

Wimbledon Community Forum
5 December 2017
Chair's Report

The meeting was held at Wimbledon Methodist Church, and chaired by Councillor James Holmes. Approximately 25 residents attended, as well as six other Merton Councillors. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, introducing the councillors present at the meeting.

Wimbledon Policing update

Sargeant Mark Rowan and PC Peter Beesley provided residents with an overview of policing and crime issues in the area, starting by addressing the imminent closure of Wimbledon Police Station.

Wimbledon, Wandsworth, Kingston and Richmond are to be merged into one single Borough Command Unit, with a very experienced command unit taking over. The merger is likely to take place in May 2018 and as part of this, Wimbledon Police Station will be sold in around 2019. The move from Wimbledon Station to Mitcham's police station will commence around January 2018 with Emergency Response Teams being located at Mitcham and Earlsfield. Options for satellite bases are being considered and discussed through consultation, for example, cafes, community centres, churches, drop-in clinics and local government buildings. The best way to report crimes moving forward will be by phone or online.

Sargeant Rowan sympathised with concerns about the closure of the police station; however, he pointed out that a positive outcome of the changes is that the number of dedicated ward officers is to be increased to two per ward, plus a police community support officer. Response time targets will also stay the same (15 minutes for a 999 call; 60 minutes for a 101; and under 24-hours for a lower grade call).

The Met Police is also looking at how to better use technology for policing. Officers are to trial using tablets from January 2018, enabling them to log and report crimes immediately. 80% of workload will be completed on these tablets. Sargeant Rowan undertook to feedback concerns about information security if the tablets are being used whilst officers are out in public.

As part of the changes in policing, six new principles have been brought in. These aim to decrease the amount of time officers spend investigating crime, instead increasing their time and presence on the streets, thereby preventing crimes from happening in the first place. The principles include no longer investigating crimes that are below a value of £50 and looking through no more than 20 minutes' worth of CCTV footage. Caveats will be put in place however, for example, if a pattern emerges or repeat offences are occurring, ward officers would look into it.

With regards to moped-enabled crime, Sargeant Rowan advised that residents could take certain actions to help avoid such crimes, for example keeping items locked and out of sight, joining their local Neighbourhood Watch, and installing outdoor security lights and CCTV. Operations are being run by the police to look at parking bays, as cars in these bays high targets of moped-enabled crime.

A Policing Plan is being run to decrease crime in Wimbledon Town Centre during the Christmas period.

Theft of bicycles is still an issue. Owners were advised to always lock up their bicycles, mark them and make a note of their frame numbers.

Responding to questions from residents, Sargeant Rowan said:

- A Judicial Review of the changes to policing would not affect the May Borough Command Unit merger date.
- A lot of police work revolves around working with social services to deal with people with mental health issues.
- After the closure of specific stations, there will be a greater number of officers posted at the police stations that remain open.
- There are two phases to the closure of Wimbledon Police Station. The front office will close first, moving to Mitcham; the back office facilities in Wimbledon will vacate from 2019.
- Whilst reporting a crime in person can provide a more thorough response because of the face-to-face interaction with an officer, online reporting should also provide a thorough response. Online reports of crime should trigger a call back; however, sometimes insufficient information is provided; therefore a crime might be screened out.

Soapbox

Regeneration of the High Path Estate

Residents discussed the proposed regeneration of the High Path Estate. Many felt that they have not been consulted properly on it, listened to or been given sufficient information about its impact. They felt that action is needed to ensure a more thorough and longer consultation. A motion was therefore proposed and agreed upon, which Councillor James Holmes will write and submit to Merton Council and to Clarion Housing. The motion will state:

1. Residents demand a longer and wider public consultation, over a period of weeks. The consultation should not just be online, but should have a physical presence too, in the form of exhibitions and a public meeting;
2. Until this extended consultation has taken place, any planning application for the High Path Estate must be delayed;
3. The site is inappropriate for a secondary school to be situated on.

Councillor Holmes said that if residents wanted to take additional action over the plans, they could write to their local councillors.

No Wheelie Bins campaign

Nell Allen provided an update campaign. A petition with more than 1100 signatures was submitted to the council and rejected, but further signatures are still being collected and Nell is appealing as she feels the petition was not given due, nor impartial, consideration.

Nell had a meeting with Veolia where they were in favour of her suggestions that:

1. All Merton's future bins and recycling boxes should be one colour (brown)
2. All bins should be without a Merton Council logo

3. Stickers should be provided that residents can place on each bin to establish content.

These suggestions will now be put to the council in a motion, by Councillor Holmes.

Merton CCG commissioning intentions

Abbas Mirza, Engagement Manager at the Merton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) gave a presentation on the CCG's plans for health services delivery. The presentation can be found at

https://www.merton.gov.uk/assets/Documents/Commissioning_CEngagement%20V3.pdf.

Any feedback or questions about the plans can be sent to Debbie Baronti at debbie.baronti@swlondon.nhs.uk.

South Wimbledon Enhancement Plan update

Local resident, Andrew Boyce, gave a presentation on work that is being carried out to deliver an Enhancement Plan for South Wimbledon. The presentation can be found at:

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/assets/Documents/SWEP%20Presentation.pdf>.

Asked how further work might be funded, beyond crowd-funding, Andrew said that there are options being considered such as applying for a CIL fund, which the council administers, and corporate funding.

Close of meeting

Councillor Holmes thanked residents for attending and closed the meeting.

Date of future meetings:

Thursday 1 March 2018 at Wimbledon Arts Space