

Your Home, Your Forum Meeting Notes

Forum:	Brierley Hill
Date and time:	28th February 2024 at 6.30pm
Venue:	Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, 3 Summer Hill, Kingswinford DY6 9JG
Attendance:	<p>Councillors. P Harley, D Harley, R Collins, M Rogers, E Lawrence, W Little, L Johnson, K Lewis, M Webb, A Davies, P Miller and J Foster.</p> <p>Officers/ police: Sergeant Impey and PC Shafiq</p> <p>Tom Senior (Liaison Officer) and Marissa Westwood (Community Development Worker)</p> <p>Members of the public: 56</p>

Agenda item	Notes
1. Welcome, introductions and apologies	<p>Tom Senior welcomed everyone to the meeting and went through the house keeping arrangements.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillor K Westwood.</p> <p>Tom Senior introduced Councillor R Collins as the Chair of the meeting.</p>

	<p>The minutes from the last meeting held on 26th October 2024 were approved as a correct record.</p>
<p>2. Updates from Ward Councillors</p>	<p>Kingswinford South</p> <p>P Harley commented that there had not as yet been much works at the Quarry and confirmed that there would be no through road.</p> <p>L Johnson agreed with P Harley’s comments.</p> <p>P Miller spoke about the empty properties in the area and the current need for more housing.</p> <p>Kingswinford North and Wall Heath</p> <p>E Lawrence informed the meeting that work had started to upgrade the parks in the area and that community groups were looking for volunteers. E Lawrence also said that there were highways works in the area to improve traffic flow and remove telegraph poles.</p> <p>Wordsley</p> <p>M Rogers informed the meeting that the new play area in Wordsley Park was open.</p> <p>Brierley Hill</p> <p>A Davies said that there was a lot going on in the ward including the reopening of the library after its refurbishment. Work would be starting on the market building and traders would still be open for business.</p>

	<p>There will also be work starting on new play equipment at two sites and that the park gates had recently been restored using a heritage grant.</p> <p>Brockmoor and Pensnett</p> <p>R Collins reported that the surgery had been displaced and that a review of health needs in the ward needs to be conducted. R Collins said that she had attended a stakeholder meeting on 26th January and that more needs to be done to improve health services in the ward.</p> <p>J Foster asked how many people were present from Brockmoor and Pensnett. There was only one attendee from the ward. J Foster said that she would lobby for a state of the art GP surgery, that she had concerns about potholes and off road bikes and had been liaising with the police.</p>
<p>3. Have your say</p>	<p>A member of the public asked about the Council's budget and how it would affect them.</p> <p>Councillor R Collins invited Councillor P Harley to respond.</p> <p>Councillor P Harley said that the vast majority of councils are in similar financial positions due to the increase in spending on children's and adult services. In Dudley, the issue was adult social care. As a council we had to provide adult social care when patients are discharged by the NHS. Some Councils had issued S.114 notices. Dudley Council will not be issuing a S.114 for this financial year, although that will require using some of the Council's reserves.</p> <p>Dudley Council will not be using as much of the reserves as was the case last October. The key is the third year of spending and the Council will currently be £12million in the red rather than £27 million.</p>

The Council has established a cross party Independent Improvement Board. It has acknowledged the hard work done by the Council and that we now have some breathing space. Councillor P Harley also said that the plans need to be sustainable and that the Council will develop a new operating model. This will mean some services being outsourced to the private or voluntary sector and some services will be charged for.

Councillor J Foster said that the main debate on the budget will take place at full Council on Monday, 4th March and that members of the public can attend or watch on Youtube. It will be a lively debate and questions can be emailed to Councillors.

A member of the public who is also a Labour Party candidate said that there are many issues that need to be addressed including potholes but thanked the Council for correcting traffic lights. However, he also asked about the £1million spent on upgrading traffic lights on Stallings Lane and asked whether the figures for emissions both before and after could be provided.

Councillor P Harley said that there are ongoing works and that the data from when the works are completed would give a better picture and that he hopes that an improvement will be seen. The works should ensure that there is a better flow of traffic and should also improve issues for pedestrians.

A member of the public asked if there had been any efforts to bring a post office back to Kingswinford. Councillor P Miller replied that there had been a delay due to the Co-op refusing to give up its licence. There has been a petition and he is hoping to discuss the issue with the Co-op.

	<p>Councillor P Miller announced that he would be standing as an independent at the next election.</p> <p>A member of the public asked what the decision was regarding green bins.</p> <p>Councillor R Collins invited Councillor P Harley to respond.</p> <p>Councillor P Harley said that the decision had not yet been taken and that a decision will be taken on Monday at full Council. Dudley Council was one of the last not to charge for green waste collections. The proposed charge is £36 which is a lot less than some authorities and that the Council would monitor the waste placed in bins.</p> <p>A member of the public thanked all the councillors for attending.</p>
<p>4. Police and communities together</p>	<p>Sergeant Impey introduced herself and PC Shafiq from the Brierley Hill and Wordsley Team.</p> <p>Sergeant Impey reported that there was a new operational model and that neighbourhood police now investigate crimes as well as responding to incidents. They have more work to do with less officers and that workloads are an issue in the area.</p> <p>Recurring issues include car key theft, antisocial behaviour and speeding. They hope to gather intelligence on care key theft.</p> <p>The police are aware of big issues, anti-social behaviour and off-road bikes. They cannot pursue off road bikes but want to identify offenders and members of the public should report any incidents.</p> <p>There will be more of a police presence on Brierley Hill High Street in the Summer months.</p>

Councillor R Collins asked the police about deployable CCTV. Councillor A Davies also said that he has tried to encourage people to report off road bikes whenever they see them.

Sergeant Impey asked that all incidents are reported as it may allow the police to identify offenders on CCTV.

Councillor W Little asked how the public should report incidents of 1) hearing off road bikes and 2) being placed in danger by off road bikes.

Sergeant Impey replied that in a non emergency 101 or WMP Webchat can be used and that in an emergency they should call 999.

Councillor W Little asked if the police could use more social media to give information.

Sergeant Impey agreed that this would be a good idea and said that people can sign up to “WMNow” which gives updates of police initiatives. One of the issues with off road bikes is that there are only four offices for the whole of the West Midlands that can pursue offenders off road and that if they have more information about incidents in this area then they can make a case for having them assigned to this area.

A member of the public asked if this would just displace the problem.

Sergeant Impey said that they try to identify offenders and seize the bikes to prevent repeat offending.

A member of the public asked whether there would be a greater police presence on the one year anniversary of serious incidents in the area

	<p>Sergeant Impey said that the situation would be monitored and policed accordingly and that there will be regular patrols.</p> <p>A member of the public said that he lived near the area where an accident occurred and that the new Tesco has caused problems and that bad parking contribute to the issues.</p> <p>Sergeant Impey said that parking was a Council issue.</p> <p>Councillor P Harley clarified that obstructions are dealt with by the police but will ask highways officers to look into this.</p> <p>Councillor R Collins closed the meeting at 7.30pm</p>
5. Date of next meeting	To be Confirmed

Time meeting ended: 7.30 pm