



Walworth Community Council

Youth Focus

Main Meeting

These minutes are subject to approval at the next meeting

Monday December 15 2008

InSpire – in the Crypt at St Peter's Church, Liverpool Grove, Walworth SE17 2HH

Please note all text in italics is an addition to the minutes after the meeting.

Present

Councillors: Abdul Mohamed (Chair), Lorraine Lauder (Vice-Chair), James Gurling, Jelil Ladipo, Martin Seaton and Jane Salmon

The meeting opened at 7.05pm.

1. **Apologies:** Councillors Ladipo (lateness), Bates, McNeill and Pidgeon.
3. **Notification of any items the Chair deems urgent:** None were notified.
4. **Disclosure of Members' interests and dispensations:** None made
5. **Chair's announcements:**
 - There will be a resolution in support of the bid for Burgess Park to the Mayor during Members' Decisions.
 - Meg Hillier MP, Parliamentary Undersecretary at the Home Office will speak.
6. **Confirmation of minutes from the last main meeting**
RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on October 1 and October 29 2008 be agreed.

7. **Local dance troupe freestyle entertain residents**

Meg Hillier MP speaks:

Meg Hillier said that she had heard about the Walworth Community Council Youth Focus meeting from Harriet Harmon MP, who had encouraged her to attend. Further, she said that she had received a phone message from the Prime Minister, asking her to pass on the message that 'it is as unacceptable to carry a knife as a gun'. The prevention work carried out with young people in Southwark is a beacon to the rest of London, so Dan Lafayette is here from the Home Office to observe.

There are two strands to dealing with knife crime: the need for the authorities to be tougher and imposition of longer terms of imprisonment for carrying knives, and then dealing with longer term issues of diversion from crime. It should be noted that anyone carrying a knife is 3 times more likely to be a victim of crime than someone unarmed. The Home Office has provided some small funding for weekend Youth Clubs, and she was here as the Home Secretary's ears and eyes for the views of Walworth young people and residents. She also pointed out that 97% of young people never came to the attention of the authorities.

The Minister was asked the following questions:

- Nicole asked why young people shouldn't carry knives, when the police carry guns. Superintendent Olisa said that most police officers do not carry guns, and those that do are highly trained. Guns are only made for one purpose: to kill. They are not for tricks, and never pointed at people
- Mr Noble asked why children died in Comus House
- Rachel Lee said she was a youth club leader on the Brandon estate; many TRA halls stand empty, and these could be used for Youth Clubs. It is a struggle to run a Youth Club and to get funding. Meg Hillier responded that too many TRA halls and school halls are not used, when schools are used, parents are grateful. Everyone benefits from the proper use of available facilities. She was looking to see how well existing programmes work with offenders, but there is a need for facilities where young people can be warm, safe and dry
- Ethan said that people carry guns because of the movies. Meg Hillier responded that people make their own choices; it is not right to carry a gun. The Government was trying to get guns off the street.
- Norma said that she was the mother of seven sons, and that the family network should be brought back, so that children always have a member of the extended family to go to after school. Meg Hillier responded that the world was changing, but extended families are important, and so was appropriate housing for families
- Brenton Smith asked what the official view was on the source of 'street guns'. In response, Meg Hillier said that the supply of guns was connected to the illegal drugs trade. Some 'street guns' are converted replica guns, and may be dangerous to the shooter. Some are shipped in from abroad. Superintendent Olisa said that 'street guns' are mostly converted replicas or starting pistols
- Councillor Seaton said that he was one of ten children, and now has his own family. It seems that young people are always talked about within a context of violence; it would be better to talk of young people's achievements. Young people should be asked to talk about the environment and how they would change it
- Mr Beadell asked why with CCTV it was not possible to catch offenders on his estate. He had spent 40 minutes filling out forms to no end. Meg Hillier said that there was a central control room in Southwark, and this should help police to catch criminals. The Safer Neighborhood Teams should be supporting tenants and residents to live peaceful lives. Superintendent Olisa said that the police did everything to use CCTV tapes

8. Making the streets safer: current police priorities, Stop and Search, Youth Offenders Team work in Walworth – Superintendent Olisa and Safer Neighbourhood Team police officers

Superintendent Olisa explained that he was representing the Borough Commander at the meeting.

The police need to protect young people from violence; 2000 Stop & Searches were carried out each month as part of this duty, but this level of police intervention runs a real risk of alienating young people. However, Southwark's police incur the lowest level of complaints in London. Any complaints made about stop & searches are investigated by community intermediaries.

- Brenton Smith asked if there had been a reduction in crime since starting the Stop & Search campaign in these numbers. He was told that gun crime was down 40%, knife crime down 17% etc. However, perceptions of the levels of crime are more important to change
- Councillor Gurling expressed concern that certain communities could be targeted for Stop & Search. He was told that Stop & Searches were intelligence led; it was unlikely that middle-aged women would be stopped and searched. It might be that certain categories of young people were searched at certain times of day. A number of knives have been seized, and the message is getting across that those who carry knives are likely to be stopped and caught

9. Work of the Action SE17 Group – Charlotte Benstead

The Action SE17 group has been started due to the shocking level of youth violence; its aim is to get youth groups, the police and the community together to pool resources towards reducing crime. SE17 focuses on prevention, diversion and education work. Only 12% of crime is committed by young people, not 45% as most people think.

To deal with 'postcode' gang crime, some Walworth school children are chaperoned home from school. The group is negotiating with Tenants' & Residents' Associations to arrange more inter generational activities.

- A resident asked why the Amersham Youth Club has been knocked down. Richard McDermott responded that investment has been made in other youth activities; there is a huge range of youth activities on the Aylesbury estate.
- A resident said that youths from Missendon will not go to other clubs as they do not like the young people at other clubs. In addition, it is dark and frightening to go out when it is dark, especially on the Heygate estate. In response, the meeting was told there is a magazine of activities, and outreach workers who will chaperone young people to activities if they are unable to travel by themselves for whatever reason.

10. What is happening to the William IV public house? – Richard McDermott

The pub will be demolished and be rebuilt as a café and youth training facility. Everyone at the meeting was asked to fill in a questionnaire about the options for the refurbished building.

- A resident asked if the new homes being built on the Aylesbury estate would have youth facilities, and was told that youth provision on the estate will be better than before and will be available and suitable.

11. The Council's Youth Service: what we offer and the Youth Opportunities Fund – Julie Jacobs

Julie told residents that the Youth Service supports young people and those with special needs. Amongst other things, the service provides music training and supports young people to gain medals under the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. On the Brandon estate, there are meetings of the Youth Forum and a Girl's Club

The new Aylesbury Youth Club will be smaller, and youth workers will ensure everyone on the premises enjoys a safe environment. Connexions provide advice on employment, housing and personal matters.

The Youth Opportunities Fund has £300, 000 this year to fund youth activities; these activities are selected by young people themselves as part of Youth Panels Applications for funding for youth activities should be made with the backing of a Walworth TRA, a school or a church.

Martin from the Walworth Youth Forum told residents that the Forum had started in September/October 2009, and meets at the London College of Communications at 6:30pm every alternate Friday. All young people over the age of 13 are welcome. £3,000 has been set aside for the hire of the room at the College, and laptops to produce documents, etc, but it is not enough, as there is a need for staff training, food and trips to visit schemes elsewhere.

- Councillor Seaton asked how many Tenant & Resident Associations had applied for funding, but this was not known.
- A further comment was that it was critical that young people apply for money, and go for interview.
- The dance group who entertained the meeting, 'Freestyle' did not get any money, but they were told that there were applications for 3 times the available funding.

Michael Groce and three young people performed one of Michael's poems

12. Divide into Workshops to seek priorities

Residents, young people and officers divided into groups led by Charlotte Benstead, Superintendent Olisa, Richard Dermott and Julie Jacobs.

13. Feedback from workshop leadersAction SE17 - Charlotte Benstead

- Young people felt least safe in Burgess Park and in the Old Kent Road
- A larger school was a good idea
- The Police & Community Support Officers are seen as positive
- Young people felt they were criminalised too easily, and then were stuck with a criminal record

The police – Sergeant Mark Stevens

- Young people found that it was hard to contact the police: they found police stations daunting and it would be better if the experience of dealing with staff at the counter was easier
- Searches should be targeted, not random
- Teachers should be more involved in targeting for stop & searches
- The telephone numbers for the Safer Neighbourhood Teams were not well publicised
- Mr Noble said that he was given a false name and physically assaulted by the police; Members should tell the police not to do this any more

The Youth Service – Julie Jacobs

- Young people do not know where to go
- There is a lack of understanding and access to youth activities
- The Aylesbury NDC and Southwark Council list available activities during the summer holidays. It would be helpful if there were termly lists of activities
- There is a need for activities for the under 11s. Activities need to be focused on age groups.

The 'Whatever' website is at <http://www.whtvr.org.uk/> and is full of activities open to young people, including sport, music and help with gaining employment. Anyone can post events for young people in Southwark on this site.

The William IV – Richard McDermott

- Facilities need to be provided for young people of all ages and in all areas
- The management needs to be strong
- Training needs should be linked to other training
- Security needs to be safe inside, and there needs to be safe routes for all to the facility

Eva sang to the Community Council**Member Decisions**

Decision: That Miss Elizabeth Sharples be appointed to the Governing body of Surrey Square Foundation Infants School.

Action: Pam Rayment

Decision: That Members endorse a resolution on Burgess Park as follows: 'The Walworth Community Council fully supports the Council's submission to the Mayor of London for a £2 million grant from the 'Mayor's Premier Park' fund for the refurbishment of Burgess Park. A vibrant, safe and welcoming Burgess Park is essential to the quality of life of the residents of the Walworth Community Council area and has a vital role to play in the regeneration of south-central London.'

Action: Jon Sheaff

Signed:

Date: