

Raynes Park Community Forum
Wednesday 30 November 2016
Chair's Report

The meeting was held in Raynes Park Library Hall, and chaired by Councillor Suzanne Grocott with Chris Edge from the Raynes Park Association (RPA). 40 residents attended, as well as five other Merton Councillors, and officers from the council and its partners. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Open Forum

Bulb planting

Volunteers from the RPA have planted bulbs outside the station and around the town centre.

Crossrail 2

TfL have been asked to submit a new business plan. This is likely to be ready in the spring with no further consultation expected until the summer.

Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP)

All NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups have been tasked with producing a five year plan to improve services and efficiency. A draft of the plan covering South West London can be found at: http://www.merton.gov.uk/health-social-care/sw_london_stp.htm

Raynes Park Christmas

David Hurst reminded residents that the 2016 Christmas festival will be on 2 December 3.30 – 7pm with the lights switched on at 5pm. Two stages will be set up, one outside the station and the other in Waitrose car park. There will be choirs performing, local singer Heather Jackson, a grotto and a live nativity with animals. A KinoVan will also be showing old films of Merton. The event is being supported by 15 local businesses and Merton Council. Thanks were expressed to Nick Coke for leading on the event.

Councillor Stephen Alambritis

Stephen played tribute to the work of the RPA in bringing the community together and was pleased to congratulate Chris Larkman for his Community Contribution Award at Merton Council's Excellence Awards.

Stephen highlighted a number of new initiatives that would be of interest:

Ask Angela: Merton is the first London borough to rollout this safety initiative in pubs and clubs. Working with Merton Police the scheme enables anyone feeling threatened on a night out to use a safe word and then the venue will discreetly provide assistance. <https://news.merton.gov.uk/2016/11/29/merton-first-in-london-to-introduce-ask-for-angela-pub-safety-campaign/>

Schools: following the successful expansion of primary schools to offer an extra 4000 places a new secondary school is needed. Plans have now been announced to build a new Harris school with 1300 places next to High Path estate in South Wimbledon.

Business: there have been positive announcements about investment in the borough with WH Smith and Waterstones returning to Wimbledon, a new Metrobank, and a new flagship Next store at Shannon Corner. As part of the planning conditions Next will be working with Raynes Park High School to offer work experience and apprenticeships.

Morden Leisure Centre: work has commenced on the new family leisure centre in Morden Park costing £11million. The current swimming pool will remain open until the new centre is finished in early 2018, and then it will be returned to green space.

AFC Wimbledon: the new stadium has nearly cleared the final planning hurdle, a section 106 agreement, and will hopefully be ready for the 2018/19 season.

Fixed Penalty Notices: Merton is taking advantage of the new rules that allow for a £400 FPN for fly tipping that does not involve taking those responsible to court.

Officers will be increasing enforcement action.

Free parking: once again there will be free parking in most Merton Council car parks at weekends in the run up to Christmas, although this does not include Coombs Lane.

Grit: Merton Council has 2400 tonnes of grit ready to keep Merton moving over the winter.

Christmas trees: a free recycling collection will be available again this year. We collect more than 30,000 trees each year. <https://beta.merton.gov.uk/rubbish-and-recycling/bulky-hazardous-and-clinical-waste/christmas-trees>

Boundary Changes: Stephen is happy to support both MPs in challenging the plans to divide up the Merton parliamentary constituencies.

In response to questions Stephen said that My Merton should have gone to all households and anyone who is not receiving the magazine regularly should contact the Communications Team communications@merton.gov.uk with their details. The results of the council tax survey will be considered seriously. The council will be moving to wheelie bins and based on the experience of other boroughs there will be lots of concerns raised that residents soon adjust. The new arrangements will save up to £2million a year.

Stephen confirmed that he will continue to work with other local parties to make sure any new plans for Crossrail 2 will not be at the cost of local communities.

Current and anticipated planning applications

Neil Milligan, Development Control Manager, Merton Council updated the meeting on local planning and other issues.

- The bins south of the Skew Arch were not removed in the summer as originally planned. The programme was paused following concerns raised by residents so that a consultation could take place. Neil agreed to follow this up with Cormac Stokes from Waste Services as there have now been two consultations with different results.
- Footpath outside the station – Network Rail is willing to hand over land and officers are currently drawing up plans and identifying possible funding. The Leader of the Council agreed to follow up with officers to ensure this is resolved promptly.

- Rainbow Estate and Kiss-and-Ride – there has been no further news from Workspace about the development.
- Southey Road Bowling Club – the application was approved in July and the Section 106 agreement is still being negotiated.
- Atkinson Morely – the initial phase is half complete but an additional application will be submitted for 85 flats to be built instead of 16 houses. The park would remain open to the public.
- Manuplastics – an application has been made for a seven storey development 110 residential units. Comments can be made through the planning explorer on the Council website. It is possible that Network Rail may want to safeguard this site but they have not done so to date.

Waste collection changes

Cormac Stokes, Head of Street Scene and Waste, from Merton Council outlined the changes to waste collection services. Having worked across south west London to improve efficiency in disposing of waste a partnership of four boroughs (Merton, Croydon, Sutton and Kingston) has come together to look at collection. Following a lengthy procurement process Veolia became the preferred bidder in the summer. The aim is to optimise savings, improve the quality of the service, and offer environment benefits. There are still details being negotiated but the final contract is expected to be signed on 14 December.

From 3 April 2017 Veolia would take over Merton's service but there would be no immediate changes to collection. From October 2018 the service would change to:

TYPE	STORAGE	FREQUENCY
General residual (non-recyclable) waste	Wheelie bin	Fortnightly
Paper and Cardboard	Wheelie bin	Alternate weeks
Glass, cans & plastics	Existing box	Alternate weeks
Food waste	Existing mini bins	Weekly
Garden waste	Wheelie bins or bags as now	Fortnightly

Reducing frequency of residual waste collection has been shown to encourage recycling rates as residents become more aware of what they are disposing of, especially food waste, which is currently only used by half of all households. New vehicles split at the back will also reduce amount of traffic.

Street cleaning also forms part of the new contract. The new structure will be based on three local neighbourhoods with a lead manager. This should reduce down time and improve response rates. Strict timescales are set out in the contract.

Enforcement remains with Merton Council and the current contractor Kingdom. More than 6000 FPNs have been issued since April. Veolia will gather evidence to pass on to enforcement as part of the new arrangements.

In response to questions about residual waste like nappies Cormac explained that as long as this waste was bagged up and placed in the wheelie bin the fortnightly

collection will not cause any problems. This has worked well elsewhere. In terms of Clinical Waste this is collected under contract from the NHS so is open to a different procurement process. Concerns were also raised about the space needed for wheelie bins. Cormac is currently discussing these issues with Veolia in order to ensure an alternative method, coloured sacks, is available in households where wheelie bins are not viable. The experience in the pilot area was that it was possible to resolve these issues in all but a small number of properties. There will also be improved assisted collection for those residents with disabilities who need support.

Cormac was also asked about clearing leaf fall. Street Cleaners will clear leaves as part of their regular routes but special work crews will target problem areas in overtime. Bins in the town centres are emptied at least daily but in residential areas this may be weekly. If a bin is full please inform the council online <https://beta.merton.gov.uk/rubbish-and-recycling/litter-fly-tipping-and-street-cleaning>.

Helen Alexander from the Apostle's Residents Association criticised the proposed changes to waste collection and suggested a number of alternative options, including the use of smaller dustbins and boxes, as well as maintaining week collections. Helen invited residents to join her in campaigning against the changes.

Proposed Boundary Changes

Stephen Hammond, MP for Wimbledon, explained that the plans to reduce the number of MPs from 650 to 600 and equalise the size of constituencies could have a profound effect on Merton. Under the proposals from the Boundary Commission for England the number of MPs covering Merton would go from two to five with both Wimbledon and Mitcham being split across different constituencies. This would make it more difficult for Merton Council to work with MPs, challenge community cohesiveness and the quality of representation. A consultation on the proposals will run until 5 December and a number of alternative options have already been suggested. The BCE will report back on responses in March and the final version will be agreed in September 2018. Details of the current consultation can be found at <https://www.bce2018.org.uk/>

The Chair thanked residents for attending and closed the meeting.

Dates of future meetings all at 7.15pm, in the Library Hall:
8 March 2017