

Your Home, Your Forum Meeting Notes

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| Forum: | Dudley North |
| Date and time: | 9th November 2023 at 6.30 pm |
| Venue: | Royal British Legion Club, Ruiton Street, Dudley, DY3 2EH |
| Attendance: | <p>Councillors: P Drake; S Ridney; M Evans; S Keasey; A Aston; M Westwood; B Challenor; D Stanley; C Sullivan</p> <p>Officers: H Jeavons – Liaison Officer; J Austin – Community Development Worker</p> <p>West Midlands Police: Sergeant L Wood</p> <p>Members of the public: 26</p> |

| Item | Notes |
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| 1. Welcome, introductions and apologies | <p>Apologies: Councillors A Hughes and M Howard</p> <p>Noted: Chair welcomed residents to the meeting.</p> |
| 2. Notes – To confirm the notes of the meeting held on 8th June 2023 as a correct record | Agreed |
| 3. Have your say – An opportunity for residents to raise issues in their area | <p><u>Make It Happen Funding- withdrawn</u></p> <p>Resident raised concerns that this funding stream had been stopped, 'put on hold'. This would affect local community groups who rely on funding, however small the amount of money. There are also rumours about the future of community funding grants, given the financial position of the council.</p> |

Community groups are concerned about their future viability if additional funding streams are withdrawn.

Action: Ward councillors were unaware of any withdrawal of council funding streams for community groups. There is a meeting next week where councillors will raise this concern and subsequently communicate the information to community groups within their wards. Ward councillors recognise the importance of the work community groups do and will robustly challenge any changes to funding streams.

Police Address

Resident asked for the location of the nearest police station to report crimes. Sergeant Wood informed him of the Castlegate address in Dudley.

Blocked Gulleys and parking on curbs

Residents raised concerns about a number of blocked gulleys causing drains to over-flow onto the pavement; Redhall Road, Banks Road and Church Street were highlighted. Councillor Stanley and the Dudley Chief Executive had undertaken a walk around Gornal to view the issue. It was noted that cars parked on the kerbs were obstructing any maintenance work to clear the blockages.

Residents were urged to report this issue to the council and targeted work to remedy the issue could be assigned to particular areas.

Councillor Corfield explained that gulley cleaning had previously been reactive. There is a new electronic system in place that enables the council to record information about street cleaning. The database of information is expanding. For example, over 12 months, 11000 gulleys were cleaned. Now the new system is in place, during the last 2 months, 8000 have been cleaned. The council can now proactively target areas and plan in regular maintenance.

Illegal selling of vapes

Action: If residents suspect that shops are selling vapes to underage youths, they must report this to the police. There are currently operations in place to check on the illegal selling of vapes.

Payments over the phone to Council Plus

A resident thanked a manager at Council Plus for resolving a two week issue he had had when trying to pay via telephone for an extra green bin collection.

Subsided drain in Woodsetton Ward, causing flooding

Action: Councillor Aston to follow up.

Steps leading to the arcade in Upper Gornal

Resident requested that the steps should be painted to aid their visibility.

Noted: Councillor Aston informed the group that maintenance was due to start on the steps and the addition of paint to increase their visibility would have to be actioned following this work.

Addition of microphones at YHYF meetings

Noted: Councillors will raise this issue, as some residents have found it difficult to hear conversations.

Three tier planters located across the ward

A resident commented on some of the planters being crooked.

Councillor Evans said that the addition of these planters, which were purchased via a grant, had brought colour to the ward. Residents thanked Upper Gornal councillors for their support during the planting season. Planting was undertaken by Gornal volunteers.

Crossings outside Ellowes Hall School

Residents raised concerns about pupils leaving the school. Issues included them not using designated crossings, fighting which spills out into the road and teachers on duty not supervising the end of school dispersal.

Councillor Stanley stated that 'camera cars' had been deployed in the area. Inconsiderate parking around the school is still a major issue and causing problems for the safe movement of buses.

Action: Gornal Ward councillors to raise these concerns again.

Quoted energy cost by DMBC for Christmas lighting

A resident asked whether the actual costs relating to the final energy bill for the lights in the Gornal Ward, would be adjusted, once known. The quoted cost is an estimate and the resident wished to ensure that the final charge would be an accurate reflection of the final cost and not be based on the initial estimate and that any excess monies be returned to Community Forum Funding?

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| | <p><u>Parking at the next Dudley North YHYF meeting-7th February 2024</u> A resident asked that the Tensca car park be made available for residents who wish to attend the meeting. Parking at Asda is limited to 2 hours and there is limited parking at the community centre.</p> |
| <p>4. Police and communities together – Discussion on local policing and related issues</p> | <p><u>Abbey Street Park equipment used for training dogs</u> A resident reported that damage was being done to the park equipment by dogs. The police had advised the resident to report the incidents via 101. Patrols have increased in the area. The resident was asked to forward pictures of damage to the Sergeant. It was recognised that increased police patrols and educating people about the damage such activity causes, were positive actions.</p> <p><u>Mobile speed camera signs on Milking Bank</u> A resident suggested that removing these warning signs may result in catching more speeding motorists. Noted: There is a legal requirement for signs to be in place.</p> <p><u>Scooters and Quad bikes causing a nuisance in the area</u> Noted: Several operations had taken place in the area, since the last YHYF meeting. There is one planned in the coming weeks. The Sergeant has requested that Dudley North be included in regular operations to target this nuisance, including the deployment of police off road bikes. Councillor Stanley stated that the police had powers to confiscate and crush bikes that are being illegally used and asked how many had been crushed. The Sergeant didn't have this information to hand.</p> <p><u>Lack of visibility of Police and PCSOs</u> Residents raised concerns about speeding cars and the lack of police presence within the wards.</p> |

Noted: There are currently 4 police officers and 2 PCSO's on duty in Dudley North. Road policing units have also been deployed to the area, particularly during the night. These are the resources available within Dudley North.

There are also 14 special constables across DMBC.

Inconsiderate parking along Clarence Street/top of Highgate-Upper Gornal

A resident raised the on-going issue of cars parking on the pavement, double yellow lines and zig-zag lines. One particular car was identified as a repeat offender. Both the council and police are aware of this on-going issue. The installation of barriers along the kerb could alleviate parking on the pavement. It was suggested that residents should email the Dudley North MP, Marco Longhi and request that parking on pavements should be made illegal.

Noted: Resident was asked to continue to report the issue via 101. This produces an auditable log that can be actioned appropriately.

Same group of youths causing damage to the Sedgley Conservative Club and The Swan public house

CCTV footage had been shared with the police and the youths identified, as known to the police. Crime numbers were shared. There has been no visible increase in police presence and the youths are still causing damage in the area.

Another resident reported that police had been deployed to Vicars Street to respond to this group of youths.

Noted: Sergeant Wood will follow up what action has been taken by checking the reports against the crime numbers. The Sergeant explained that there were more police patrols in this area but he would escalate residents concerns within his team. It was affirmed that the CCTV cameras in Sedgley are monitored 24/7.

Councillor Evans thanked the police for the support they are giving.

Car tyres slashed-Monument Lane

Councillors Evans asked for an update on this incident.

Noted: This is an on-going investigation proceeding through the youth justice system.

Shoplifters and police response to reports

Councillor Stanley asked how the police were dealing with shoplifters following an incident that he was made aware of, in a local business. Does the value of the stolen product result in a different police response?

Noted: Police resources are limited and their response is dependent upon the severity of the crime and the number of crimes that have occurred. All crimes need to be reported and as much information/evidence, included in the report. The police can then investigate the report, using the given information.

Knife Crime Incident- update

A resident asked for an update following a reported knife crime.

Action: Sergeant to contact the resident directly.

Round House Road- off road bikes

Residents and councillors identified this area as being a known 'hot-spot' for off road bikes/stolen bikes. Incidents that were reported months ago still have no resolution and the perception is that there are too few police officers available.

Noted: Police recovered bikes and posted this information on their Twitter page. Police have changed their shift times to target particular areas, at the times they know off road bikers are active. Councillors thanked the police for their continued support. There was a shared recognition that the police and councillors needed to work together.

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| | <p><u>Black Country Wellbeing Centre</u> A volunteer at the centre stated they are hosting the Christmas Tree Light switch on at Upper Gornal Arcade, Kent Street on 3rd December.</p> |
| <p>5. Updates from Ward Councillors</p> | <p><u>Activities/comments</u></p> <p>Councillor Drake: The Remembrance Day gathering will begin at Vicarage Road followed by a service at the church. Working with residents to address anti-social behaviour in specific areas. Potholes are a focus in certain ward areas, for example, Church Road. The Coseley Christmas light switch on event is planned for 17th November.</p> <p>Councillor Ridney: A location for a live tree has been agreed within the ward. This should ensure a more sustainable approach to the Christmas celebrations and save costs in the future. Green Care were thanked for their action in clearing Memorial Lane.</p> <p>Councillor Challenor: Thanked the community groups in the area for their work. One resident in particular was praised for her work across several community groups. December 2nd is the date for Gornal Christmas fayre. Summer Lane and Abbey Road are due to be resurfaced.</p> <p>Councillor Stanley: Thanked the volunteers of Gornal for all their time and the good work they do. The Remembrance Day gathering will begin at the British Legion, followed by a service at the Memorial Hall. Residents were reminded that public transport in Gornal is being reviewed. If residents do not use the local buses, they may cease to operate in the area.</p> <p>Councillor Sullivan: Is working with the police on the vandalism and a groups of youths causing problems within the Sedgley area.</p> <p>Councillor Evans: Joint work with the police has focussed on keeping the crime rate in Sedgley low.</p> <p>Councillor Keasey: Residents were urged to continue to raise issues with their ward councillors.</p> |

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| | <p>The Sedgley Christmas light switch on event is planned for 26th November, 4-7 pm.</p> <p>Councillor Aston: The Remembrance Day gathering will begin at the Woodsetton war memorial, with a service held at the Upper Gornal Methodist Church. Ward councillors have been liaising with Severn Trent water about the condition of Parkes Hall Pool. There has been an improvement in the water quality. The Upper Gornal Christmas light switch on will take place on 3rd December, at Kent Street Arcade. The Councillor expressed his frustration that funding for Christmas trees and decorations has to come out of Forum funding.</p> <p>Councillor Westwood: Councillors Westwood and Aston have been working with Oak Street residents to address anti-social behaviour, including drug dealing in the area. The road is now one way. There are still issues with cars parking on grass verges around Chad Road despite double yellow lines in the area. A walk around the area has identified trees that need pruning. Valley Road is an example. TPOs on trees are causing challenges.</p> |
| <p>6. Forum funding A summary of recommendations on applications made for funding since the last meeting and to consider any deferred applications.</p> | <p>A summary of funding recommendations was shared:</p> <p>The Black Country Wellbeing Centre- Approved St Andrews and Bridge Churches- Approved Smile Productions CIC-Refused Dudley MBC- Christmas Trees/Lights- Approved Centre for Inclusive Living- Approved, following the group providing additional information.</p> <p>Noted: An urgent application, submitted by Gornal Together, had been considered in between scheduled Grant Panel meetings; £1,538.93 was approved. The application was for the purchase and installation of a defibrillator and stab units, inside The Royal British Legion Club, Ruiton Street, Lower Gornal. In addition, 2 Union Flags were purchased, to replace the existing ones.</p> <p>Noted: An urgent application, submitted by Friends of Gornal Field, had been considered in between scheduled Grant Panel meetings; £1,653.34 was approved. The application was to provide accredited training to members on using strimmers, and to purchase various garden equipment.</p> |

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| 7.Date of next meeting | 7 th February 2024 Sedgley Community Centre - Ladies Walk, Dudley, DY3 3UA Details will be available on the following link: Your Home, Your Forum, Dudley North |

Time meeting ended: 20:30