



Community Forum Action Notes



Forum: Amblecote, Cradley & Wollescote and Lye & Stourbridge North Community Forum

Date and time: Monday, 8th November 2021 at 6.30pm

Venue: Online on Microsoft Teams

Attendance: Councillors: R Body, D Borley, T Crumpton, M Hanif, P Lee, P Lowe and N Neale

Officers: Jayne Pilkington (Area Liaison Officer), Carol Tromans, Charlotte Fletcher and Davinder Tiwana (all Public Health, Dudley Council) and Shirley Shea (Family Solutions).

Police: PC Luci Boardman

Members of the public: 32

1. Welcome and introduction to the meeting

Councillor T Crumpton opened the meeting and introduced the Councillors and Officers in attendance. The etiquette for the on-line meeting was explained.

Carol Tromans (Community Development Worker) shared her email address carol.tromans@dudley.gov.uk and the link to the community development webpage: <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/council-community/community-forums/community-development-workers/>

2. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair

Councillor Crumpton was appointed as Chair of the forum and Councillor Hanif as Vice-Chair for the remainder of the 2021/22 municipal year.

Councillor Crumpton requested a moment of silence for the people lost during the pandemic, to reflect upon those who have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic and for the tragic loss of MP David Amess.



3. Apologies and declarations of interest

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillors P Bradley and K Razzaq; Sergeant John Norgrove.

Councillor Crumpton declared his interest with regards to Wollescote Park as a member of the Friends Group; Councillor Body declared his interest with regards to Homer Park as Chair of the Friends Group.

4. Communities Together

Councillor Crumpton put forward questions for consideration under this agenda item:

- What was great about our local community?
- What would we like to see in our local area and how can we make this happen together?

Carol Tromans issued the web link to the forum for the public should they wish to report any issues or queries to Dudley Council Plus by contacting <https://customer.dudley.gov.uk/service-request/council-contact/?ref=SO-00411> or alternatively call 0300 555 2345 8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday.

Subject

Action/Response

(i) Lighting and improvements to the play area on Penfields estate

- query raised by a resident who had lived on the estate for 20 years and was a member of the Street Watch Group. The play area on Penfields was well used, however, there was a run-down part to the park which had the potential to be a great space for the older children e.g. basketball, goal posts etc.

Ward Councillors to support with progressing these proposals further.

Councillor Lee - ideal location for football and basketball. Fencing may be needed and it would be good to link the two Street Watch Groups together.

Councillor Hanif - improvement work to this area had been done about 8-10 years ago and was happy to provide support.

There was no lighting which made people feel at risk when walking to the shops despite the large foot fall. Lighting would act as a deterrent to drug users. A small community group on Facebook had expressed their support for lighting improvements. Councillor Borley had been supporting the project and had been liaising with Amblecote members.

Councillor Crumpton – the cost of the equipment was always more than expected and match funding may be required.

Councillor Lowe – suggested that Sports England may be able to assist.

(ii) Access to Wollescote Hall and Park

A representative of the Friends of Wollescote Park expressed how Wollescote Hall could be an excellent venue for a variety of community groups to congregate such as a community choir or craft groups. The ground floor was currently being used by the Sons of Rest. It was felt that such a great meeting space should not be exclusive for the Sons of Rest use and needed to be opened up to other groups to use. The park was located in three wards. Concerns had been expressed regarding the lack of diversity. In other parts of the Borough there were 'Sons and Daughters' of rest, however, Wollescote had voted against this.

Councillor Crumpton to arrange to speak to the Sons of Rest.

(iii) Improved Communication for local community events

A member of the public raised the issue concerning the need for better communication and promotion for local community events.

The representative of the Friends of Wollescote Park expressed a similar frustration over the poor promotion of local community groups. The Council's Parks and Development staff were helpful and had their own facebook page. The main issue was the cost of printing for posters and flyers.

Councillor Crumpton requested that Officers see if there was any legal reason why money could not be set aside as a Forum for small community groups to have assistance with promotion of their events and to liaise with the Council's Print Services for printing of flyers, etc.

Carol Tromans offered help to promote the work of the park. Charlotte Fletcher referred to the Community Information Directory. Councillor Crumpton expressed that more could be done via the Your Borough, Your Home magazine.

(iv) Tanhouse Estate

A resident from the Tanhouse Estate queried whether there was a way of improving the little park on the estate, what was happening with all the large empty boxes on the estate, and how was the estate going to respond to the Government's green initiatives recently announced, particularly the emphasis on switching to heat pumps and how would this information trickle down to people on the estate individually.

Councillor Crumpton felt that the best approach would be to arrange to meet with the Housing Team to discuss these issues further.

(v) Everley Nursing Home

Members of the public raised the issue of the former Everley Nursing Home. It was felt that they were being kept in the dark about the proposals. There was a fear of crime together with a strong concern the negative impact the proposal would have on the local community and residents and that it did not appear to have been considered by the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

It was stated that there was a nursery at the end of the road; that this was a change of use application; that it was a house in multiple occupation (HMO) and that one of the local residents had provided a five page letter to the LPA setting out their concerns and objections to the proposals.

Another local resident also expressed concerns and felt that there was a grey area when it came to change of use. The focus of the LPA appeared to be only on the proposed extension with no mention of sound proofing and the flashing lights around the building which would disturb local residents.

Question was raised as to whether Children Services had been consulted on the proposals as it seemed that there was no evidence of a risk assessment being undertaken.

Councillor Crumpton advised that he had written to Children Services and Planning and had been informed that this was not a change of use.

Over 40 objections had been logged. It appeared to be a company that appeared to have been set up for only 12 months. There should be regulation of these type of facilities.

Councillor Neale explained that Councillor Phipps had been exploring options about HMO's. Cllr Neale expressed the importance of putting objections in writing and submitting them to the local planning authority.

A member of the public acknowledged that the proposed residents would be vulnerable people, however, it should not be overlooked that a lot of the residents in the locality were also vulnerable, along with the children in the nursery. It was felt that the Directors for the company appeared to be very inexperienced.

Concerns were raised that there would be no sleeping accommodation at the property and a query was raised as to who would be supervising the vulnerable residents. It was noted that every downstairs window was easily accessible and there concerns were expressed over the light pollution caused by this scheme.

5. Police update and discussion

PC Luci Boardman, on behalf of Sergeant Norgrove, provided the following updates:

- There were two junior PCSO schemes running at Amblecote and Peters Hill Primary Schools. It was hoped that this would be increased in the new year to cover others in the wards.
- The Street Watch schemes were currently covering Claycroft Place, Penfields Estate and Withymoor, Amblecote and were run by the PCSOs on the team.
- 5 warrants had been executed and they had recovered around £900,000 of cannabis plants (in total), around £500,000 of stolen goods (plant machinery, tools and garden goods) and £3,000 cash.
- Good CCTV had been installed in Lye High Street, helping to prevent crime.
- 4 PCSOs, 1 Sergeant., 5 PCs to cover Amblecote, Stourbridge North and a 12 week rotation of students.

Councillor Lee added that in Amblecote, £700,000 of cannabis plants and £500,000 of stolen goods had been retrieved all under one warrant.

Councillor Hanif requested that PC Boardman take back to Sergeant Norgrove a request from residents in the Clay Croft area for CCTV, just for a 5 month period in light of the recent shooting. PC Boardman would investigate to see if CCTV can be used to cover the bottom of Chapel Street.



Councillor Hanif reported the ongoing problem of fly tipping in Clinic Drive. Fly tipping had been terrible within the past 12 months. Councillor Hanif was in contact with Corporate Landlord Services to query many enforcements since the cameras had been installed.

Councillor Lowe advised that whilst the CCTV was welcomed, it needed to be staffed. Weekly roving surgeries were required; Penfields Estate would be next.

Councillor Crumpton expressed the need for easier access into Ghausia Mosque.

Councillor Neale advised that she was trying to start Street Watch groups but could not get expressions of interest from the community. She stressed the importance of the public reporting antisocial behaviour (ASB) to the Police. It was advised that CCTV was coming in Furlong Lane and Wynall Lane.

Councillor Lee explained that only two people were needed to form a Street Watch Group and whereby they would only be needed to do an hour a month. It was advised that in Amblecote there were 9 people.

Councillor Crumpton – Cradley Community Centre had an AGM recently as did Cradley Library. Friends of the Library and Friends of Stevens Park visited the sensory garden at Wollescote Park. It was a great environment for a carer or for someone who was partially sighted or disabled, unfortunately, ASB was still occurring in parts of the area.

Councillor Crumpton thanked PC Boardman for the update from her and Sergeant Norgrove who cover the Stourbridge area, however, reiterated his frustration that no further updates had been provided for what was happening within the Cradley area, which was covered by the Halesowen team. Councillor Body also requested for an update about his ward. Councillor Crumpton would be requesting a meeting with Sergeant Norgrove in order to discuss this further. PC Boardman provided contact email address:

Halesowen@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk

Stourbridge@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk

6. Community forum funding

Funding report – there were no new applications to consider, therefore, the report was for noting of spend since the last meeting.



Councillor Crumpton introduced Val Bloomer (Friends of Homer Hill Park) and David Paxton (Providence Methodist Church) as examples of past recipients of forum funding and read out the email of thanks from David.

In terms of ideas for funding, Councillor Crumpton reflected on COP 26 and that the forum should be supporting living Christmas Trees. Councillor Lee advised that live Christmas trees were being planted in play areas. A representative of Friends of Wollescote Park expressed that there should be more investment in trees in Wollescote Park in light of ash die back. It was felt that more hedgerows should be planted. An application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund needed to be made for funding.

7. Arrangements for next meeting

Councillor Crumpton requested comments about how attendees of the meeting felt about having virtual Community Forum meetings going forward or if they would prefer the return of meetings being 'in person' if a Covid safe environment could be arranged. The majority expressed a preference for a hybrid meeting. Councillor Lowe queried whether in addition to hybrid meetings that rotating between face-to-face meetings and MS Teams could be looked at as it was encouraging to have welcomed many more people to the meeting who for many reasons were not able to join the physical meetings.

Attendees were asked to complete a short evaluation in order to provide feedback on how the online forum meeting went. The deadline for completion is the 30th November 2021: <https://forms.gle/8wWgq9XoaYBCF1zi8>

Meeting ended at: 20.34

