

LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON	
	<u>NOTES OF MEETING</u>
	Subject: Morden Community Forum
	Date: 29th March 2017 Time: 19.15
Action Needed By:	
	<p>1. <u>Welcome and Introductions</u></p> <p>1.1 Cllr. Philip Jones welcomed everybody to the meeting.</p> <p>1.2 Approximately 21 residents attended, as well as 8 councillors, and officers from the council and its partners.</p>
	<p>2. <u>Police update</u></p> <p>2.1 Sergeant Gemma Harris informed residents that Merton Police's priorities for Morden are currently burglaries, ASB in parks and ASB related to mopeds.</p> <p>2.2 Smart Water is being delivered in Merton Park. It is hoped this will help to reduce burglaries by 35%. The wards to which Smart Water is delivered are decided centrally; the decision is dependent on burglary rates. However, the end aim is to have it in one in seven houses.</p> <p>2.3 With regard to ASB in parks, the primary cause is youths drinking, smoking and causing a nuisance. The police are carrying out proactive patrols in the parks during the evenings, especially during the summer months.</p> <p>2.4 ASB related to mopeds is a priority for the Metropolitan Police across London. Operation Venice has been set up to target all known moped-related crimes, but it remains a challenge as there is a high risk involved with pursuing mopeds. To help tackle the problem further, warrants are being issued to people at their homes.</p> <p>2.5 By May, there will be two full-time police officers per ward.</p>
	<p>3. <u>Morden Leisure Centre update</u></p> <p>3.1 Christine Parsloe, Leisure & Culture Development Manager at the council, informed residents that the timetable for the leisure centre has slipped slightly, but work is still going ahead.</p> <p>3.2 The Great-Crested Newts in the park are coming out of hibernation. Once they do so and move to their new pond, work can start on site. It is hoped this will be in June, with construction starting in July. This would mean the new leisure centre would open in September 2018; after that, demolition of the existing centre</p>

	<p>would take place.</p> <p>3.3 Drains on the site need repairing and replacing, but this will be done at the same time as all other works that rely on digging up the roads.</p> <p>3.4 The design of the centre is being looked at, with a change to the shape of the roof structure – to a lower height - being considered.</p> <p>3.5 A Seedham roof would not be suitable for the new leisure centre and was never intended. Proposals to swap the locations of the fitness suite and the studio are also being considered, which would create a mezzanine floor over the café and bring the fitness suite to the front of the building.</p> <p>3.6 Work to discharge the planning conditions is underway, as well as discussions with GLL who will operate the new centre.</p> <p>3.7 The Museum of London is undertaking a survey of Morden Park Pools with regard to the heritage of the building.</p> <p>3.8 The plans for the leisure facilities will not disrupt Armed Services Day on 24th June, or other events that are planned in the park, although there will be some disruption during construction. The current leisure facilities will remain open during the new build.</p> <p>3.9 The final tender is not in yet, therefore the cost implications of the timetable slippage are not known; however, the council has set aside a capital programme budget of £11m for this project.</p>
	<p>4. <u>Choose Wisely programme – Merton CCG</u></p> <p>4.1 Abbas Mirza, the Lead on Patient and Public Engagement explained that the CCG is running a pre-engagement programme about “choosing wisely”. The proposals refer to possible changes to prescribing over-the-counter medicines, the provision of gluten free products, IVF provision, and guidance on ensuring patients are surgery ready, including advice for smokers and those with a high BMI.</p> <p>4.2 A presentation on the programme can be viewed on the Morden Community Forum web page.</p> <p>4.3 Residents voiced concerns that pre-engagement continues, but decisions already appear to have been made by the CCG Board, for example, the decision to stop prescriptions for gluten-free foods. A resident commented that the CCG had said recipients of these prescriptions would be consulted by their GPs, but such consultation has never occurred. Abbas responded that he was not aware the CCG had committed to this, but that the CCG is</p>

	<p>conscious of concern about gluten-free prescriptions for those on a lower income being stopped and that it is keen to mitigate any impact.</p> <p>4.4 Some residents also felt that decisions are being made on a cost basis alone, not on a clinical basis, for example, the proposal to stop IVF, which some residents felt is a fundamental right that will be denied to those on lower incomes. Abbas said that further consultation on this matter is due to take place and explained that those on lower incomes will be able to make funding requests for IVF.</p> <p>4.5 Abbas noted a resident's concerns about making people surgery-ready and how this might affect those with physical disabilities and learning difficulties. Merton CIL has made the same point, which has been fed back to the CCG.</p> <p>4.6 A resident suggested that the CCG board meetings should be recorded for the public's benefit.</p> <p>4.7 Another resident expressed concerns that many with vested interests in health care are not being presented to or engaged with, with engagement seeming to focus mainly on the elderly. Abbas explained that engagement is taking place as widely as possible with as many diverse interest groups as possible, including the Coeliac Society.</p>
	<p>5. <u>Scrutiny topic suggestions</u></p> <p>5.1 Councillor Peter Southgate explained that there are three Scrutiny panels, which cover Children and Young People, Healthier Communities & Older People, and Sustainable Communities. The work of the panels is monitored by the Overview & Scrutiny Commission, which also has responsibility for scrutinising Crime and Disorder matters.</p> <p>5.2 The Scrutiny Panels are now inviting topic suggestions for matters that they might investigate in the coming year that are relevant to Merton and council service delivery. Past topics have included air pollution, childhood obesity, and fitness amongst the over-50s.</p> <p>5.3 Residents were asked to put forward any topic suggestions that they might have.</p>
	<p>6. <u>Eastern Electrics Music Festival</u></p> <p>6.1 Residents were informed that an application has been submitted to Merton's Licencing Committee for a music festival in Morden Park on Saturday 5th August.</p>

6.2 A meeting between the festival organisers, the council and other partners is scheduled to take place on 4th April, after which the council will know more details which it will be able to share with residents.

6.3 A meeting between the festival organisers and The Friends of Morden Park (MPPFA) is to be arranged within the next couple of weeks.

6.4 Whilst the MPPFA were unable to attend the Morden Forum, they provided the following statement about the festival:

“The Friends of Morden Park is a voluntary organisation with approximately 60 members. Our Committee of eleven local people meets monthly to discuss the park. We were been advised by Merton Council Parks Events Officer of the outline proposals for this music event and we discussed it at length at a special meeting of our Committee on 2nd February. We are broadly in support of this event being held in Morden Park and hope that it might put Morden on the map as a good place to hold a music event. This August event is aimed at a young audience who don't often get the chance to have something as exciting as this offered locally. It may bring business and trade to the shops, pubs and restaurants in Morden and around the park.

“Time Limited Premises Licence notices are currently around the perimeter of the park asking for representations to be made within 28 days from the date of the notice which went up on 22nd March. The organisation of the event is at an early stage but we feel it is important Morden people should be made aware of what is being proposed.

“We, of course, have some concerns; the numbers of tickets which are expected to be sold, 20,000 is much greater than those usually sold for the two Firework sessions held in the park in November. It will be a big event but Morden Park is big too and we believe it can cope. We are in liaison with Council Officers, and we will take up the offer of having a meeting with the event organisers. We are confident that it can be well organised (it has been at other venues) and our concerns listened to and addressed.

“A number of different events already take place in the park throughout the year which the public come together to enjoy. We would like to take this opportunity to remind this audience that Merton Dog Watch is due to be held in the park near the bandstand on Saturday 20th May between 10am and 4pm and the Annual Morden Family Fun-Day, which generates and distributes its proceeds to local charities, will be held in the playing fields on Sunday 16th July from 10.30am.

“We are acutely aware of fabulous parks in this borough and throughout the country being under extreme funding restrictions. We realise that parks are becoming increasingly reliant upon generating income from holding events just to keep going. If this event is a success and the organisers find it a suitable venue then we would hope it might become an annual event with the income generated making a contribution to the future of Merton parks.”

6.5 Written copies of the statement were provided to residents at the Morden forum.

6.6 A resident asked how the festival plan might affect the construction of the leisure centre and whether the park would still be accessible if 20,000 people were attending it for a festival. It was explained that signs around the park about the festival state that only part of the park will be fenced off.

6.7 Councillors Jerome Neil and Imran Uddin welcomed the festival and advised residents make any concerns known to Green Spaces, so that officers can address them.

6.8 Councillor John Sargeant also welcomed the event and the council's innovation.

6.9 Councillor Dennis Pearce commented that insurance, food hygiene and all other regulations for events in Morden Park are rigorously inspected, and Eastern Electrics will have to go through all these checks before they are given a licence.

7. **Soapbox**

7.1 Local resident Bob Whitfield spoke about the demise of local independent newspapers and their reduced readership because they are filled with adverts rather than news stories. He stated that the community role of local papers is vital, as is their role in providing apprenticeships for reporters.