

Blackfen Forum
Notes of a meeting held on 15th October 2008
At Our Lady of the Rosary Church Hall

Present: Mr K Cope (Chairman), Clr B Beckwith, P.S. B Sherlock and 29 members whose names are recorded on the Attendance Sheets.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors, P Catteral, V Clarke, P Craske, K Perrior and P Cammish, C Robinson (Neighbourhood co-ordinator), C Britnell (BVSC), M Brown (Blackfen School) C Andrews, R Kelly, E Denning, B Wynne and M Wynne.

Chairman's Introduction. The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting especially those attending for the first time. He expressed his thanks to Clr Brian Beckwith and Sgt Brian Sherlock for their attendance. He was able to announce that Premier Autocentres have once again agreed to sponsor the Christmas lights display in Blackfen and proposed a vote of thanks. This was heartily endorsed. Rather than asking fellow traders to contribute towards the cost of the lights, Premier will suggest that they might wish to make a donation to the charity, Delmelza Childrens' Hospice.

1 Minutes of last meeting (9th July 2008) had been previously circulated. It was agreed that they were a true record.

2 Matter arising:-

(a) Hanging baskets - Although some traders were prepared to contribute to some of the costs it appears unlikely that sufficient support would be forthcoming to cover the total costs. Health and Safety requirements and insurance costs are also a factor to be considered. The very attractive hanging basket display at Premier Autocentres was commented upon.

(b) Pedestrian Crossing Wellington Avenue by the Oval. - Information has been received from PCSO Ian Kaye that "Slow" markings have been placed on the approaches to the crossing and a warning sign positioned at the junction of Marlborough Avenue with the Oval. It has also proposed that the height of the crossing be raised. Speed checks had also been carried out with fixed penalty tickets issued and warning advice administered. Discussion is also taking place with Bexley Council and TFL with a view to improvements at the junction of Burnt Oak Lane and the Oval "Hopper bus" stopping point.

(c) Members commented that they had been very favourably impressed by the presentation given by the Army Cadets 106 Provost Detachment RMP. A letter of appreciation has been sent.

3 Funding: The Treasurer, Ron Briggs reported that funds currently stood at £661 - 89. This includes a grant of £650 received under the Council's "Corporate Small Grants Scheme" for which we are very grateful as it will enable the Forum to continue its activities and meetings in the immediate future.

4 Re-cycling bins, Westwood Lane: The secretary reported that he had accompanied Councillor Catterall and Mr R Bridgeman of Bexley Council on a "walkround" at which this (and other issues also on the agenda) had been discussed. The possibility of reducing the number of containers is being investigated and

hopefully the remaining containers can then be sited in one line thus making the site look tidier. Several members commented that since the widening of the central traffic refuge opposite the bins, refuse collection vehicles now regularly drove up on to the pavement to undertake collections from the bins (there apparently being no other option apart from completely obstructing southbound traffic flow in Westwood Lane).

5 Bus stop shelters: During the "walk round" the decision by TFL not to provide shelters at the two eastbound bus stops for route 132 was discussed. The opinion was that this was a viable proposition for the stop at Wellington Parade opposite Woolworths. Further discussion with TFL has now taken place and the provision of a shelter has been agreed.

6 Gloucester Parade Private Service Road: The condition of the service road is considered to be deplorable and potentially dangerous to vehicles and pedestrians visiting the business premises and very much an "eyesore". The Council has no responsibility and no authority to undertake repairs. It is considered that the majority of the public visiting premises in Gloucester Parade are unaware of this therefore the placing of warning notices to this effect by the Council will be considered. The Council has written repeatedly to the landlord of Gloucester parade but has received no response or acknowledgment. Further enquiry will be pursued. Some tenant businesses at Gloucester parade are equally concerned and willing to contribute their share to the cost of repairs but many of the shop premises are vacant.

7 Village Centre Signpost: As part of the Blackfen Regeneration Project suggestions for a suitable "Town Centre Artwork Feature" had been requested and submitted. Unfortunately funding for this is apparently not available. The suggested feature is a village type signpost designed by John Holmes. Drawings and photographs were on display at the meeting and members were invited to comment. The design found favour with all and the members would support any efforts by the committee to secure funding and obtain any required planning permission.

8 Policing Issues: Brian Sherlock (Sergeant Blackfen & Lamorbey Ward) informed the meeting that "Road Safety" was a priority both for his ward and also the Blendon & Penhill ward team. He outlined various measures that had been undertaken in relation to road safety issues. He also described a "Road Watch Survey" scheme shortly to be introduced for which volunteers were sought.

Sgt Sherlock then responded to points raised "from the floor":-

(a) Rear of Blackfen Parade - Resident stated that incidents of disorderly behaviour by children and youths including jumping on sky lights have now re-commenced after a fairly reasonable period of calm. Reply- Police are aware of two recent incidents and patrols have been increased.

(b) Bus stop Wellington Avenue - Resident verbally abused seriously and threatened with violence by young female (accompanied by friend) on two separate occasions. - Response will arrange for PC to visit and obtain full details.

9 CCTV: It was noted that Bexley Village were applying to Bexley Council for CCTV coverage to be installed. It is understood that the Council are about to undertake a review of CCTV coverage throughout the Borough. Suggested that requests submitted previously over a period of years for coverage to be provided for the Blackfen Shopping be renewed.

10 Any Other Business:

(a) Ian Hadley drew to attention the TFL's proposed extension of the 132 bus route to North Greenwich. He was concerned that this could result in delays due to congestion in the Greenwich area which would result in a less frequent service between the existing route of Eltham to Bexley. He was also disappointed that no prior consultation had been conducted with residents in the Blackfen area.

(b) Mr Hawkins informed the meeting that although the owner of the land adjacent to 2 Wellington Avenue could no longer operate as a "scrapyard", he had appealed against some of the conditions imposed. Mr Hawkins had attended the appeal hearing but felt that he had been not been allowed to voice his objections. Councillor Beckwith agreed to discuss the matter in detail with Mr Hawkins following the meeting.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 9.10.pm.

.....Secretary

.....Chairman

GGM/18/10/08