

Your Home, Your Forum Meeting Notes

Forum:	Dudley North
Date and time:	1st March 2023 6.30 pm
Venue:	Sedgley Community Centre, Ladies Walk, Sedgley, Dudley, DY3 3UA
Attendance:	<p>Councillors: P Drake; M Howard, S Ridney; M Evans; S Keasey; A Aston; A Hughes; B Challenor; A Millward; D Stanley</p> <p>Officers: H Jeavons – Liaison Officer; J Austin – Community Development Worker; Aaron Lawrence– Community Development Worker</p> <p>West Midlands Police: Sergeant M Sanders; PCSO's Cartwright; M Knight; E Corfield; S Berry</p> <p>West Midlands Fire Service: S Hunt and colleagues</p> <p>Members of the public: 60</p>

Item	Notes
1.Welcome, introductions and apologies	<p>Apologies: Councillors M Westwood and T Westwood</p> <p>Noted: Chair welcomed residents to the meeting and acknowledged a return to the meeting format previously used at former community forum meetings.</p>
2.Have your say – An opportunity for residents to raise issues in their area	<p><u>Parking along Vale Street-Sunday Football at the Well-being Centre:</u></p> <p>Resident raised concerns about the parking along Vale Street.</p> <p>Action: Councillor A Aston to investigate opening up barriers to parking spaces on the Windmill car park for Sunday football visitors.</p>

Upper Gornal and Woodsetton community litter picking group:

Upper Gornal and Woodsetton community litter picking group have been requested to target privately owned land. They have been active on council owned land but have observed areas of private land that need attention.

Information about ownership of private land can be obtained from the land registry; although it is recognised that there may be a cost for this process and permission still needs to be sort from the landowner before access to their land is viable. The council can compel local landowners to clear their land of rubbish. Ward councillors have attempted to engage local schools about the green areas in their locality and the care/upkeep of these areas.

Action: Councillors A Hughes and A Aston to follow up this focus and keep the community group informed of the progress. This will include the siting of additional litter bins on Tipton Road and High Arcal and conversations with Woodsetton schools.

Alleviating traffic congestion in Sedgley:

Traffic congestion and the associated air pollution is a concern around Sedgley, particularly around Vicar Street and Gospel End. A number of options were shared, including making specific roads one way, installing Stop signs, implementing double red lines in specific areas, installing surveillance cameras to enforce the yellow box regulations. There is a perception that very little consideration had been given to the location of simultaneous roadworks and the impact upon an already congested area.

Action: Sedgley ward councillors thanked residents for their suggestions. This issue will be taken up with the council highways department.

Parking and speeding by Ellowes Hall School:

Speeding cars and inconsiderate parking along the road is causing a danger to pedestrians. Speed calming measures were discussed, including speed warning signs. Councillor A Millward has asked for signs that flash when cars speed, displaying the registration of the car; they have proved to be a success elsewhere. This is still to be agreed.

Action: Gornal ward councillors to raise residents' concerns with the highways department.

	<p>Traffic issues around the Bramford lights: Noted: Despite a traffic survey in this area and a change of traffic light priorities, traffic congestion is still an issue. All avenues to alleviate this problem have been explored.</p> <p><u>Lower Gornal Village and parking outside Sainsburys:</u> Parking is an issue in Lower Gornal. The site of the derelict pub, the Fiddler's Arms was discussed. This derelict site has attracted anti-social behaviour. The land is privately owned and there are plans to build houses on the land; therefore, the site can't be used for parking.</p> <p>Noted: Sergeant Sanders addressed the issues of illegal parking on pavements, double yellow lines and explained where mobile speed units are placed and the reasons why they are placed there.</p> <p>Action: Councillor B Challenor to investigate the parking issues in Louise Street.</p> <p><u>Celebration of King's Coronation-Lighting of a beacon on Sedgley Beacon:</u> Plans are being investigated to light a beacon on Sedgley Beacon to celebrate the King's coronation. A risk assessment needs to be undertaken as part of this process.</p> <p>Action: Councillors S Keasey and M Evans to send a supporting letter to the resident.</p> <p><u>Land by Upper Gornal Pensioners Club:</u> Land around the club appears to be owned by 2 different organisations, one being the local church. The land is overgrown, ivy, nettles and weeds are now causing damage to the pensioners club building. The land is also used for fly tipping, which is causing other issues with rats. In addition, the stairwell to the entrance to their cellar is being used as a toilet by people passing by.</p> <p>Forum funding could be applied for in order to secure/monitor areas around the building, or install a gate, to discourage anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Action: Councillor A Aston is meeting with the new minister of the church and will discuss concerns regarding the overgrown land surrounding the building.</p>
--	---

Support for small businesses opening in Sedgley:

A resident raised an issue about the lack of advice and support for people who wish to set-up a business. For example, the health and safety policies that need to be in place before a business opens. Start-up and retention of new businesses- where can this advice be sought and what support is available to help those sustain their businesses?

Councillor S Keasey mentioned support from banks, Trading Standards, Citizens Advice.

Councillor A Millward mentioned: Black Country Chamber; Federation of Small Businesses; Licensing Laws; Food Safety Acts and an entitlement to 'small business' rates discount.

It was suggested that information from these sources needs to be combined and made available at a central site, for example the library.

Action: Councillors S Keasey and M Evans will investigate further and contact the resident directly.

Conservation Area in Sedgley:

Residents asked for a progress update and whether the area is being extended.

Action: Councillors S Keasey and M Evans will give an update to the resident.

Old Graveyard in Sedgley hosting future events:

A resident raised a question regarding the suitability of using this land for Christmas celebrations, as there may be a conflict of interest if celebrations are held on grounds that were once a graveyard.

Councillor S Keasey stated that there are many sites that can be used for different events, but that this particular site was well suited for the Christmas celebrations. When other events are organised, he will consider the suitability of other available land. However, this site is a large central site, that is accessible to many people.

Anchor Lane Waste and Recycle Centre:

Negotiations are still ongoing – no further updates are available.

<p>3. (a) Fire Service – To receive a presentation and discussion on fire service issues</p>	<p><u>Support for vulnerable residents:</u> Information regarding Safe and Well-being visits, to vulnerable residents within the West Midlands, was shared. This service includes visiting residents in the home, fitting smoke alarms with a 10-year battery life and specific fire safety advice. The fire service explained how they work in collaboration with the local police in preventing fires with youths; and in schools' educating young people on the risks and dangers of fires</p> <p>Noted: Fire service was thanked by a resident following a recent visit to their home. The advice and service given was excellent. Noted: Resident asked about the possibility of the fire service visiting a local pensioner's community group. Contact information was shared with fire service officer.</p> <p><u>Grass fires during Summer 2022:</u> Residents raised concerns about the number of grass fires in Dudley North, caused by grass cutting contractors not collecting the cut grass. Sedgley Beacon and Cotwall End were both named as fire risk areas.</p> <p>Action: Councillor D Stanley to follow up with Green Care in relation to leaving cut grass, and the increased risk of fires</p> <p>Noted: The fire service was thanked for their attendance at the meeting and their response to questions from residents.</p>
<p>3. (b) Police and communities together – Discussion on local policing and related issues</p>	<p>Sergeant Sanders explained that the team has been reduced considerably, which had therefore led to working differently. The new chief constable is putting in a different model of working to serve the local communities. There is a recognition that the previous police service was not giving the general public what they wanted; change is happening. The emphasis is on providing a service for local people and the 'Response Policy' to reported incidents, will return to the local team. The police service will now attend all domestic burglaries and will conduct effective investigations and see/visit more people who have been a victim of any crime.</p>

	<p>The team will stay local, which will enable them to get to know the local offenders, the local areas and crime hot spots, across all 4 wards. There are new PCSOs being recruited and trained to help the wider team.</p> <p>Crime statistics, for a specific area post code can be searched for via this link: https://www.police.uk/%C2%A0</p> <p>Statistical evidence has recognised that a lot of crime does go unreported; however, generally crime was down by 35% compared to previous years. Vehicle crime in Sedgley is down by 10%. Noted: Local social media posts don't always reflect this downward trend.</p> <p>999 call service – this is now improved, and response times are where they should be.</p> <p>101 call service – is still an ongoing concern and is currently unacceptable. This is being dealt with similarly to the way the 999 service was, to improve the waiting times and response time to calls. They are deploying a bank scheme for staff to man the lines, staff have the opportunity to work overtime, they have increased recruitment and centralised the call centre, (now in Birmingham). Some residents expressed concern about the lack of confidence in the police responding to incidents, which may result in crimes not being reported. Residents need to see police on the streets to change negative perceptions.</p> <p>Knife crime was discussed and how it is being dealt with by visiting schools and educating young people of the dangers. Pro-active policing includes working with local community groups to prevent crime from youths, particularly as the warmer nights are approaching.</p> <p>Friends of Abbey Street, Gornal thanked Michael Sanders and his team for their efforts with the crime taking place at the park and how they had supported, to reduce the vandalism. They were also praised for the work they conducted to close down a cannabis farm in Gornal.</p> <p>Action: Police asked residents for any information on cannabis to be reported to them, as cannabis and the farming of cannabis leads to bigger crimes. Any information at all can be very useful to help fight the 'bigger picture'.</p>
--	---

4. Working together	<p>Liaison Officer gave an overview of the feedback from the World Café session held at the last Forum meeting. There were hard copies available, and attendees were also informed how they can access this online.</p> <p>Noted: The World Café was not well received at the last YHYF and will not be conducted again at future Dudley North Forum meetings.</p>
5. Updates from Ward Councillors	<p><u>Activities/comments</u></p> <p>P Drake: Focus- fly tipping and surveillance cameras, anti-social behaviour in specific areas M Howard: Same foci as P Drake and specific housing issues affecting residents S Ridney: 2 CCTV cameras being installed in Roseville. Local community groups were thanked for their work to keep the area clean. New homes in Coseley are due to be built, but no infrastructure is yet in place to support the new residents i.e., schools, GP surgeries B Challenor thanked the community groups in Gornal for all their hard work A Millward: Focus- Preventing anti-social behaviour in the park areas, fly tipping in specific areas, repairing potholes and involvement with the action group focussing on the proposed development of a green field area off the Straits D Stanley: Thanked 2 Gornal residents for their tireless work with the Friends of Gornal Library and Gornal Together M Evans: Thanked the Friends of Sedgley Beacon and Friends of Alder Coppice for their work within the community. M Evans thanked T Westwood for all her hard work during her time as a Sedgley ward Councillor. S Keasey: Thanked the people involved in organising the Sedgley Christmas celebration. All groups were thanked for their work and the pride they take in their area. The opening of a new Aldi in Sedgley was also mentioned A Aston: Thanked the local groups who work for the benefit of the community. Upper Gornal Fun Day will be held on July 1st A Hughes: Focus- speeding issues and involvement with the police on the speed watch initiative, signage on Eve's Lane and working on a school crossing outside Woodsetton School</p>
6. Forum funding	<p>A summary of funding recommendations was shared. Full details can be found by clicking on the following link: Your Home, Your Forum Dudley North</p>

7.Date of next meeting	Details will be available on the following link in due course. <u>Your Home, Your Forum – Dudley North</u>
------------------------	---

Time meeting ended: 20:55