



Community Forum Action Notes

Forum: Castle & Priory, St James's and St Thomas's

Date and time: Monday, 1st November, 2021 at 6.30pm

Venue: Online - Microsoft Teams

Attendance: Councillors K Ahmed, S Ali, C Bayton, A Finch, S Mughal and W Sullivan

Officers: S Griffiths (Area Liaison Officer), G Gray (Assistant Democratic Services Officer) and A Lawrence (Community Development Worker)

West Midlands Police: Sergeant J Beaumont

Members of the public: 7

1. Welcome and introductions

The Area Liaison Officer made introductions and welcomed everyone to the first pilot online Community Forum.

2. Appointment of Chair

Councillor K Ahmed was appointed Chair of the Forum for the 2021/22 municipal year.

3. Appointment of Vice-Chair

Councillor S Waltho was appointed Vice-Chair of the Forum for the 2021/22 municipal year.

4. Apologies and declarations of interest

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Aston, K Finch and S Waltho. No declarations of interest were received.

5. Communities Together

Councillor K Ahmed thanked everyone for joining the meeting and welcomed any feedback. The meeting was an opportunity for people to raise any issues in their area. The following issues were raised:

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Action/Response</u>
Concerns regarding falling leaves from Council owned trees in the Castle and Priory area; that residents were having to pay to have leaves taken away; whether the Local Authority were going to take action and it was considered that to charge residents to remove those leaves was unacceptable.	Area Liaison Officer to raise with the appropriate Directorate. It was noted that problems would arise and be less cost effective for the Council should this issue not be resolved.
Issue raised regarding pot holes at Wrens Hill Road, Foxhall Road and Bluebell Road Area and that a survey would be required within the Priory area to assess what needed repairing	Area Liaison Officer to raise with the appropriate Directorate.
The YMCA had been invited to the meeting regarding the youth centre that had been established through lottery funding. They occupied premises at Meadow Road and St Frances Road for youth activities.	Noted. It was anticipated that they would attend the next meeting to provide information.
Ongoing issues concerning traffic, damage to vehicles, risk to the public and serious accidents at Bunns Lane. Issue had previously been reported a number of times to the relevant Directorate.	A request was made to arrange a site visit with Councillors and the Acting Director of Public Realm or alternatively to invite the Acting Director of Public Realm to the next Community Forum meeting.
Concerns regarding traffic queuing issues at King Street and Hall Street whereby traffic lights were not working efficiently. Issue had previously been reported to the relevant Directorate.	Area Liaison Officer to raise with the appropriate Directorate.
Councillor S Ali encouraged people to attend the forthcoming Remembrance Service.	Noted

Councillor S Ali reported that a food bank had been established at Sledmere Community Centre running from 5-7pm each evening and on Sundays.

Noted

Councillor Ali advised that there were ongoing sports activities being undertaken at Sledmere Community Centre and that cricket sessions would commence at St James's Academy Sports Centre from 3rd November, 2021.

Noted

Concerns regarding escalation in anti-social behaviour at Russell's Hall Park. A meeting had taken place with residents six weeks prior. Residents had requested feedback regarding any action taken and the plan going forward to address this issue.

Sergeant Beaumont reported that the Police were aware of issues, had identified ring leaders, contacted schools, issued letters to individuals and additional officers were on patrol in the area. He advised that PC Follows had been active on Social Media and was pursuing the issues.

Query raised concerning where other outlets for food banks were situated, what funding had been granted to food banks, what criteria was needed to be eligible for food banks and the process to apply to access the service.

It was advised that there were various food banks in operation under the Black Country Food Bank scheme.

It was noted that Holiday and Activities Food Programme funding had been granted to the local authority until Christmas. Councillor C Bayton advised that she would be raising the issue at the next Scrutiny meeting. Processes were being finalised and it was considered that it would be essential for funding to be publicised and accessible for individuals.

Further information to be provided about what criteria is formulated; how information is being distributed and how easy the application was to complete.

6. Police update and discussion

Subject

The Police gave a general report on crime and disorder issues, policing activity and action taken within the area of the Community Forum.

Concerns were raised regarding traffic, accidents and dangerous driving at the Limes Road/Laurel Road roundabout; signs missing at the roundabout that had been reported but no further action had been taken.

Query regarding what action the Police take in the aftermath of an accident.

Reference was made to a forthcoming meeting to speak with people regarding local issues.

Action/Response

Issues noted, including ongoing Operation to tackle under 25 violence; safer travel operations in Dudley together with county line operations. Drug dogs and knife arches were being used at schools and bus stations whereby drugs and weapons had been seized. Police were looking into more advanced technology to detect knives.

There had been joint working with Local Authority concerning drug problems.

Sergeant Beaumont to provide an overview of information to Councillors regarding drug rates in each Ward.

Area Liaison Officer to liaise with relevant Directorate.

The Police advised they investigated and secured an area after a traffic accident depending on the circumstances. The Council would be contacted to assess areas for serious traffic accidents. All accidents were recorded, documented and circulated to the relevant Directorate.

Noted.

7. Funding

Applicant

Recommendation

The What? Centre, Dudley

An application had been submitted to fund essential repairs to the roof. It was confirmed that the centre served residents throughout the Borough, therefore, Members considered that funding should be provided equally from each Ward. A breakdown of information regarding individuals in each Ward who accessed the service was in progress. It was advised that a payment had already been made from the Centre's funds due to the urgency of the repairs.

The Forum recommended that the application be deferred and that Public Health contact Ward Members within four weeks regarding the request for contributions from all wards. Community Development Worker to provide feedback.

Genesis Education and
Tutoring Consultancy
Community Interest Company

Deferred. Officers to investigate if there was an opportunity to obtain funding through the Children's Services Directorate. Public Health to liaise with that Directorate accordingly.

Christmas Trees and Lights

The Forum had expressed concerns and requested in previous years for this issue to be viewed more strategically and paid for out of mainstream resources or other funding such as sponsorship, rather than being an ongoing call on community funding. The Forum was concerned that this had not been taken on board and the same requests were coming back each year.

The Community Forum supported the trees and lights, however, queried whether there was a need for two trees. Members requested that further information/evidence be provided to them as to why this could not be funded from other sources. They requested that information be given within 2 weeks.

8. Next Meeting

Date and Venue to be confirmed.

A general view was expressed that this Community Forum historically had good public attendance. It was felt that online meetings were not inclusive and a clear preference was expressed for future meetings to be held in a physical setting, subject to the necessary safety measures.

Meeting ended at: 8.15pm