

Borough, Bankside and Walworth Community Council

MINUTES of the Borough, Bankside and Walworth Community Council held on Monday 29 September 2014 at 7.00 pm at Amigo Hall, St George's Cathedral, Lambeth Road (junction with St. George's Road), London SE1 6HR

PRESENT: Councillor Martin Seaton (Chair)
Councillor Claire Maugham
Councillor Maisie Anderson
Councillor Neil Coyle
Councillor Karl Eastham
Councillor Paul Fleming
Councillor Eleanor Kerlake
Councillor Lorraine Lauder MBE
Councillor Maria Linforth-Hall
Councillor Vijay Luthra
Councillor Darren Merrill
Councillor Adele Morris
Councillor David Noakes

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Stephanie Cryan
Councillor Chris Gonde

OFFICER SUPPORT: Matthew Hill (Public Realm Programme Manager)
Jay Daisi (Service Development Officer)
Andrea Allen (Senior Project Manager)
Pauline Bonner (Community Council Development Officer)
Gerald Gohler (Constitutional Officer)

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The chair welcomed councillors, members of the public and officers to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

There were apologies for absence from Councillors Dan Garfield and Rebecca Lury; and for lateness from Councillors Adele Morris and Karl Eastham.

3. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were none.

4. ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

The chair announced that there were the following stalls at the back of the hall, which people might be interested in:

- Private sector landlord licensing scheme
- London Mutual Credit Union
- Southwark finance and corporate services
- Southwark housing renewal
- Southwark carers
- Southwark volunteer centre
- Money management

The chair informed the meeting that there had been a supplemental agenda pack distributed to members regarding the appendices to the reports for items 15 and 17. He also drew people's attention to the responses to public questions, which could be found on page 11 of the agenda pack.

A resident said that the answer to the public question about rubbish bins on Walworth Road, that had been provided, was too general. The chair endorsed a suggestion that officers should follow up with the questioner if the answer received was too general, provided their contact details were known. Councillor Darren Merrill said as the cabinet member responsible he would follow up on this issue.

5. MINUTES

Councillors considered the draft minutes of the Borough, Bankside and Walworth Community Council meeting held on 23 July 2014.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2014 be agreed as a correct record, and signed by the chair.

6. YOUTH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Representatives from the Borough, Bankside and Walworth Youth Community Council reported back on the youth hub on the Walworth Road. Various, free activities had taken place there over the summer and had been a great success. Activities had included jewellery workshops, t-shirt design and spoken word workshops, as well as discussions on mental health and sexual harassment. Over 100 young people had regularly taken part and learned skills like time management. A poem written at one of the workshop was also read out to the meeting, and received applause and praise from the meeting.

In response to questions from councillors, the representative of the youth community council explained that during the sexual harassment workshop, young people had discussed how to define it in a school context and among young people, and how it could be tackled. Members of the youth community council said they would be happy to circulate the evaluation of the project to councillors.

The chair thanked the members of the youth community council for attending.

7. FOCUS ON OLDER PEOPLE

St George the Martyr Charity

Councillor Claire Maugham informed the meeting about the St George the Martyr Charity, which provided eligible pensioners (over the age of 62) with the following benefits: a pension of £225 a year, paid three times a year; outings; the chance to go on an annual holiday; a Christmas hamper and party; and an opportunity to apply for grants. There were also small grants made to non-pensioners. For further information, contact the charity by letter at Marshall House, 66 Newcomen Street SE1 1YT, or phone Paul Leverton or Rosemary Nolan on 020 7407 2994.

Southwark Carers

Caroline Fergusson from Southwark Carers informed the meeting that the organisation supported carers, whose role could be very stressful and draining. This support took the form of advice, respite of up to 30hrs a year, counselling services, and help with accessing benefits and services. For more information, contact Southwark Carers on 020 7708 4497, or visit <http://www.southwarkcarers.org.uk>.

In response to questions, Caroline said that since the changes to council tax and other benefits, the number of carers who were struggling had gone up. These carers also accessed the council's hardship fund. Caroline explained that there was also a carer budget of up to £100 - £300 per year designed to help carers take a break, available subject to assessments and to the level of care provided.

The meeting also heard that the council's centre of excellence for people with dementia in Cator Street would not open before 2015/2016, and would not be providing respite care. Rather, it was going to be a day centre.

At this point Councillor Adele Morris joined the meeting.

8. THEME: YOUR FINANCIAL HEALTH

Councillor Neil Coyle introduced this item saying that there was currently a national campaign against irresponsible lending led by members of the community. Payday lenders, especially on the Walworth Road, and irresponsible lending were a big problem in the borough, with the council and voluntary groups often having to help residents through financial difficulties. 7,000 people in the borough had become reliant on food banks, ten percent of whom were in work. There was cross-party agreement on this issue, but one of the problems was the presumption in favour of planning consent in planning law. This had led to extra problems in Southwark, e.g. the council had lost in court in a recent case, where it had refused a change of use applied for by a payday lender. The council was working closely with the credit union and other organisations on the issue.

Councillor Stephanie Cryan, deputy cabinet member for financial inclusion, explained that the council plan, which ran until 2018, had four core priorities: supporting people into work, helping businesses to grow and prosper, creating vibrant town centres and promoting financial well-being. To achieve this last goal, the council and its partners were giving

support to people with the most complex needs and families in difficult circumstances. These were designed to get them to the point where they could access employment support, were able to manage their finances independently and not be reliant on payday lenders. Further aims were a higher uptake of financial and debt advice services, and higher levels of credit union membership.

The council would be looking to ensure education, employment or training for every school leaver; support 5,000 local people into jobs; create 2,000 new apprenticeships and scholarships; and had created a childcare commission. Further aims included a £10 credit union account for every 11-year-old in the borough; improving the teaching of financial literacy and budgeting abilities in secondary schools; 10,000 more people signing on to a credit union; stopping the spread of pawnbrokers, payday lenders, betting shops and online betting; and encouraging business start ups. The council had recently introduced the living wage for all its workers and subcontractors and encouraged all local businesses to do the same. A “Universal support” pilot, which was run together with Lewisham and Lambeth was currently testing debt advice, and levels of employment and digital support. The work was being undertaken with Peckham job centre and the aim was to see 100 people a month. Furthermore, the council’s rightfully yours team had supported 3,639 residents and raised over £6m for them last year.

There was also a Southwark emergency support and hardship fund, for example for emergency utility bill payments. The council had also implemented an article 4 direction, which meant any new payday lending shops now had to come through the planning committee.

Rightfully yours

Jay Daisy, from the council’s revenue and benefits department, presented facts and figures regarding the financial health of the community council area. He explained that there had been five major changes to benefits which were affecting residents: changes to council tax benefit, housing benefit, the benefit cap, and the changes to the Social Fund and Disability Living Allowance. The council had been monitoring the impact of these: one in ten residents was affected by one or more of the changes; more than 6,500 in the Borough, Bankside and Walworth Community Council area. The council had put in place the hardship fund for the most vulnerable.

Jay explained that from April to August 2014, 317 of the most vulnerable people had been helped by the council’s hardship fund. While these numbers were small, about three times as many people were eligible for this fund. Second group of people helped by the council were those who were out of work, with a special emphasis on younger and older unemployed residents. For those who did not fall in those categories, there was the discretionary housing fund from central government, which Southwark had dispersed. The issue was how to get in touch with these residents in order to help them access the fund. Officers were therefore working with organisations like job centres. He urged anyone who was struggling financially and thought they might be entitled to benefits they were not receiving, or anyone who knew someone in that situation, to contact the rightfully yours team, on Tel: 020 7525 7434, email: rightfullyyours@southwark.gov.uk .

In answer to a question from the floor, Jay said that according to the council’s calculations, in Cathedrals ward 146 people would be affected by the changes to housing benefit, and 1,018 by changes to council tax benefit; in Chaucer these figures were 174 and 1,084; East Walworth 160 and 1,087; Faraday 176 and 1,231; and for Newington ward the figures

were 255 and 1,358. The figures were also available on the council's website.

At this point, Councillor Karl Eastham joined the meeting.

London Mutual Credit Union

Lucky Chandrasekera, Chief Executive of the London Mutual Credit Union (LMCU), introduced this item by saying that there had been a credit union in Southwark since 1982. While it was initially mainly for council employees, the organisation had since expanded into Lambeth, Camden and Westminster. Today the LMCU had 20,000 members, 10,000 of them in Southwark. Credit unions allowed people to borrow money, but also offered savings products. Only 3% of the UK population were members of a credit union compared with 75% in Ireland and 45% in the USA. In the last year, £12m in loans had been given to members. LMCU were looking to open a branch on the Walworth Road and were working with the council to try to find a site. The organisation was also working on creating junior savings accounts for every secondary school child in the borough. They were keen to promote these services and to expand the membership, and had delivered 200,000 flyers in the borough, for example via council rent statements. Lucky explained that central government looking at capping interest rates, and that the number of payday lenders had gone down, as the market seems to have shrunk. Part of the problem with payday lenders was the lack of awareness of their practices by their users. He went on to encourage people to join the credit union, which gave any profits made back to its members. Lucky explained that the credit union, too, had a payday loan product, but their lending was based on ethical lending.

Southwark Citizens Advice Bureau

Sally Causer, advice service manager, informed the meeting that there had been citizens' advice bureaux (CAB) in Southwark since 1939. Currently the CAB had 25 staff and 130 volunteers who provided advice in offices in Peckham and Bermondsey, with outreach sessions held on the Kingswood and Aylesbury estates. Southwark CAB was the busiest in London advising 13,000 people a year; 1,000 of which were seen at welfare reform events around the borough. Legal aid cuts, as well as the changes to the employment support allowance and personal independence payments had also had a big impact on people in the borough, and on how many people were attending CABs. The CAB also provided advice on discretionary housing payments and as part of the "Money Savvy Southwark" programme, which was funded by the Big Lottery Fund and provided advice around credit and store cards, but also around fuel bills, council tax and rent arrears, and around managing money and budgets. Part of this programme was training community champions, who went out into the community to sign-post people to the advice services offered by the CAB. Other support that was available related to homesearch and leaseholder advice.

In response to a question from the floor, Sally Causer said that the "Money Savvy Southwark" programme was aimed at educating people about their personal finances. It offered 1-2-1 support, debt advice, group workshops and advice for new tenants. There was also a target of 2,000 residents a year (10,000 in 5 years) receiving advice sessions. More information was available at www.moneysavvysouthwark.org.uk.

Councillor Eleanor Kerslake reported back on the efforts to open a credit union on Walworth Road, which was very much needed as the area had the highest concentration of payday lenders in the country. This had been raised by residents and by the youth community council. Officers and councillors were working with churches and the Walworth

Society on this project. An option of having a pop-up branch (for example in a church) was being explored. Councillors would bring the issue to council assembly. Residents could sign a petition against payday loans, join a credit union, and participate in a day of action to spread the word about credit unions.

The meeting heard that this was an incredibly important issue; everyone should join the credit union. Apart from loans, the credit unit offered favourable rates to savers.

The meeting heard that zero-hour contracts, cuts in legal aid and other employment law issues exacerbated the problem. The chair explained that he had been approached by representatives of payday lenders, but had decided the community council was not the appropriate forum for them to attend. This meeting was about discussing the possible credit union location, the advantages of saving and raising awareness of the problem of debt.

The meeting heard that the Mayor's "common good" fund was also available. Thanks to the council's actions no council tenants had been evicted, despite the borough being the 12th most affected by the benefits changes. There was a suggestion to launch a petition about payday loans.

The chair thanked all participants for their contributions.

9. COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cleaner Greener Safer (CGS) capital fund 2015/2016

Andrea Allen, senior project manager, informed the meeting that the CGS capital fund 2015/2016 was now officially open. Since its inception in 2003, the CGS capital fund had distributed £30m across 2,000 projects around the borough, which translated into £7.6m and 453 projects in the Borough, Bankside and Walworth area. The funds allocated in the coming financial year would be a borough-wide total of £1.8m, which translated into roughly £90,000 per ward, and into £450,000 for the Borough, Bankside and Walworth Community Council area. There was also the possibility of groups managing the projects themselves. The chair invited people who had questions about how to submit their projects to speak to Andrea or himself after the meeting.

Applications were invited until Friday 7 November 2014, with schemes scheduled to be agreed at the community council meeting on Saturday 7 February 2015.

Southwark Volunteer Centre

Shaun O'Regan, from Southwark Volunteer Centre, told the meeting that the centre was located in the Elephant and Castle Shopping Centre on the first floor. There was a wide range of volunteering roles available with hundreds of charities, and the centre was open for drop-ins from 10am to 4pm on Tuesdays, Wednesday and Thursdays. He went on to say that there were two projects ("Into work", "Future me") looking to place volunteers aged 18 to 24, which could be a great way to gain work experience through volunteering and so be a route into paid employment. Another project was aimed at over-25s who were unemployed and resident in the SE1, SE17 and SE16 areas. This project was trying to encourage people to get into volunteering as a way to get training. Shaun invited all to pop into the centre. For more information visit: www.volunteercentres.org.uk

Wheels for wellbeing

Valerie Oldfield, the organisation's community engagement officer, explained that it was a charity working with disabled people providing cycling sessions, specialist instructors and peer support at the velodrome in Herne Hill. The velodrome sessions took place every Monday from 11am to 1.30pm, were free and open to all ages and abilities. In 2014-2015, so far more than 1,000 disabled people across all impairment groups had taken part in the sessions.

Walworth's got talent

Father Andrew Moughtin-Mumby informed the meeting that this event would take place at St Peter's Walworth Church on 11 October 2014 from the afternoon. It was open to anyone living or working in SE17.

Employ me

Winsome Duncan informed the meeting that her organisation was running employability workshops for young people which have recently been opened up to adults as well, due to high demand. The training was based on her personal experience. She had also written a book, and was running training on how to start one's own business, including specialised advice for ex-offenders.

Local sporting success

Michelle, a resident, informed the meeting that her young son had just signed a contract with Queens Park Rangers. The meeting applauded this success. She went on to say that this underlined the importance of having play areas, and that she wanted to thank officers and councillors for providing the play area and playing fields at Comus House.

Green flag success for local parks

The chair informed the meeting that two local parks had won a green flag award: Surrey Square and Nursery Road Park.

Leader's question time

Councillor Claire Maugham informed the meeting that Southwark Council was holding a Leader's Public Question Time for the first time. This would allow the Southwark residents or workers to hold the Leader and the council's cabinet directly to account. The council was asking anyone who lived or worked, or was interested in Southwark to suggest a question about the council for the Leader, Councillor Peter John, to respond to. This free event would be taking place on the evening of 22 October at City Hall.

Council's budget for the year ahead

Councillor Maugham informed the meeting that over the past four years the council had had the equivalent of around £90m in funding cuts – which was about a quarter of its total budget. It was also likely that the council would lose a further £70m of funding over the next three years as the cuts continued. With all this in mind, the council needed residents' help to decide how best to spend what is in the budget. Every year, since 2011, the council had asked for residents' views on the council's budget. So, in the coming months, the council would be consulting with residents across Southwark to hear their views. As part of this the council would once again be carrying out a consultation exercise at each of the community councils, at the November/December round of meetings, to hear what residents thought about the tough choices the council will have to make.

Police officers in the borough

The meeting heard that Councillor Michael Situ, cabinet member for environment, recycling, community safety and volunteering, had started an online petition to urge the Mayor of London to increase the number of police officers in the borough. Councillors were encouraging everyone to sign the online petition, which was on the Southwark council website.

Health of the borough

Councillors Rebecca Lury and David Noakes would be discussing outreach consultations about the health of the borough at a future meeting.

Charter of Principles – new homes consultation

Councillor Claire Maugham informed the meeting that the council was currently consulting residents on a charter of principles which would set the framework for how it would consult with residents on the delivery of 11,000 new council homes. This consultation was the beginning of the council's conversation with residents about housing in Southwark. The council wanted this framework to be in place before the next conversation began in spring 2015, and the decision on the charter would be made by cabinet in November. The charter had been drafted drawing on examples of good practice and lessons learnt across the council, and built on the work during the housing commission. The closing date was 13 October 2014.

10. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

There were none.

11. COMMUNITY CONVERSATION ON DOMESTIC ABUSE AND COMMUNITY CONVERSATION ON WOMEN'S SAFETY CHARTER

Eva Gomez, Safer Communities Team Manager, informed the meeting about two projects which her team was leading on: the domestic abuse strategy and the women's safety charter.

The domestic abuse strategy was currently being consulted on. Domestic abuse was defined as an incident or pattern of incidents of violent, abusive, controlling or coercive behaviour. These could happen between family members, intimate partners or ex-partners irrespective of gender or sexual orientation. It could take different forms: emotional, physical, psychological, financial or sexual. While men were also affected, the vast majority of people suffering domestic abuse were women. One in four women experienced domestic abuse in their lifetimes, which is why Southwark prioritised its resources and support on women. Nationally one incident of domestic abuse is reported every minute and 750,000 children witnessed or experienced domestic abuse every year. There was a paper and an online questionnaire; face-to-face consultation with practitioners, stakeholders and people who had experienced abuse would also be taking place.

The women's safety charter was about combating sexual harassment in bars and clubs which went unchallenged a lot of the time and was sometimes trivialised. The council was committed to taking this seriously, and was currently consulting on this. The first step in this would be a voluntary code of conduct under which restaurants, bars and clubs would

challenge unacceptable behaviour by some men. More information was available at www.southwark.gov.uk/womenssafety.

Responding to questions from the floor, Eva said in terms of domestic abuse, the council had commissioned a voluntary 26-week programme for perpetrators. There would also be consultation with the perpetrators, including adolescent perpetrators who abused their parents or grand-parents. As part of the charter, the council would work alongside the venues, to raise awareness and to train bar staff to intervene and log incidents. Eva went on to say that she would be happy to come back to a future meeting to give an update on both topics. Information on the subject had been published into Southwark Life, but people could also contact her on 020 7525 7246 or at eva.gomez@southwark.gov.uk.

Councillor Maria Linforth-Hall thanked Eva's team for the training courses and information provided to councillors and residents.

12. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The following public questions were raised.

1. Why were there no representatives of the council present at the annual general meeting of the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)?

Councillor Neil Coyle responded that the CCG was independent of the council and that councillors did not have representation on the body. Councillor David Noakes explained that there were links between the council and the CCG, through the Health and Wellbeing Board. The CCGs were also invited to the health scrutiny meeting, so there was dialogue between them and the council.

2. What is being done about the construction site at Stead Street? The pavement has all but disappeared and the street has become narrow, so cars, vans and especially fire engines cannot get through.

Councillor Darren Merrill said that he would speak to the resident and pursue the matter, as it fell into his cabinet brief.

The following questions were submitted in writing:

3. When it rains the water runs down Madron Street SE17 into the Old Kent Road. When it is not raining the water still flows into the Old Kent Road. Who is responsible for this flow of water and what is being done to stem the flow?
4. If a Southwark resident has no income or a very low income private work pension, would they qualify for any council tax benefit?
5. Why is parking allowed in East Street, particularly on Mondays without permit? Wardens are not giving out tickets to people without them.
6. What section 106 money has been granted to or drawn down by Peabody Trust over the last 5 years?

The meeting also heard a view that the metropolitan police should reimburse the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLAM) for the time of the nurses who were working on the street triage project, which had been discussed at the previous community council meeting.

13. COMMUNITY COUNCIL QUESTION TO COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

The chair explained that because of the Leader's Question Time meeting on 22 October 2014, the next regular Council Assembly meeting would be on 26 November 2014. He therefore proposed to hold the question agreed at the previous community council meeting on 23 July 2014 in abeyance.

RESOLVED:

That the following question be submitted to the next council assembly meeting on 26 November 2014:

“Are the changes to local NHS services, increased waiting times and access to treatment impacting on the council services, and what is that impact?”

14. LOCAL PARKING AMENDMENTS

14. ESTATE PARKING SCHEME - TABARD GARDENS

Note: This is an executive function.

Councillors considered the information in the report.

The meeting heard that Tabard Gardens tenants and residents association (TRA) had raised important questions with ward councillors about the measures proposed in the report only that afternoon, which officers had been unable to address due to the short time since they had been raised.

A motion to defer this item to a future meeting was moved, seconded and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That this item be deferred to a future meeting, in order for the concerns recently raised by residents to be responded to by officers.

14. GLENGALL TERRACE

Note: This is an executive function.

Councillors considered the information in the report.

A motion to approve this item was moved, seconded and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That the following local traffic and parking amendment, detailed in the appendices to the report, be approved for implementation subject to the outcome of any necessary statutory procedures:

- Glengall Terrace – remove two parking bays that are partially on the footway, relocate the bay on the south side so that it is entirely on the carriageway and install double yellow lines in the remaining length of the street.

15. TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT REPORT: NEWCOMEN STREET

Note: This is an executive function.

Councillors considered the information in the report.

A motion to approve this item was moved, seconded and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That the following non-strategic traffic and parking arrangements, detailed in the drawings attached to the report, be approved for implementation subject to any necessary statutory procedures:

- Newcomen Street - Retain 'temporary' zebra crossing as permanent facility

16. LYTHAM STREET PERMANENT CLOSURE

Councillors considered the information set out in the report. The chair pointed out that the site of the scheme was in Faraday ward.

RESOLVED:

That the community council is supportive of the proposal to make permanent the closure of Lytham Street to motor vehicles, following a one year experimental closure.

17. QUIETWAY CYCLING PROPOSALS

Councillors considered the information set out in the report.

The chair allowed some contributions from the floor. The meeting heard that there were concerns about the scope of the consultation for site J. There had been no survey of the usage of the gate. Opening the gates to motorbikes and mopeds would have a negative impact on safety. If an alternative through Swann Street was considered, there should be consultation on this.

Matt Hill, public realm programme manager, explained that in terms of site H (Rothsay Street) the projections were that only 15 vehicles an hour would be displaced from Tower Bridge Road during peak hours. In terms of Site J, Matt explained that in officers' opinion the consultation process had not been flawed. The consultation boundaries had been agreed with councillors, and there had only been a 10% response rate. The changes to the gates were a difficult "on-balance" decision, but potential motorbike activity would be monitored. He also explained that the Mayor of London's cycling commissioner had given a commitment that TfL (Transport for London) would fund enforcement action and remedial action, if a large number of motorbikes did use the altered gate.

The chair encouraged residents attending to submit their comments about the schemes to their ward councillors or to write directly to the cabinet member. The meeting also heard that the local member of the London Assembly had also been involved in looking at the sites.

RESOLVED:

That the community council feed back the following comments regarding the individual sites:

- Site H: There had been a considerable number of comments from residents about this site, and concerns had been expressed about the proposed changes. In particular, it was feared that these would push traffic into Alice Street from Tower Bridge Road. Residents of the Jam Factory had expressed concerns about possible rat-running and restricted access for emergency vehicles, as the road was very narrow already. Decima and Meakin estates residents had raised concerns about creating a bottleneck in Alice Street, which would impact on wheelchair and pushchair users especially. This would need looking at closely.
- Site I: there was general agreement with the plans set out for site I.
- Site J: over the last month, there had been concerns raised by residents of Trinity Square about the changes to the gates at Trinity Street. These were supported by ward councillors. Changes to / widening of the gates would increase motorcycle traffic through the square, and no evidence to the contrary had been presented in the report. Furthermore, the recommendation in the report was not consistent with the proposal that had been consulted on. There was a possible alternative via Swann Street, which the cycle path could take. Ward councillors had given residents their full support in opposing any measures which would undermine the purpose of the gates.
- Site K: councillors were satisfied with the measures, and had not received any negative representations regarding the plans for this site.
- Site L: ward councillors said that they had not been approached about this item with negative comments. In addition to the proposals, residents should be consulted about moving the zebra crossing on the corner of Great Suffolk Street and Toulmin Street. Another issue which needed to be addressed in the area was people cutting across pavements at the corner

of Weber Street.

- Site M: councillors were supportive of the plans set out for site M.

Meeting ended at 9.40 pm

CHAIR:

DATED: