

WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL
THAMESFIELD “LET’S TALK” MEETING
ST MARY’S CHURCH, PUTNEY HIGH STREET, SW15 1SN
THURSDAY 2 MAY 2019 AT 7.00PM

PRESENT

Council Members

Councillor Steffi Sutters (Cabinet Member, Deputising for the Leader of the Council)
Councillor Rosemary Torrington (Thamesfield Ward Councillor)
Councillor John Locker (Thamesfield Ward Councillor)
Councillor Michael Ryder (Thamesfield Ward Councillor)
Councillor Leoni Cooper (Deputising for Leader of the Opposition)

Council Officers

Chief Executive’s Group

Sophie Bimson – Community Engagement Manager
Lorinda Freint – Business and Enterprise Manager
Gareth Jones – Democratic Services
Elizabeth Kingdom – Partnership Officer
Colin Lucas – Community Safety Officer
Mandy Skinner – Assistant Chief Executive (Customer and Partnerships)

Environment and Community Services Department

Camillus Donnelly – Head of Network Management
Nick O’Donnell – Assistant Director (Traffic & Engineering)
Elen Richards - Area Team Manager West Team (Development Management)
Michael Singham – Waste Strategy Manager
David Tidley - Transport Strategy Team Manager
Sharon Wright – Head of Inspection and Enforcement

Housing and Regeneration Department

Anne Brown – Deputy Area Housing Manager
Danny Edwards – Area Housing Manager
Ian Ruegg – Head of Development

Children’s Services

Andy Hough – Head of Education Inclusion

Residents

Approximately 40 members of the public were present.

INTRODUCTION

Councillor Sutters 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 as follows.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS

Toilet Facilities

Issue: Lack of public toilets around Putney High Street and urinating in the street, particularly a problem around “Ladbroke’s”, the alley ways alongside the Library, and “Tortilla” restaurant, adjacent to Metro Bank and Jones Mews.

The problem outside the library was attributed to all-day street drinkers, the resident felt unsafe walking to her home and there are not enough police to patrol the area.

Also, “no alcohol zones” were suggested and that licensed premises should be made to stop customers urinating outside the premises.

Response: Councillor Sutters said she was in discussion with the operators at Putney Station to make the station toilets available to the general public. Mr Singham added that as far as he was aware the community toilet scheme was still in operation although the Council no longer financially supported the scheme.

Councillor L Cooper suggested that it was time for the Council to look at providing two public toilets in each town centre. Councillor Ryder assured residents that the Ward Councillors were aware of the strength of feeling over this issue and they would see action taken, he accepted there needed to be more police but had made sure the local Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) were up to strength. Councillor Torrington added that conditions could be applied to licensed premises to require them to keep the street clean. Councillor Locker reported that the SNT are considering bringing in a no alcohol zone around the station, which the residents unanimously supported by a show of hands. Councillor L. Cooper added that a no alcohol zone introduced in a problem area around cash machines in Tooting had been successful.

Councillor Sutters reassured residents that their concerns had been noted and the Council would look at measures that could be introduced to address these issues.

HOUSING

Issue: All night parties, anti-social behaviour at Council owned property, 346 Upper Richmond Road.

Response: Mr Edwards asked the resident to speak to him and Mr Lucas at the end of the meeting, Mr. Edwards understood that the occupier was in the process of being re-housed and thought this could happen in the next few days.

Councillor Sutters asked that Mr Edwards keep her informed regarding this issue.

(Post meeting note: the tenant has now vacated the premises and the Council has taken possession of the whole of the property. A board up of the French windows and glazed front door panels has been booked in for tomorrow morning (Saturday, 4 May), to be followed by full securing after the Bank Holiday on Tuesday, 7 May.) (Further update: the property was fully secured with metal sheeting on 7 & 8 May and there have been no further incidents.)

Green Wall and City Tree Scheme

Issue: A resident asked for an update on the Green Wall and City Tree Scheme.

Response: Mr O'Donnell explained that the plans for a green wall at the cinema in Putney High Street had been abandoned due to lack of cooperation from the freeholder, and despite the Council undertaking to cover all the costs involved. A new location would be considered. A number of locations had been identified for city trees which included Putney High Street.

Communicating with the Council

Issue: A resident complimented the staff answering the telephones at the contact centre, however, finding a particular officer/service using the automated system and having to go through numerous options and pressing different numbers was frustrating and invariably led to being directed back to the Council's website. This had been particularly frustrating trying to arrange to have a disabled parking bay removed and there had been no response to written requests.

Response: Councillor Sutters acknowledged the issues with the telephone system. Councillor Locker asked that the resident speak to him about the parking bay and he would deal with it immediately. He added that the website is in the process of being rebuilt which should launch in the Summer. Councillor Torrington advised that if residents had a problem contacting the Council then they should email their Ward Councillors or come along to a Saturday surgery at the library (10am-11am).

Ms Skinner added that the contact centre handled 3,000 to 4,000 calls a week, but there would be improvements to call handling and the website this year.

Environmental Issues

Issue: Air Pollution and effects to health, despite improvements to air quality in Putney High Street the levels were still too high; support for car free days; closing the high street to traffic, banning 4x4's, better cycling infrastructure, more bike hangers and fines for engine idling.

Response: Councillor Locker responded that the Council were considering supporting the car free days in June and September, closing roads had worked in conjunction with the boat race and Ride London events, he suggested this worked better at weekends rather than week days, and benefited some businesses as a result of the increased footfall, he was keen to see this developed. Councillor Torrington added that more electric vehicle charging points were being installed in the area. She also added that the closure of Hammersmith bridge had increased traffic on High Street and they were urging Hammersmith and Fulham Council to deal with it quickly and consider running bus services to link up on either side of the bridge. Councillor Torrington also pointed out the large number of car club members in the Borough.

A resident added that electric vehicles were not without their problems, there was still contamination from brake pads and tyres and they can still run over cyclists and pedestrians, they wanted people to be discouraged from using cars and for the Council to promote walking and cycling.

Councillor L Cooper added that the Mayor would be supporting car free day in September and making funding available and mentioned that Putney High Street was the Mayor's first bus low emission route, she supported more bike hangers and road closures outside schools. Councillor Sutters suggested that the Mayor (of London) consider relocating Putney bus garage.

Mr O'Donnell added that the Council was actively bringing forward various initiatives within the next twelve months including Putney High Street green initiatives (on site from August), parklets, more cycle parking, City Trees, school street trials (albeit not in Putney but roll out potential is there), a borough wide engine idling order, low car neighbourhoods, cycle contraflows and a revised Liveable Neighbourhood bid.

Putney Business Improvement District (BID)

Issue: What can be done to address the loss of retail premises on the High Street. Who controls Putney Business Improvement District.

Response: Miss Freint explained that the BID had been formed to help improve the trading environment. It is made up of representatives from local businesses, each business pays a levy, a budget is set, and a business plan drawn up. This runs for 5 years. The stakeholders make the decisions and it was not politically led.

Planning and Licensing

Palmhouse

Issue: How can residents ensure that Palmhouse retains restaurant (A3) use and does not become a bar (A4) adding to the anti-social problems in the High Street. If it receives a License what can be done to prevent late night extensions under Temporary Events Notices (TEN's).

Response: Councillor Torrington explained that she had spoken against this application when it was recently approved at the Planning Applications Committee

(PAC) and Ward members would monitor the premises to ensure it retained A3 use. No application had been submitted for Licensing approval and if a licence were to be granted it would be subject to restrictive conditions and it could always be reviewed. Councillor Locker added that all 3 Ward Councillors had fought against the Palmhouse application. He wanted to work with residents' groups and the local MP and meet with the operators of the premises to dissuade them from trying to turn the Palmhouse into anything like the establishments they managed in Paddington and Olympia. The hours of operation granted to the restaurant by PAC are up until 23.30 weekdays, Friday/Saturday and 23.00 on Sundays/Public Holidays. It was also understood that the Council or Police could object to a TEN.

Elen Richards stated that the Planning Service would object to any licensing application for TENS that went beyond the planning condition of 23.30. Councillor Ryder added that the applicant had scaled down their original plans because of the concerns raised.

Final Questions

Issues: Pelican crossing on Lower Richmond Road between Sefton and Pentlow Street (red light took too long to activate).
Support for the Putney Society's front garden scheme.
Climate emergency.
Stop residents cutting down trees in back gardens.
Pension fund investments in fossil fuel and tobacco companies.
Separate collection of food waste.

Response: Mr O'Donnell explained that the traffic lights were managed by TfL, but the Council would report any problems that they were made aware of.

(Post meeting: the timing issue on the Lower Richmond Road pelican crossing has now been reported to TfL.)

Response: Councillor Locker responded that he had endorsed the Putney Society's front garden scheme on social media and is supported by all the Ward Councillors, he also pointed out that there were prizes to be won. He explained that the pension Fund was managed jointly with Richmond and, although the situation was complicated, officers are reviewing investments in fossil fuel companies. Councillor Sutters pointed out that the pension fund was a cross party managed fund.

Councillor Locker acknowledged that there was much to be done on climate change and the Council were compiling many different initiatives, including the reduction in plastics, improvement in air quality and installing more electric vehicle charging points, all the initiatives would be brought together as a single strategy.

Councillor L Cooper suggested that food waste should be collected separately as it can be used for compost and anaerobic digestion, it also made people realise how much food they were wasting.

Councillor Sutters explained that collecting food waste separately would require more vehicles on the road, the current arrangement is to include food waste in the

black sacks and this is then transported to the incinerator at Belvedere and converted into energy, helping to power 100,000 homes. The current arrangements can be reviewed when the contract comes up for renewal. Councillor Sutters declared her love of trees, she explained that many were protected by TPO's and to let her know of any at risk, planning policy would be to retain trees where possible on new developments and replace lost trees.

CLOSE OF MEETING

Councillor Sutters thanked the residents for attending the meeting.

The meeting ended at 9.10pm.

Gareth Jones 020 8871 7520
gareth.jones@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk
