

WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL
GRAVENEY WARD “LET’S TALK” MEETING

Tooting United Reformed Church, Rookstone Road, SW17 9NQ

Wednesday, 27th February 2019 at 7.00pm

PRESENT

Council Members

Councillor Senior (Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Resources)
Councillor Akinola (Graveney Ward Councillor)
Councillor Forbes (Graveney Ward Councillor)
Councillor Gibbons (Graveney Ward Councillor)
Councillor Rigby (Deputy Leader of the Opposition)

Council Officers

Chief Executive’s Group

Mr Brian Albuquerque – Tooting Town Centre Manager
Ms Sophie Bimson – Community Engagement Manager
Ms Adama Fregiste – Community Safety Officer
Ms Elizabeth Kingdom – Partnership Officer
Mr Jonathon St Clair Smith – Community Engagement
Mr Gareth Jones – Democratic Services
Mrs Emma Calvert – Democratic Services

Children’s Services Department

Mr Adam Wells - Pupil Services

Environment and Community Services Department

Mr Camillus Donnelly – Head of Network Management
Mr Nick O’Donnell – Assistant Director (Traffic and Engineering)
Mr John Scully – Inspection and Enforcement Manager
Mr Michael Singham – Waste Strategy Manager
Mr Thomas Wilson - Senior Planner (Development Management)

Housing and Regeneration Department

Mr Martin Byrne – Area Housing Manager

Residents

Approximately 40 members of the public were present.

INTRODUCTION

Councillor Senior welcomed residents and explained the format of the meeting. Councillors and officers in attendance then introduced themselves. A summary of the questions and comments from residents and responses are provided below.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS

Street Cleaning

Bickley Street – a local resident reported refuse including sanitary waste spread on the pavement.

Michael Singham, Waste Strategy Manager replied that all streets should be swept at least weekly and that this was scheduled to take place the day following refuse collection.

Waste and recycling

Education - A local resident highlighted the need to educate residents about how to dispose of their waste and to “double bag” their rubbish residents leave rubbish bags on street which split and deposit their contents onto the pavement.

Michael Singham advised that waste should be stored in bins in front gardens wherever possible to prevent animals from tearing bags and spreading rubbish. In response to a suggestion from Councillor Rigby, Michael Singham undertook to arrange the distribution of a letter/leaflet to residents in Bickley Street reminding them of how to present and contain waste for collection pointing out that this information is also available on the Council’s website.

(Post meeting: Highways Inspection Team will be leafletting Bickley Street and Gilbey Road.)

Timing of collections – Councillor Forbes commented that refuse collection in the area had become later in the day which resulted in refuse sacks blocking pavements and obstructing parents and children on the way to school.

Michael Singham noted that SERCO, the waste collection contractor, collect refuse in each zone of the Borough on a specific day. A number of factors have to be balanced in relation to the timing of the service. Collection is not permitted before 6.30am due to possible noise nuisance but the contractor is otherwise able to organise the collections in an efficient and effective manner. However, there are other restrictions which have to be taken into account including not collecting refuse from main TfL routes during peak morning and evening hours and collections around schools during the school run period.

Flats above shops – In response to complaints from local residents regarding refuse disposal and flytipping by the residents of flats living above shops, Michael Singham advised that for new builds, waste storage arrangements are often dealt with as part of the planning process as well as conditions attached to any permission granted to

ensure that suitable and accessible bin rooms are available. Unfortunately, many older flats do not have waste storage facilities. In these circumstances, residents should store their rubbish in their flat and put it out on the pavement next to their door no earlier than 6.30pm the day before their scheduled waste collection. Even flats with waste storage arrangements must present waste sacks onto the pavement by their front door if it opens directly onto the pavement and the storage is not in a communal bin.

Councillor Rigby suggested that one solution would be more flexible collection services, bespoke to each street rather than a one size fits all approach. Collections could be twice or three times a week according to need.

In response, it was noted that this would have budget implications and that the current waste collection contract was in place until April 2024.

Flytipping

Gilbey Road and Longley Road – Local residents praised the refuse collectors but reported problems with residents of flats in these roads leaving rubbish on the street around lampposts. This had been reported to Sharon Wright, Contract Manager Waste and Street Cleansing, who had been very helpful, but this had not resulted in an improvement. What could be done to improve the situation? Could landlords be held responsible, could more warning notices be erected, could CCTV be used?

John Scully, Inspection and Enforcement Manager, advised that he was aware of the issues in Gilbey Road and that enforcement action was not possible unless proof of deposit was found. Letters have been delivered to the properties concerned. This would be repeated and he would ensure that appropriate signs were in place.

In relation to CCTV, John Scully advised that a mobile unit could be used where appropriate. The resident added that during a previous period when a temporary CCTV camera had been in place, this had been very effective.

It was noted that the law is weak in respect of the responsibility of landlords and intervention would require the introduction of a licenced landlord programme.

Michael Singham advised that any flytips of less than two cubic metres would be removed by the Council's contractor, Continental Landscapes, as part of scheduled street cleaning services within one week with no action by residents required. If quicker removal was needed, the issue should be reported using the "Report It App", website or calling Council customer services.

Vant Road – A local resident reported that fly tipping was causing obstructions.

Lessingham Avenue and Derinton Road – residents in these roads also reported fly tipping.

Valnay Street – A local resident reported flytipping at the top end of the street.

(Post meeting note- mobile CCTV deployed in Gilbey Road and Bickley Street along with additional flytip warning notices. The procurement of additional mobile CCTV cameras is being considered.)

Car park off Church Lane – A local resident reported flytipping on a grassed area on the car park which he believed to be Council property. He had reported this using the Report It app and the website but nothing had been done.

In response, Michael Singham undertook to take details following the meeting and look into this.

(Post meeting: it transpired that the area referred to was not the Council carpark, but a grass area next to a private carpark separated by a brick wall from Church Lane, resident advised to contact the Council's property manager to confirm ownership and responsibility for this land.)

Dumped mattresses – Residents reported these in Blakenham, Derinton and Franciscan Roads. Associated difficulties included obstructed pavements, possible spread of bed bugs and homeless people sleeping on them.

Michael Singham gave details of the bulky waste collection service noting that this was available at a low-cost relative to other boroughs. He confirmed that the dumping of mattresses was an offence.

Councillor Gibbons noted that a once annual free bulky waste collection had been part of the Labour manifesto.

In relation to the dumping of mattresses, a local resident proposed that landlords, estate agents and mattress manufacturers could be made responsible for providing information for tenants regarding disposal.

Litter

Glasford Street, Mitcham Road, Amen Corner area – a local resident reported that this area was very littered. Another resident queried the removal of litter bins in this vicinity, there had been 4 and now there was only 1.

Michael Singham advised that, in general, rubbish bins were only located in streets where there was daily street cleaning although a case for exceptions could be made. This was to ensure that the bins were emptied daily. He undertook to speak to the resident after the meeting to discuss the litter bin locations.

Street Trees – Residents requested more street trees to increase street pride and reduce litter.

Nick O'Donnell, Assistant Director (Traffic and Engineering), advised that there were various reasons including pavement width, parking and underground utility connections which meant trees could not be planted in some streets. He encouraged residents to work with other local streets to promote neighbourhood projects.

Councillor Rigby commented on the success of tree base planting in the Southfields area and that this had been supported through a grant from the Wandsworth Grant Fund.

Enforcement Action – In response to a question from a member of the public regarding penalties for flytipping and littering, John Scully confirmed that the Council do take action were appropriate and that the following Penalty Charge Notices have been issued since April 2018:

- 83 for businesses;
- 237 for littering;
- 17 small flytipping offences;
- 13 large flytips; and
- 22 other flytips.

Councillor Gibbons added that it would be useful to have these statistics publicised on a ward by ward basis. A resident suggested that the number of prosecutions could be posted on notices in the street to deter flytippers. Councillor Akinola added that the warning notices needed to be securely tied to lampposts as she had seen these drop to the ground and they then become part of the problem.

(Post meeting note: after consideration the idea of posting notices of prosecution numbers on street was not pursued as the information would need constantly updating.)

Play Services

In response to a question regarding the possible relocation of services at Franciscan Children's Centre to Hillbrook School, Councillor Gibbons mentioned that there was an online petition that the resident could sign, or they could send him their details.

Pavements

Longmead Road – A local resident noted that utility works outside his property had led to the pavement being uneven and water collecting there. He had reported the problem a number of times.

Nick O'Donnell, Assistant Director advised that utility companies have a 12-month reinstatement period to make good the pavement following works. He undertook to arrange an inspection and ensure that the utility company resolve the problem.

(Post meeting note: the state of the footway has been inspected and found to be in good repair, there is an issue with ponding and this will be investigated further.)

Vant Road – A local resident reported that the pavement was uneven and that this had caused accidents. Councillor Akinola asked whether the Council maintains a record of such accidents.

Nick O'Donnell advised that damaged pavements could be reported using the "Report It App" or the website. In addition, there is a regular programme of

inspections and pavement works are prioritised by condition. Records are kept and are available on request on a road by road basis.

Mitcham Road - Councillor Akinola reported that the pavement outside Café Ole was damaged and Nick O'Donnell undertook to investigate this.

The Antelope, Mitcham Road - A resident reported the poor state of the pavement outside these premises.

Traffic Management

"Rat-running"– A local resident reported an increase in rat running in Trevelyan and Mellison Roads and that apps such as WAZE appeared to encourage this.

Nick O'Donnell advised that Wandsworth, together with TfL encourage low traffic neighbourhoods. The best approach for residents with concerns was to submit a petition. The Council could then arrange for a survey of traffic volume and speed and consider putting measures in place to mitigate the issue. In response to concerns that this approach could push the problem into adjoining areas, Nick O'Donnell confirmed that this is taken into account so that any solution works for the area as a whole.

Parking – A local resident reported difficulties parking in Lessingham Avenue. Despite having a parking permit, it was often not possible to park. Business owners and others were parking in the street and damaging residents' cars. The introduction of pay and display spaces was proposed.

Residents in Valnay Street reported that it was difficult to park especially on Sundays when the CPZ was not in force and shoppers parked in the street. This was particularly frustrating for residents who had paid for a parking permit.

Nick O'Donnell suggested that residents arrange a petition requesting a change to the current parking arrangements or the extension of a CPZ. Council officers could support this process. He undertook to obtain the resident's details following the meeting and would provide details of the process to follow.

Play spaces

Parks and green spaces – A local parent noted that there were no designated play or open spaces in Graveney ward and asked what could be done to facilitate active outdoor play for children.

Nick O'Donnell advised that the Council recognises the importance of outdoor play and solutions such as pocket parks and play streets. £35k had been allocated to Gravenel Gardens through the neighbourhood CIL and work was ongoing to take this forward.

Councillor Senior noted that there were currently improvement projects underway for Furzedown Recreation Ground and Fishponds playing fields while acknowledging that these were not located in the ward.

Councillor Gibbons advised that he was involved with discussions regarding possible open and play spaces. These included the area outside Gravenel Gardens, a café and open space on the former bowling green on the Constitutional Club site and a semi-pedestrianised area at the back of Tooting Market.

Play Streets – Councillor Rigby advised that she had written to Councillor Cook proposing that the £90 fee for play streets be waived as this was a barrier to use. Play streets could help to build a sense of community which could have a positive effect on issues such as flytipping.

A local resident noted that 23rd September was World Car Free Day and suggested that charges for play streets should be suspended on this date. Councillor Rigby suggested that the Council could celebrate this event by closing residential streets free of charge.

Councillor Senior noted that the Council could look into this and that a charge was levied due to the requirement to advertise street closures. In response to a further suggestion from Councillor Rigby that a blanket advertisement be placed for the closure of a number of streets, Nick O'Donnell advised that the Council does not issue blanket notices because one objection can cause the whole process for all streets to fail. Colleagues in the Transport section were looking at possible ways of marking World Car Free Day such as funding for road closures or other activities.

Active Lifestyles for Children / Idling – A local parent noted that there were four primary schools in the area and that there was a problem with cars idling outside schools. What could be done to encourage families to walk, scoot or cycle to school?

Nick O'Donnell advised that the Council encourages this through individual school Travel Plans which have been found to have to have a positive effect.

In relation to comments from Councillor Rigby regarding the issue of penalty charge notices (PCNs) for engine idling outside schools, Nick O'Donnell described the process which had to be followed before a PCN could be issued, this included having to give the driver a warning first which invariably led to the engine being switched off and no fine being issued.

Healthy Streets – In response to a question from a local resident, Councillor Senior confirmed that a Healthy Streets Champion was to be appointed and their remit to be decided.

Drainage

Glasford Street – A local resident noted that a drain in the street floods when it rains. He had reported this via that app several times but had not received a response.

Ward Councillors encouraged residents to let them know in such cases and they would follow up to ensure a response was received.

Report It App

Residents noted that they had not received a response to issues they had reported using the App. In response, Michael Singham advised that feedback was not given in response to issues reported on the App but that this did not mean that action had not been taken. If an issue needed to be escalated, residents could also speak to their Ward Councillors or use the formal complaint procedure as necessary. Councillor Gibbons suggested that it could also be helpful to report issues via Twitter using @wandbc. Nick O'Donnell undertook to take the comments regarding the "Report It App" back to the relevant colleagues.

Housing

Councillor Gibbons welcomed the building of 2 new council houses in Graveney ward and commented on the importance of providing affordable housing.

Mopeds

Residents reported problems related to moped delivery drivers for companies such as Deliveroo. These included anti-social parking in Valnay and Bickley Streets and anti-social behaviour including sexual harassment. Councillor Gibbons advised that he had reported this to the Safer Neighbourhood Team who were monitoring the situation. Councillor Rigby encouraged the Leader of the Council to write to Deliveroo to report this behaviour and demand an improvement.

(Post meeting note: the issue has been reported to the police and it is being investigated.)

CLOSE OF MEETING

Councillor Senior thanked residents for attending the meeting.

The meeting ended at 9.10pm.

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