residents raised issues associated with Exempt Properties in the area and the anti-social behaviour and crime that residents living near to those properties were experiencing. The properties housed vulnerable people who were not receiving the care they were supposed to. In respect of particular cases Inspector Everitt undertook to take details at the conclusion of the meeting. If the issues were felt to be related to mental health, it should be reported to the mental health team for assessment.

Car crime around Duddeston Manor Road was reported and complaints related to beggars. Inspector Everitt said he was aware of the problems around Bloomsbury Estate and assured the meeting that the police were taking action. Inconsiderate parking was also a problem affecting many residents, and in particular around St Josephs school where it was felt parking was impacting the safety of children and parked cars blocked the entrance to Camrose Tower. It was suggested that exercises be undertaken with the school children and their parents.