



## **BERMONDSEY COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

MINUTES of the Bermondsey Community Council held on Wednesday 18 January 2012 at 6.00 pm at The Oxford and Bermondsey Youth Club, 3 Webb Street, London, SE1 4RP

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**PRESENT:** Councillor Linda Manchester (Chair)  
Councillor Graham Neale (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Anood Al-Samerai  
Councillor Michael Bukola  
Councillor Mark Gettleson  
Councillor Paul Kyriacou  
Councillor Eliza Mann  
Councillor Nick Stanton

**OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT:** Councillor Richard Livingstone

**OFFICER SUPPORT:** Forid Ahmed (Neighbourhood Coordinator)  
Matt Hill (Public Realm Programme Manager)  
Gill Kelly (Community Council Development Officer)  
Barbara-Ann Overwater (Senior Planning Policy Officer)  
Gerald Gohler (Constitutional Officer)

### **1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME**

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

### **2. APOLOGIES**

There were apologies for absence from Councillor Denise Capstick; and for lateness from Councillors Mark Gettleson, Eliza Mann and Paul Kyriacou.

### **3. ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT**

There were none.

#### **4. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS**

Members declared interests regarding the following agenda items:

##### **14. LOCAL PARKING AMENDMENTS**

Councillor Nick Stanton, personal and non-prejudicial, in relation to the local parking amendment on Mandela Way, as he visited the depots located there to pick up packages and mail.

#### **5. MINUTES**

##### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2011 be agreed as an accurate record of that meeting and signed by the chair.

#### **6. COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

At this point, Councillor Paul Kyriacou joined the meeting.

##### **Southwark Civic Association**

Gary Magold, representing the Southwark Civic Association, explained that the Civic Association had been in existence since 1995, and that it awarded honours on three different levels: letter of commendation, freedom of the old metropolitan boroughs and life-time achievement. There were also specialised "of the year" awards. This year the association wanted to honour people who had shown acts of civic engagement or courage during or after the disturbances in August 2011. He encouraged all those in attendance to submit their nominations by 31 January 2012, either in paper form or electronically via the website.

##### **Elephant and Castle Opportunity Area supplementary planning document (SPD)**

Barbara-Ann Overwater, from the council's planning policy team, informed the meeting that a consultation about this document was currently ongoing. The document was aimed at providing a framework, against which future planning applications, traffic schemes and other developments would be assessed. She encouraged people to give their feedback electronically or on the questionnaires provided until 7 February 2012, or to come along to the Walworth Community Council on 21 January 2012 at 1pm, at the Walworth Academy, where this document would be discussed in workshops. Responding to questions from the floor, Barbara-Ann said that the consultation on the leisure centre was independent from this consultation, but that the SPD document would take account of the leisure centre development. The meeting heard that the separate consultation on the leisure centre would finish on 23 January 2012.

Councillors asked Barbara-Ann to note, and add to the feed back, that there was a real shortage of family-sized, affordable housing, and that this should be included in the document.

### **Recycling / Waste-collections**

Ian McGeough, from Veolia, informed the meeting about the new processing and recycling facility off the Old Kent Road, which featured the following main components. The centre itself which sorted and recycled the waste, the recycling discovery centre for children at Key Stage 2, and a permanent exhibition/meeting space, which community groups could use to meet. He reminded the meeting that the facility at Manor Place was now closed.

### **LINK Southwark**

Sec-Chan Hoong informed the meeting that LINK Southwark were looking for people to join their leadership group. This group would be in charge of overseeing the transition to Health Watch which would scrutinise health and social care provision and establishments in the borough, including hospitals, care homes and GP surgeries. Health Watch would also have the power to ask for written replies from the organisations regarding problems it had raised. The leadership group would operate like a board of trustees, and support the organisation in its overarching aim to improve health and social care in the borough. She encouraged attendees to pick up one of the recruitment packs.

## **7. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS (IF ANY)**

There were none.

## **8. COMMUNITY SAFETY UPDATE**

PS Brown from South Bermondsey Safer Neighbourhoods Team (SNT) fed back on recent activities and priorities of this team:

- Operations targeting untaxed vehicles, and those without insurance
- Focus on a small number of young people causing problems in the Blue, which had led to 2 arrests

He asked people to ring the new 101 number for any non-urgent enquiries, and sign up to email updates by the individual SNTs.

Responding to a question from the floor about cycle racks being moved to the side of the building at the White Cube gallery, he agreed that it was important to design out crime, but that he could not comment on this particular case. He would inform the local crime prevention officer, who would be better placed to comment.

He went on to apologise for the long wait a resident had experienced on the 101 number, and said that more staff were being transferred to this unit, and therefore the service would improve.

## **9. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OVERVIEW**

The chair introduced the panel:

- Dr Lorraine Radford
- DS Davies, Metropolitan Police
- Pauline Campbell and Angela D'Urso, Safer Southwark Partnership
- Neil Dickens, Broken Rainbow

- Ntokozo Dlova, Bede House

Dr Radford gave an introduction to the issue of domestic violence which she said was rooted in inequality and profoundly affected individuals, especially children, but also the whole of the community. She went on to say that a quarter of women and a sixth of men would experience domestic violence over the course of their lives, and that anyone could be affected, whatever their sexual orientation, although the most common form was men inflicting domestic violence on women. She went on to give the Home Office definition of domestic violence which is: "An incident of threatening or abusive behaviour in the context of a close relationship or in the family." Domestic violence was about coercion and control, and 20 women a week were killed by their partners in the UK. She went on to illustrate the impact of domestic violence on children with an example.

DS Davis, from the Metropolitan police, explained that the Domestic Violence Unit in Southwark was one of the busiest in the country, and dealt with "honour-based" violence, hate crime and domestic violence. She said that one of the problems the team came up against was an unwillingness by members of the public, such as neighbours to come forward and make witness statements, and that prosecutions sometimes fails because of this.

Pauline Campbell and Angela D'Urso, from the Safer Southwark Partnership, explained that different agencies worked in partnership which involved so-called MARACs (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) about cases of domestic violence, and possible interventions. Pauline Campbell reiterated that family members are deeply affected by domestic violence, and that they often do not want to get the police involved. She went on to say that legal advice and support was available for victims. Angela D'Urso said that it was important that services had an individual approach and that they provided appropriate one-to-one support. There were also independent advocates, who advocated on behalf of the victims. From the 1 April 2012 there would be a 24 hour service which was not the police, so that victims were more likely to come forward. There would also be a perpetrator programme to fight the cycle of violence.

Neil Dickens from Broken Rainbow outlined that domestic violence also occurred in the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community, and that there were special issues such as societal and internalised homophobia, which stopped people from coming forward or regarding themselves as having been the victims of domestic violence. Other issues which may come up were: blackmail, feeling less supported, isolation, not being believed. Broken Rainbow ran a helpline funded by the Home Office, and other projects to support domestic abuse survivors from the LGBT community by for example working out individual safety strategies with them. About 25% of gay men and lesbians had experienced domestic violence, but the percentage among trans-people was as high as 50%. For more information contact Broken Rainbow: [www.broken-rainbow.org.uk](http://www.broken-rainbow.org.uk)

Ntokozo Dlova, from Bede House explained that the organisation was based at 351 Southwark Park Road and had programmes for supporting victims of domestic abuse and hate crime, and was open from Monday to Friday 9am-5pm. She emphasised that the organisation did not try to sway those they helped to follow a particular course of action, and offered groups for survivors of domestic abuse. No appointments were needed, people could just pop in. For more information, contact Bede House: 020 7237 3881 or [www.bede-house.org](http://www.bede-house.org).

## **10. PANEL ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE - A QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION WITH RESIDENTS**

The panel then discussed issues and questions from the floor.

Dr Radford explained that the research evidence for programmes for the perpetrators was inconclusive, as the evidence was patchy. However, a programme in Scotland which had put perpetrators on probation had resulted in a decrease of violent activity. Angela D'Urso explained that sometimes the perpetrators would not change despite being in programmes, which in a way was an outcome, too, as it facilitated the decision to get out for his partner and other family. Ntokozo Dlova, from Bede House, said it was important to remember that domestic violence was not about anger, but about control. Neil Dickens, from Broken Rainbow, added that the victim was usually blamed by the perpetrator and also mistakenly blamed themselves.

Responding to a question from the floor, the panel responded that those under 18 could protect themselves by means of a child protection order which was made by social services. For over 18s, an injunction could be applied for. Speakers emphasised that it was a question of social responsibility for people to take steps against domestic abuse, including informing social services or the police. The panel also agreed that while no direct causality between alcohol and drug use and domestic violence could be established, alcohol and drug use were one of the warning flags which would be discussed at MARACs. Sometimes anti-social behaviour by young people had its roots in domestic abuse, and alcohol and drug use.

The panel explained that the government was currently consulting on a proposal on whether the authorities should have the right to warn the new partner of someone who had engaged in domestic violence, and that support for the wider family was not possible because of strained budgets – the focus was on those directly affected.

Responding to further questions, the panel agreed that the most important thing for victims of domestic violence was their safety and that the victims should not wait, for example for a suspected mental health condition to have been diagnosed in the perpetrator. In terms of the perpetrator being a regular visitor, rather than actually a resident in a building, the meeting heard that the police could take action as soon as any assaults took place, and ASBOs and other measures could be put into place to effectively ban the perpetrator from the property.

The panel advised that if a perpetrator tried to continue the abuse via custody visits, a solicitor should be involved, which was a good idea in any custody case. Independent, free advice was also available from Women's Aid. In terms of reclaiming the rights to your property, after having had to flee an abusive situation, agencies would advocate on behalf of the victim to ensure they could return to the property, which could then also be fitted with extra security. On the whole, the sooner the victim left, the sooner the abuse would end, and more time there would be to re-establish her/himself.

## **11. BOWEL CANCER AWARENESS**

At this point, Councillor Paul Kyriacou left the meeting.

Clare Stephenson, from Bowel Cancer UK, spoke to the meeting about the importance of testing for bowel cancer. She said the organisation had been in existence for 25 years and that they had a support line staffed by nurse and open Monday-Friday.

In terms of the disease itself, survival rates of those cases which were picked up early were 93%, but unfortunately only 7% of cases were early diagnoses. The disease affected men and women equally, and there was a great lack of awareness of the symptoms and risk factors.

The symptoms for bowel cancer were bleeding, blood in the stool, bowl habits changing, weight loss, or lumps or bumps in the abdomen. If someone displayed any of these symptoms they should visit their GP. In terms of the risk factors, these were age (50+) and a family history of Crohn's disease, polyps in the colon and type 2 diabetes.

The good news was that everyone could decrease their risk factors by: reducing their meat intake (especially of processed meat), eating more fruit and vegetables, for example beans, exercising and drinking enough water. Furthermore, smoking cessation and being screened for polyps in the bowel were important. People aged 60-69 were able to pick up free testing kits from their GPs. Responding to questions from the floor, Clare explained that only 60-69 year-olds were eligible for a free testing kit, but that anyone who had the symptoms she had outlined should visit their GP.

## **12. HIGHWAYS DEVOLVED CAPITAL FUNDING FOR 2012/13**

Attendees had left feedback on maps of the area during the break. The chair said this would inform the schemes which would be proposed by officers.

## **13. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The following question was submitted in writing during the meeting:

"While I welcome the redevelopment of Bermondsey, the White Cube Gallery, in what would appear to be an aesthetic or poor design issue, have agreed with officers to remove the cycle racks from the front of the gallery and have provided replacements to the side. Would members place a stay on this, get the coverings removed from the racks, until the Police have reported back from a position of 'designing out crime'."

Councillor Gettleson commented that he had only become aware of this issue that day, and said that it was questionable the bike racks were safer at the side of the building. He would look into this.

A question was raised about the proposed merger of Bermondsey and Rotherhithe Community Councils, and whether this would make them less effective. Councillor Anood Al-Samerai responded that members of this community council agreed with this, and were opposed to the merger, and to taking local planning functions away from community councils. They were of the opinion that community councils were very important.

A question was raised about the recent planning committee which had decided on the London Bridge redevelopment, and the closure of certain streets as part of the scheme.

Councillor Gettleson explained that the scheme which was agreed was more beneficial than the one which had been suggested before the intervention of local members; and that members and residents would have to watch carefully that the money generated by the scheme was spent as agreed. Councillor Al-Samerai said that the assurances from Network Rail which councillors had managed to get were a real achievement, and that they had negotiated the best deal possible.

**ACTION:** Chair to invite TfL to a future community council meeting to talk about proposed changes to traffic in the London Bridge area due to the refurbishment of London Bridge station.

A question was raised about the traffic congestion in Spa Road, where there were four new estates which created extra traffic flows, with large lorries parked on either side.

Councillor Manchester responded that she had raised this issue with the department, and they had had to wait until the building work was finished to put in place traffic calming measures. A programme was in place looking at the pedestrianisation of the arch, and she assumed that the traffic calming was part of these works. The meeting heard that rat running was also a major issue of concern in Spa Road.

Simon Hughes, MP asked that

- The community council formally opposes the merger of the community council areas
- The community council supports the proposed merger of Lewisham and Southwark Colleges, which would give financial security to Southwark College, and safeguard having a further education college in Bermondsey

He said he also wanted to congratulate all those involved who had put together the event around cycling safety at the Tate, and asked whether more such events could be put on.

#### **14. LOCAL PARKING AMENDMENTS**

Executive Function

##### **RESOLVED:**

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

- Mandela Way – proposed time-limited parking bay

## 15. SOUTHWARK'S BUDGET FOR 2012/13

Councillor Richard Livingstone, Cabinet member for finance, resources and community safety informed the meeting about the budget for the next financial year which would be considered at the Council Assembly meeting on 29 February 2012. He said that Southwark was facing heavy cuts in the grant from central government, and it was more affected than other parts of the country, because the proportion of its budget, which it receives from central government was larger as a proportion than other authorities. He said that there were more cuts to come, but that the three-year framework of the cuts which had been agreed last year was standing, and that there were therefore no new cuts.

The proposal would go to cabinet on 23 January 2012 for the first reading, and for final approval by cabinet on 7 February 2012. He encouraged people to submit their views.

Responding to a question from members, Councillor Livingstone explained that, the council's contingency fund was £5.5m, and the council would not be adding anything to this year, but would take some money from the council's reserve to be used in the current budget.

The meeting heard that Southwark Cyclists were going to gather in front of the next Council Assembly meeting, as they had not been able to bring a deputation, that many residents did not want the proposed community council mergers, and that the budget should be devolved to the community councils themselves with the cuts being decided there.

Councillor Livingstone responded that five deputations were likely to be heard at the next meeting of Council Assembly, while normally only three were heard. He went on to say that community councils were facing significant cuts, which amounted to a 25% cut over the next 3 years, in line with the budget reduction of the council as a whole. The Democracy Commission had put forward recommendations, in light of these cuts. It had been a difficult decision, but this was deemed to be the best fit and had been based on which areas had the most cross-border issues in common. There was also going to be a new Cleaner Greener Safer Revenue fund, which represented a new power given to Community Councils.

Committee members suggested that the community council budget should have been devolved down to community councils which could have taken the decision on which parts of their budgets they want to cut themselves. This was supported by some speakers from the floor. Views were expressed that the demographics of the proposed areas were not the same, and that Bermondsey could lose out. Members raised questions about why Camberwell and Dulwich community councils were to remain in their current form. A resident raised the possibility of getting sponsorship or Section 106 money to help fund community councils. The meeting also heard that more figures were needed to inform people's opinion.

Councillor Livingstone reminded the meeting that this decision had not yet been taken. He said there should be parity in terms the number of meetings, and a solution had to be found which fit all areas. Developers had contributed significantly to the area by putting on apprenticeship schemes, and by providing local jobs. In terms of Dulwich and Camberwell community councils, Councillor Livingstone said that according to the relevant legislation



about the size community council areas, only having four areas would not be possible, but that the current proposals seemed to best guarantee democratic accountability.

Simon Hughes, MP asked what the size of the councils reserves were this year, and said that top council officers were overpaid. No officer should be paid more than the prime minister. Funding could be freed up from that source.

Councillor Livingstone responded that the council's reserves were £86m, which would probably be reduced over the coming years, as further cuts of the government grant were likely. In terms of top salaries, the council was going to be saving £1m on these next year.

There was a discussion about the council's priorities and alternative ways the money for community councils could be found.

The chair asked for a show of hands from all those in attendance on the following statement:

“The Bermondsey Community Council opposes the proposed merger of the Bermondsey and Rotherhithe Community Council and believes community councils should be strengthened.”

The vast majority of attendees agreed with this statement (with 2 attendees opposed and one abstention).

The chair thanked Councillor Livingstone for attending the meeting.

The meeting ended at 10.00 pm.

**CHAIR:**

**DATED:**