

**Action Notes of the Castle and Priory, St James's and St Thomas's  
Community Forum**

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2015 at 6.30 pm  
at St. Thomas's Community Network, Beechwood Road, Dudley.

**Present:**

Councillor K Finch (Chair)  
Councillor A Ahmed (Vice-Chair)  
Councillors K Ahmed, S Ali, A Finch and S Waltho.

**Officers:**

S Griffiths (Lead Officer to the Forum) (Democratic Services Manager)

Together with 14 members of the public.

22 **Apologies for Absence**

Councillors S Arshad, M Aston and M Roberts.

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23 **Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair and Vice-Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Councillors and Officers introduced themselves.

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24 **Listening to you – Questions and Comments from Local Residents**

**Subject**

**Action**

Request to secure bin areas under Flats 39, 41, 43 and 45 Watsons Close, Kates Hill. Problems had been reported to the Council over a period of four years.

Referred for a response/action. Councillor S Waltho supported the request and confirmed that this issue had been raised several times without a successful resolution. He would pursue the resident's concerns.

Request for information regarding roof repairs at Flats 39 to 45 Watsons Close, Kates Hill.

Referred for a response.

Ongoing parking issues on Russells Hall Estate. Problems resolved in Abbotsford Drive, but continued in Bushey Fields Road, Ashenhurst Road, Overfield Road and Middlepark Road.

Councillor K Ahmed welcomed comments regarding Abbotsford Drive and noted other concerns. There was unlikely to be a solution to satisfy all residents. The Council was faced with severe budget issues restricting the ability to undertake future improvement works.

Unkempt hedgerows in Bushey Fields Road; rubbish and black bags being dumped along the road, encouraging fly-tipping.	Members noted this ongoing issue. Referred for a response/action. The Chair encouraged local residents to report incidents of fly tipping and to collect evidence to identify the perpetrators.
Ongoing drainage problems at the playing fields on Russells Hall Estate.	A site visit had been undertaken and issues were referred for response/action.
Issues and concerns in relation to a tenant in Middlepark Road.	Information passed to the Lead Officer for referral to appropriate Council Officers.
Issues in relation to the condition of roads on the Russells Hall Estate, including potholes and the possibility of removing/modifying some of the traffic calming measures.	Councillor K Ahmed stated that some modifications had been made to lower road humps but, in general terms, traffic calming measures in that area would not be removed.
Problems being experienced by a resident concerning rats at a private property and damage being caused at surrounding properties.	The Chair advised that pest control could assist with the problem. Officers were scheduled to visit the resident concerned.
Russells Hall Estate: Blocked drains in Bushey Fields Road; rubbish in Overfield Road; street lamp adjacent to 24 Overfield Road obstructed by the fir tree at 7 Pearce Close; tree branches and brambles left on Bushey Fields Road after pruning; progress regarding stray horses; request for road markings at the bottom of Pearce Close; issues relating to Broadmeadow Retirement Village and the use of Section 106 monies.	Members noted and commented on individual issues and these would be referred for a progress report or a response/action where necessary.
Licensing conditions applied to the supermarket on Middlepark Road, Russells Hall. Concern that conditions had not been implemented in relation to the provision of adequate car parking spaces. This was causing parking problems.	Members noted the situation and asked for this to be referred for a response or appropriate action to be taken regarding non-compliance with the conditions.
Issue concerning funding allocated for the Foodbank.	Noted.

Health and safety concerns regarding congestion and traffic at Oakham Road. The work undertaken had not resolved all the problems. Request that National Express be contacted again concerning their vehicles travelling along the road when alternative routes were available.

Councillor Ali stated that he was aware of the issues and would continue to pursue action by working with residents to resolve ongoing problems. Concerns would be reported to Officers for a response/action. Ward Councillors undertook to pursue the issue regarding National Express.

Regeneration of Dudley Town Centre: Positive comments were made about the improvements to King Street. Concerns were raised about new pedestrian crossing lights outside Cousins furniture store which were confusing. Similar concerns regarding the pedestrian lights by the public toilets in the Town Centre. Lack of signage to public toilets.

Councillor K Ahmed noted and commented on the issues raised. These would be pursued and referred for a response or appropriate action.

It was noted that there were timing issues with the traffic lights at Hall Street.

Review of the closure of Blackacre Road.

Councillor K Ahmed had undertaken to review this after 6 months of operation.

A resident asked if officers could ensure that future meetings of the Forum did not clash with PACT meetings. He informed Members that a Street Watch Scheme had been implemented in Kates Hill.

Noted.

Concerns about a reduction in Police resources in Kates Hill following the recent reduction in crime numbers.

Noted.

English Defence League (EDL) protest scheduled on 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2015. Reference was made to the Police vehicles positioned adjacent to the proposed development site and a query as to why trees had been removed from the site.

A leaflet was circulated giving advice from the Council/West Midlands Police. Ongoing consideration was being given by the relevant agencies to dealing with the event on 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2015. The removal of trees was the responsibility of the land owner.

Progress update on the works at Dudley Market Place and the potential for additional charges due to delays in completing the project.

Councillor K Ahmed stated that works were anticipated to be completed by the end of April and acknowledged that the project had been delayed for various reasons.

Request for public toilets in Dudley Town Centre to be open on Sundays, particularly during trading hours, to assist with the regeneration of the Town.

Councillor K Ahmed advised of the ongoing budget issues faced by the Council. Alternative suggestions or options would be considered, particularly working with community groups who might apply for grant assistance.

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25 **Working with you – Topics Raised by Local Councillors**

Councillor S Waltho referred to the “Rise Up for St Thomas’s” community event to celebrate multicultural Dudley to be held on 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2015.

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26 **Community Forum – Love Your Local Community Funding**

Application

Recommendation

Dudley MBC – Environmental Management Division (St James Ward)

Noted – this application had been deferred at the previous meeting to ascertain the exact location of the proposed Christmas tree in Milking Bank. Members subsequently recommended refusal of the application.

Duke of Edinburgh Award Association

Approve a contribution of £500, in principle, to be split equally between the three wards, subject to confirmation that the scheme will be of direct benefit to local people within the wards.

Arc-Aid

Approve £1,500 to be split equally between the three wards (allocation to be from the High Street Innovation Fund).

The following grant application was considered as a matter of urgency:-

Priory Park Boxing Club

A contribution of £1,500 was recommended at the meeting. Following further consultation with the Chair and ward members, the recommendation was amended to approve £2,500 in total (£1,500 from Castle and Priory and £500 each from the St James’s and St Thomas’s wards).

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27 **Next Meeting**

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2015 at 6.30pm - St Barnabus’ C of E Church.

The meeting ended at 8.20 pm