

JOINT YARDLEY EAST AND YARDLEY WEST & STECHFORD WARD FORUM

THURSDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2022

6.00PM – 8.00PM

ST. EDBURGH'S CHURCH SCHOOL

CHURCH ROAD

YARDLEY

B33 8PD

MEETING NOTES

COUNCILLORS:

Baber Baz (Yardley West & Stechford)

Deborah Harries (Yardley West)

NOs OF ATTENDEES: 18

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Beverly Edmead - Community Governance Team, BCC

PC Felicity Howell – Stechford & Yardley North Police Team

PC Paige Smith – Stechford & Yardley North Police Team

PCSO Ken Walters – Stechford & Yardley North Police Team

PC M White – Stechford & Yardley North Police Team

Les Williams – Depot Manager, Waste Management Services

MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING:

Cllr Deborah Harries in the Chair

1. Welcome and Introductions

Following introductions, Cllr Harries welcomed residents from both Yardley East and Yardley West & Stechford Wards to the meeting.

2. Notice of Recording

Residents were advised that members of the press/public may record and/or take photographs of the meeting.

3. Police Matters – including an update on Yardley East Speedwatch

Following introductions, PCSO Ken Walters advised of ongoing WMP policing priorities for the local neighbourhood team – these included:-

- Youth Violence (under 25yrs) – this continues to be an ongoing and increasing problem. Officers currently had powers to carry out Stop and Search – several hotspot areas had been identified, including Oaklands Park, which was a real cause for concern as several robberies and knife crime incidents had been carried out there. Regular surveillance of known repeat offenders was also ongoing.
- School Traffic Parking – zero tolerance approach being adopted to obstructive/dangerous parking and parkin on zig-zag lines outside schools. Officers would be carrying out visits to all schools in the ward over time and proactive enforcement action carried out to help reduce the problem.
- Obstructive/dangerous parking across the ward – several hotspot areas had been identified – including around Yew Tree Shopping centre, where there was an increase in pavement parking and on zig-zag markings. Visible patrols around the Yew Tree would be increased, however this would have to be managed along with the other priorities for the team. Local businesses had been asked to remind their customers to park appropriately. Residents could also upload/email pictures of inappropriate/obstructive parking to the local police team, with the time, date, and location – as long as it was safe for them to do so. Warning letters/fines would then be issued to drivers as appropriate.
- Bateman House – ongoing problems with youths congregating and causing anti-social behaviour in the hallway/landings. Unfortunately, no CCTV cameras are installed in the block – discussions ongoing with the building owners (Tesco & City Council) regarding better security for the block. In the meantime, regular patrols would continue to be carried out.
- Swan Shopping Centre/Open/Green Spaces- patrols and weapons sweep carried out on a regular basis
- Old Yardley Park – the local team were aware of the issues raised regarding an increase in the use of gas canister bottles/drug use and alcohol amongst other acts of anti-social behaviour and were responding to these concerns; however, many of the incidents were taking place after 11pm when the Team shift ended. Residents must continue to report incidents, giving as much detail as possible so that these could be logged, and resources/responses planned accordingly.

- Speeding continued to be a major concern across the ward and neighbouring areas like Sheldon. Community Speedwatch had restarted, with the first activity planned for 29th Sept. Hotspot areas for Speedwatch activities had been identified by residents/data provided regarding speeding as well as local knowledge. Activities were always carried out with a PCSO/PC present. More volunteers were always needed, and full training was given prior to taking part. Residents interested in finding out more should contact Ken or the local police team.
- Streetwatch activities – local patrols were carried out by volunteer residents and the PCSO(s) for 2 hours every month. Again, training and equipment (hi-vis clothing, torch etc) were provided, and more volunteers were always needed. Residents interested in becoming involved/finding out more should contact the local police team.

Several residents made the following additional comments/concerns:-

- Fines/tickets should be issued for parking on grass verges; also, pavement parking should be illegal as it currently was in London
- Stechford Police Station – pavement/obstructive parking on the footpath outside the building; it was unclear if this was staff or residents parking.
- Bordesley Green East/Manor Road/Station Road by the supermarket- ongoing problem with pavement parking, even though there is secure underground carpark for the new apartments in Bordesley Green East.
- Yardley Fields Road – increase in drug dealing/acts of criminality/nuisance just outside the park/green space; barriers were also being damaged by high performance vehicles using the area for acts of criminality. It was agreed that specific details relating to this would be emailed to the officers following the meeting.
- Increase in speeding/dangerous driving/obstruction along Station Road/Yardley Fields Road/Blakesley Road
- Drug dealing activities outside Clements Newsagent,(which seemed to be the focal point) and Debenham Crescent between 11pm – 3am most evenings
- Barrows Lane – increase in speeding cars, with drivers often seen using handheld mobile phones

Responding to the issues and comments, PCSO Ken Walters confirmed that the local teams were aware of most of the issues raised; several operations and increase in visible patrols were some of the actions planned.

PCSO Walters further advised that police teams could seize/remove/ticket vehicles parked obstructively on pavements or double yellow lines; however, there were no powers currently in place for fines/tickets/prosecutions for grass verge parking or for making pavement parking illegal outside of London. A change in the law would need to be passed through Parliament for any changes to traffic/parking legislation.

PCSO Walters explained that technical issues to the secure underground parking meant that residents living in the apartments on Bordesley Green East could not currently use the facility.

PCSO Walters added that the increase in the use of gas canisters was a major concern across the whole city. Whilst purchase and use was currently not illegal, the health implications were unknown, and users were unwittingly putting themselves at risk for 30 seconds use and 'unnatural high' which was often used alongside alcohol and other substances. A change in legislation was needed if this was to be effectively tackled.

Bringing the discussion to a close, residents were reminded to continue reporting incidents to the police, so that these could all be logged if resources were to be deployed in problematic/hotspot areas.

Cllrs and residents thanked PCSO Ken Walters and his colleagues for their attendance.

4. Waste Collection Service – Refuse, Recycling and Street Cleansing

Following introductions, Leslie Williams, Depot Manager, Redfern Road briefly advised of the challenges faced by Waste Management and Collection in ensuring that all services continued to be delivered during the hugely successful Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

One of the key successes had been the roll out of the Mobile Household Recycling Centre (MHRC) to all wards at least once a month – this was a free service to residents and most items could be disposed of as it provided a similar service to that of the static Household Recycling Centres across the city. The location(s) of the MHRC in the ward were agreed with Ward Cllrs and tended to focus on areas prone to fly-tipping or rubbish accumulation. More challenging wards were able to have more than one visit of the unit as necessary.

In response to residents' comments regarding the short notice given for the location of the MRHCs, Mr Williams explained that this was to avoid businesses/trade waste/landlords and rogue household clearance operators from using the receptacles which were solely for residents' use only.

Locally, problem areas had been identified – these included Yew Tree Shops. Most of the flats above the business premises were not

suitable for wheelie bins; they remained on regular sack collections. However, not every business premise had a trade waste arrangement in place and had been trying to dispose of their waste with the normal household collections.

Other activities included 'All Out Days' arranged with other Council Services and partner agencies including Border Forces and Environment Agency – business premises were usually targeted to ensure that appropriate arrangements were in place; several individual shops were known to the services, and these were currently being dealt with. Other hotspot areas included Yardley Green Road, and officers continued to work with colleagues in Parks to ensure that fly-tipping in parks/open spaces were tackled quickly as part of maintaining the street scene.

Discussions were also ongoing to ensure that the services provided by Waste Collection and Parks were better coordinated – with litter picking/cleaning done prior to grass cutting/pruning to avoid shredding.

Residents advised of the following and that CCTV cameras were needed for fly-tipping hotspots:-

- Former Cascade site – an increase in fly-tipping/dumping; site not completely secured.
- Station Road – several shop owners throwing out bits of food on the floor – including bread/fruit/veg etc, leading to an increase in vermin and large birds, including gulls.
- Street bins collection in Clements Road – currently only once a week; bins very well used.
- Marlborough Road/ Park bins not regularly emptied – several residents/groups carry out litter-picking activities around the park, however, the bags were not always collected despite arrangements being made beforehand.
- Blakesley Road/Denton Grove/Blakesley Primary School – the area behind the school was regularly fly-tipped.
- Several houses that backed onto the parks had started dumping their rubbish on park land.
- Recycling and household waste collections had been emptied by crews into the same vehicle on several occasions.
- Manor Gardens – very narrow road; wheelie bins left permanently on the pavement by some residents; fridge- freezer also left on the pavement.
- Harvey Road – missed household collections on several occasions due to obstructive parking.
- Gosmoor House – ongoing issues with bin collections; residents had been told to use the chutes instead of the large bins for disposing their waste and the recycling bins had been removed.
- Station and Barrows Roads – ongoing problem with missed collections – some collections were rescheduled to the next collection date rather than the next 24-48 hrs. Also bins not always being returned to their collection point.

Responding to residents' comments, Mr Williams explained that currently, the Waste Enforcement Team had 8 mobile CCTV cameras which were deployed at hotspot areas around city; fixed cameras were no longer used following the changes in the law regarding to the Data Protection Act which also required signage to be displayed if the cameras were installed near properties.

The Street Scene Team and crews were currently working with Keep Britain Tidy and other agencies to see how fly-tipping/dumping could be actively tackled as the problem had significantly increased across the whole country.

Residents should continue to report fly-tipping so that the mobile CCTV cameras could be deployed in the hotspot areas in both wards.

Mr Williams added that crews were required to keep the recycling and household waste collections separate; unfortunately, there were occasions where collections were mixed – this was normally in exceptional circumstances and not a regular occurrence.

Where bins were being left out on pavements permanently, this would be investigated, and residents contacted accordingly as the public highway should be kept clear. Crews had been reminded that wheelie bins should always be returned to their collection point/as close to their collection point as possible – unfortunately, sometimes it was an issue with individuals; however, crews would continue to be reminded to do this.

Mr Williams explained that where collections had been missed, every attempt was made to reschedule collection asap; unfortunately, this was not always possible due to a national shortage of HGV drivers which has had a knock-on effect on a number of services requiring this profession, including Waste Collection, so regrettably, some collections had to be rescheduled to the next cycle.

Regarding the issues at Gosmoor House, the separate wheelie bins for waste and recycling materials were constantly being mis-used and contaminated; discussions were currently ongoing with the caretaker and Housing staff regarding how to resolve the issue.

Mr Williams agreed to look into the other issues raised and to advise the Cllrs accordingly.

Cllrs and residents thanked Mr Williams for his attendance and updates.

5. Local Updates/Residents News/Open Forum

The following matters were raised:-

- Barrows Lane – petition had been stated against the development of 87 houses by Persimmons on the former playing fields. The closing date to register objections was 29th Sept – to date, nearly 3,000 signatures had been collected

- Yardley Conservation – next meeting to be held on 13 Oct
- Friends of Yardley Fields Park had recently been set up. Regular litter-picks to take place on Saturday, 10am – 12pm. Volunteers always welcome.
- Love You Street Activity to take place around Bordesley Green East, Denton Grove, Richmond and Stuart Roads. Waste Enforcement Teams would also be doing a search of black bags on Blakesley Way.
- Mobile Household Recycling Unit visit – 26th Sept, 7am – 12pm, Stuart Road by the park entrance. Residents living close by had been notified. Several other locations had been identified by Cllrs so that most areas in both wards benefited from the MHRC.
- Kestrel Avenue – bollards to be installed to protect the grass verges
- Yew Tree Shopping Centre Festive Lights – local businesses/traders had contributed towards this year's lights; Yardley Primary School had also helped raise funds by holding non-uniform days. The big switch was arranged for 20 Nov at 3pm. Contributions to the fund could be made via the florists in the village.
- Moat Lane – resurfacing currently being carried out. Speed signs also to be installed.
- National Trust – plans in place for planting of blossom trees in Yardley and Stechford along the No 11 Outer Circle bus route.
- Cost Of Living Crisis – warm banks/community hubs to be identified/mapped to enable residents struggling with heating costs/safe space during the winter months.
- St. Edburgha Coffee Mornings – open to all.
- Fly tipping behind Stechford Train Station on land owned by Network Rail.
- Yardley Green Road was becoming a hotspot for fly-tipping
- Queen Road – ongoing issue with speeding; discussions with local District Engineers about possible traffic management measures.
- Neglected/ungated alleyways continued to be a problem; rubbish dumping was common, and alleyways blocked, which was a health, safety, and fire hazard. Cllrs to contact residents to discuss clearing and maintaining the alleyways.
- Dixons Estate Agents/ Yew Tree Shops – anti-social behaviour, drunken behaviour, littering and various acts of criminality. Cllrs to arrange a site visit with the local police team and Les Williams to see what could be done/ decide on the best course of action.

6. Date of Next Meeting

To be agreed and residents advised accordingly.

Cllrs Baz and Harries thanked residents for their attendance and active participation in the meeting.

Meeting closed 8.05pm