

Blackfen Forum
Minutes of a General Meeting
Held at Our Lady of the Rosary Church Hall
At 7.30.pm on Wednesday 4th March 2009

Present: Mr Kevin Cope (Chairman), and 27 members whose names are recorded on the Attendance Sheets.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Beckwith, N Betts, P Catteral, V Clarke, P Cammish, P Craske G D'Amiral, N O'Hare and K Perrior due to a full Council Meeting on this date and from Mr and Mrs Wynne and Ms E Denning.

1 Minutes of previous Meeting (15th October 2008) were accepted as a true record.

2 Matters arising:-

Re-cycling bins Westwood Lane: Clair McGarry reported that Bexley Council are currently looking into this matter.

Bus stop shelters: Provision of a shelter at the stop opposite the former Woolworths has now been included in the TFL programme. Further consideration is being given to the stop opposite Ayers Bakers.

Gloucester Parade service road: Bexley Council have written further letters to the landowner but still have received no response. A letter from the Forum has been distributed to all occupied business premises pointing out our concern and suggesting that they should consider taking collective action to remedy the problem.

"Village" centre signpost: In the current economic climate the likelihood of obtaining funding appears remote. Although there is little that can be done at the present time the consensus of opinion was that the project should be "kept alive".

Pedestrian crossing, Wellington Avenue by the Oval: Several members stated that despite the introduction of "Slow" signs they did not feel safe using the crossing due to the speed of vehicles approaching from both directions. It was suggested that a central refuge on the crossing would improve safety. The secretary will forward this suggestion to Bexley Council.

Disorderly behaviour rear of Blackfen Parade: Mr Cunningham pointed out that the "Alleygates" at the Wellington Avenue end were broken and had remained open for quite some time. Clair McGarry explained that although Bexley Council provided a grant towards the cost of installing alleygates the maintenance was the responsibility of the occupiers.

CCTV: The secretary had written to Councillor Perrior and a reply has been received. The control room at Bexley Civic Offices is being redeveloped and no additional fixed cameras can be considered at the present time. The long term future of CCTV in the Borough is now being planned as the present system is outdated. Once the new control room is established the priority will be to consider the positioning of cameras. When this stage is reached the Forum will be advised.

132 Bus route: Mr Ian Hadley said that as he had feared, the extension of the 132 bus route to North Greenwich had resulted in a less frequent service between Eltham and Bexley. Other members disagreed and welcomed the change although they did concede that there appeared to be insufficient buses during the "rush hours". Mr Hadley has passed correspondence to the secretary relating to consultation between Bexley councillors and London Buses on this matter.

3 London Fire Brigade Presentation:-

Carole Griggs, Fire Community Support Officer for Bexley Borough gave a very interesting talk describing work carried out in the community by the Fire Brigade and also provided sound advice to improve fire safety in the home. She gave details of schemes available whereby Fire Officers would visit homes, conduct a free home fire risk check and for vulnerable people would fit smoke alarms free of charge. She also described the youth engagement scheme LIFE (Local Intervention Fire Education), a five day course which gives youngsters the opportunity to learn fire fighting skills alongside real fire-fighters and which encourages them to develop new values, to work in co-operation with others, gain self esteem and confidence and to improve their communication skills. The talk was well received and a question and answer session followed.

4 Bexley Community Safety Partnership - Update:-

Clair McGarry, neighbourhood co-ordinator, informed the meeting of various local projects currently being undertaken. Many of these involved "youth engagement" with several projects being undertaken both within the schools and also with out of school activities such as "Street Dance". She drew attention to the "Roadwatch" scheme operated by local police in which volunteers were sought to assist the police with the use of "speed guns" to deter speeding motorists. She reminded the meeting that the services of the "Community Pay-back team" (young offenders) could always be sought for any suitable local community project. Clair congratulated Clive Andrews, manager of the George Staples public house, on his nomination for a "Keeping Bexley Safe" award.

5 Policing Issues:-

PC Howard Newcombe, Blackfen and Lamorbey Ward SNT, informed the meeting that the local teams are very much involved in "youth engagement" schemes including visits to schools and youth clubs and are encouraging young people to "have their say". Speed surveys have been conducted in Willersley Avenue and warnings given although the problem is not as great as perceived. There has been a slight increase in residential burglary in recent months with incidents of thieves forcing open upvc doors which occupants had not secured with a key. He encouraged any interested person to volunteer to take part in the "Roadwatch" scheme, training sessions for which were available at Sidcup police station.

6 Any other business:-

Mr Bigginton stated that traders in Blackfen Parade had complained to him about insufficient parking facilities for customers and "over zealous" parking attendants discouraging shoppers. Mr Andrews stated that shoppers were welcome to make use of the car park at the George Staples ph if space was available.

There being no further business the chairman thanked all for attending and the meeting concluded at 9.5pm