

Your Home, Your Forum Meeting Notes

Forum:	Dudley North
Date and time:	Monday, 23rd June, 2025 at 6.30 pm
Venue:	Royal British Legion, Ruiton Street, Dudley DY3 2EH
Attendance:	<p>Councillors: B Challenor, D Corfield, P Drake, M Hussain, S Keasey, C Littler, S Ridney, D Roberts, I Sandall and D Stanley.</p> <p>Officers: M Johal – Liaison Officer and J Austin – Community Development Worker, C Green and S Perry (Neighbourhood Services), J Drew (Participation Development Officer)</p> <p>West Midlands Police: Seargent Ross Treacy, PC Ashley Clements and Fay Cartwright (PCSO)</p> <p>West Midlands Fire Service – Jim Cotton (Station based assessor) and Joseph Farmer (Crew Commander)</p> <p>Members of the public: 40</p>
Meeting end time:	7:45 pm

Item	Notes
1. Chair's opening announcement to include welcome and introductions	The Liaison Officer welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. Election of Chair	<p>The Liaison Officer asked for nominations for the Chair. Councillor S Ridney was nominated, seconded and elected as Chair.</p> <p>The newly elected Chair formally started the meeting and Ward Councillors, Police and Officers introduced themselves.</p>
3. Apologies for absence	Councillors S Turner and A Aston.
4. Declaration of Interests	None.
5. Notes	<p>The notes of the meeting held o 19th February, 2025 were confirmed as a correct record.</p> <p>An update was provided on Ladies Walk Clinic and it was noted that separate meetings were being held in this regard. The next meeting was due to be held on 17th July, 2025. Councillor D Corfield informed the meeting that positive discussions were being held with regard to a new lease.</p>

6. Have your say	The Chair invited residents to speak on issues. The following is a summary of key issues raised at the meeting:	
	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Response/follow up actions</u>
	<p>Silver Jubilee Park Gates It was queried whether the decision not to lock gates affected all parks. Leaving gates open had increased anti-social behaviour at Silver Jubilee Park.</p> <p>The questioner offered to lock the gates herself if the Council provided the relevant permission.</p>	<p>Councillor D Corfield commented that it was intended to leave all parks open. It was noted that it was a trial and other options may be available.</p> <p>With regard to tackling anti-social behaviour, initial discussions were taking place on the possibility of introducing a borough wide Community Protection Order.</p> <p>Councillor D Corfield undertook to speak to the questioner after the meeting.</p>
	<p>Motorbike Issues – Sedgley A resident referred to several incidents occurring with people on motorbikes, particularly near Asda. They wore balaclavas and one did not have a licence plate. The incidents should be recorded on CCTV.</p>	<p>Councillor D Corfield stated that an additional CCTV had been installed in Sedgley. Culprits would be named and shamed.</p> <p>Sergeant R Treacy explained that the police had limited powers in relation to pursuit and reference was made to the tragic incident in</p>

		Wales where children had died. Public intelligence was key to capturing culprits.
	The item, Have Your Say, was adjourned at this point to allow the Fire Service item to be brought forward.	
7. Fire Service	<p>Representatives for the Fire Service referred to off road bikes and commented that these types of incidents were also an issue for them.</p> <p>A question and answer session then followed.</p> <p>Costs associated with call out charges for the fire service were provided. It was stated that although there had been a reduction in manpower, the quality of service and target times had not been impacted. An optimum crew level was maintained at all times.</p> <p>Reference was made to the hot weather and it was queried whether there had been many grass fires. The Fire Service reported that there had been numerous calls about grass fires and 80% in the Dudley area were deliberate. People were using e-bikes to get away.</p> <p>It was sometimes difficult to access parks and it was requested that when locks are changed, a sufficient number of keys be provided to the Fire Service.</p>	
	The Have Your Say item reconvened at this juncture.	

6. Have Your Say continued	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Response/follow up actions</u>
	<p>Motorbike Issues continued A resident referred to incidents in Quarry Park and Upper Gornal. The right of way through the estate to the park formed a perfect circuit.</p> <p>Publicity around the crushing of bikes was queried and further that crushing of bikes should be open to the public.</p>	<p>Councillor D Corfield referred to ‘Operation Snap’ which was a police initiative allowing members of the public to report driving offenses by submitting video evidence, often from dashcams.</p> <p>Mention was also made of ‘Operation Hercules’ which is an ongoing West Midlands Police (WMP) initiative targeting dangerous and anti-social driving, specifically street racing and car cruising. It involves a multi-agency approach, working with the West Midlands Fire Service and local authorities. People will be able to view information and report issues on the Council’s website which will then link to the Police.</p> <p>With regard to publicity around crushing bikes, Sergeant R Treacy confirmed that on the previous occasion, authority to crush the bikes had been given before publicity could be arranged.</p>

	<p>A resident raised the following issues:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Anti-social behaviour (ii) Cars parking in front of driveways (iii) Rent Increase (iv) Blocked drains/potholes <p>A list of the issues had previously been provided but no action had been taken and some had been closed on MyDudley.</p>	<p>Councillor D Corfield explained the actions he had taken in relation to clearing blocked drains and repairing potholes as part of his previous Cabinet Member portfolio.</p> <p>The meeting were also informed on the Granicus electronic software system which was used to digitally measure blockages and automatically informed on when the next clearing should take place.</p> <p>Councillor D Corfield undertook to check progress on gulley works on the areas reported.</p> <p>In relation to MyDudley, it was noted that when jobs were allocated/included in work programmes, they were automatically closed.</p>
	<p>Overgrown Grass Complaint about overgrown grass across the whole of Dudley and inadequate machinery to do the work. Reference was made to residents having to pay for services they were not receiving.</p>	<p>Councillor D Corfield commended Street Scene Officers for their work and informed the meeting on their achievement in being shortlisted for a national award.</p>

		<p>S Perry (Neighbourhood Services) undertook to take comments on board. It was reported that the Team were currently under pressure with staff shortages. Problem areas were being addressed.</p>
	<p>Birmingham New Road Lights/Woodsetton area There was no planned highway works but the temporary traffic lights were causing mayhem, particularly as they were not working. An accident had occurred because of the situation. People were unable to get in and out of their drives due to the traffic.</p> <p>Cars were driving on pavements from Sedgley to Birmingham New Road as the road was not wide enough. It had been indicated that consideration would be given to erection of railings to prevent cars going onto the pavement.</p>	<p>Councillor D Corfield stated that works were part of upgrade and improvements to the junction through to Coseley.</p> <p>It was further reported that utility companies applied to the Council for emergency permits to undertake work. Permits could not be refused but the Council had no control over works taking place.</p> <p>Works were taking place to stepping the junction back from Sedgley Road to Birmingham New Road as well as the Bean estate side.</p> <p>The Chair read out a response email she had received from Councillor S Phipps providing reassurance that most of the major works were now completed.</p>

		<p>The Council gave notice of proposed works in the Express and Star, Social Media and on their website.</p> <p>Sergeant R Treacy undertook to look at the issue in relation to cars turning right and entering the pavement.</p> <p>It was requested that a highways representative be requested to attend the next meeting.</p>
	<p>Swan Brookes Path The path was grassed over. The Council had indicated it would be cut 3 times per year but it had not been touched this year.</p>	<p>S Perry (Neighbourhood Services) stated that the hedgerow belonged to Bramford School and the Council were not responsible for maintaining school areas. He undertook to liaise with the school to pay for any works to be carried out.</p>
	<p>Parking Around Schools Complaints were made about parking around schools and it was queried whether Enforcement Officers were scheduled at certain times.</p>	<p>The Chair stated that she was of the understanding that there was a rota to tackle individual schools across the Borough. Problem areas should be reported so that these could be listed and tackled.</p>

		Councillor D Corfield referred to the contractor to undertake enforcement action. They had been in place from the latter part of last year. They were proactive and currently building a database.
	<p>Online/Digital Access/Social Media A resident referred to use of technology and the expectation of residents reporting issues online. The meeting were reminded that there were still large communities that did not have digital access.</p>	<p>The Chair referred to support from library services and that computers were available for people to use.</p> <p>Members held regular surgeries for people to attend. Ward Members could also be contacted by telephone.</p>
	<p>Shopping Arcade – Kent Street, Upper Gornal People were parking their cars and then travelling by bus into Wolverhampton. The parking area was always full and it was requested that signs for one hour parking should be displayed.</p>	Councillor D Corfield stated that the service road was part of the highway.
	<p>BP Garage - Wolverhampton Road It was queried what works were taking place in the vicinity.</p>	It was reported that the size of the shop was to be increased.

	Residents were already disturbed by the noise and music due to the 24-hour operation.	Residents were requested to document issues to gather evidence which would enable the 24-hour licence to be reviewed.
	Beacon Hill – Horses The grounds were being rented out for horses. The area was an eyesore up to the Blind Institute.	It was noted that the temporary structure could potentially require planning permission.
	Parked Vehicle Causing Obstruction The issue had been reported to the police a couple of months ago, but the vehicle had not been moved. Residents were finding it difficult to get in and out of their drives.	Sergeant R Treacy undertook to speak to the resident regarding the matter after the meeting.
	Pop Up Tips and Household Waste Recycling Reference was made to stopping of pop-up tips and progress on identifying alternative sites for household waste recycling was queried.	Councillor D Corfield indicated that alternative sites were still being looked at with a view to having one central location.
	Garden Fires A resident queried the policy on garden fires.	The Chair stated that she was of the understanding that people could only light fires in their garden between 7pm to 10 pm. If there were issues, they should be

		reported to Environmental Health for investigation.
7. Police and communities together	<p>Sergeant R Treacy provided information on his background and current role, including the set up of the policing structure. It was noted that the police worked reactively and did everything they could to tackle crime with limited resources. Work was undertaken on a partnership basis, and where issues concerned tenants, the Local Authority could be approached to take action such as eviction.</p> <p>An update for the Dudley area was then provided to include the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four dedicated police officers allocated to tackling motorbike issues. Upcoming operations targeting off road bikes to catch culprits was also mentioned. • Strategies to tackle shoplifting, anti-social behaviour, burglaries and theft of vehicles was explained and that intelligence was key. • Burglary surgeries were being held and the next one was due to be held on 25th June, 2025 at One Stop in Coseley. • The process for dealing with premises that dealt with illegal and counterfeit goods, including underage selling of vapes was explained. If premises did not work with the police and accept their recommendations, there was joint intervention in partnership with the Council to review the premises licence, and dependent on the circumstances, resulting in possible closure of the shop. • Positive action had been taken to combat anti-social behaviour incidents involving young people in the Sedgley area resulting in parents being warned. The Local Authority had agreed to install a deployable camera to capture such incidents. The police were able to remotely log on and see live footage. CCTV with audio facility had also been installed near Subway. 	

- Reference was made to Aladdin's Pizza and the intention of them seeking an extension to their licence to open until 4 am. Objections were made by the police and discussions were ongoing with the business to negotiate operating hours to align with other similar premises in the vicinity.
- Sergeant R Treacy referred to difficulties with youths in the area. Attempts were being made by the Police to engage with youths in Sedgley by offering them opportunities to distract them from causing a nuisance. A Youth Festival was being planned to offer young people various activities to divert their attention.
- Other issues being tackled by the Police included drugs. Brief details were provided on upcoming targets at premises in the Dudley North area.
- Speeding was an issue and patrols were out and about on Northway the previous week. Those caught speeding were either given a warning letter or prosecuted depending on their speed. Speeding issues at Cotwall End Road and Stickleby Lane were noted.
- A new technology system was now being used to map out issues and to alert patrols when they should be in the relevant areas.
- An additional pot of money had been received and extra police would be allocated to the Dudley North area.
- Police surgeries were held in each Ward, mainly at the library, at least once a month. These were advertised on Twitter or the West Midlands Police website.
- Work was continuing with primary schools to work with children each week in relation to the junior PCSO scheme.
- The police were looking for people to participate in Community Speedwatch. Two people per hour were needed for the scheme. Street presence acted as a deterrent.
- A fun day to be held at St Chad's School on 11th July and all sectors of the emergency services would be present.

	<p>A resident mentioned an issue regarding men that were drinking and intimidating, near the betting shop in Gornal Village.</p> <p>A resident referred to a recent meeting whereby the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Superintendent had been in attendance. During the discussions mention was made of the policing strategy and additional resources in the region of £200 million of which some would be used towards more police officer presence. Police officers in attendance stated that they were not aware of the additional funding.</p> <p>In response to a query, the police confirmed that ethnic data was recorded when capturing criminals.</p>
<p>8. Date of next meeting</p>	<p>The Chair read out a statement stating that a review of Forum meetings was currently underway and therefore dates of future meetings had not been set. A report on proposals will be submitted to Cabinet in July. The report will be available on the Council's website in due course.</p>