

## Stirchley Neighbourhood Forum

Draft Minutes of Meeting held on 15th May 2023 @7.30pm in Stirchley Community Church

**Present:** 16 including; Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, members of the Forum's management committee & Cllr Mary Locke

Rob Morris (RM Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting

### 1. Apologies

Julie Sanders, Margaret Walker, and Pete Walker

### 2. Minutes of meeting 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023

The Minutes were accepted as being a true record

### 3. Matters arising from previous meeting

#### **3.1 Pitcairn Close Flooding Update.**

Rob from the Fruit and Nut Village was consulted about the feasibility of tree and shrub planting on the dug channels and saw no reason why planting cannot take place there.

Cllr Locke has been in touch with Darren Share at the parks department as it is council owned land, but he is currently busy with the Chelsea Flower Show until June.

Rachel West (RW - Council Officer) highlighted that Fruit and Nut Village have previously been successful in the local authority crowdfunding programme and there is not a limit for the amount of projects that an organisation can apply for. Although it may not be possible to apply for this round (deadline 31st May), there would be future rounds.

RM noted the planting was not urgent, but it is the kind of issue that if not kept on the table can easily become lost.

#### **3.2 Cars going the wrong way near Aldi**

Sandra Cooper (SC) stated that it feels much clearer after Aldi have painted road signs. RM concurred and nobody raised any disagreements.

A point was raised that pelican crossing by Aldi does not make noise to signal crossing and neither does the one on Fordhouse Lane. It was noted that this is not accessible for members of the community who require tactile or sound to help crossing.

It was also noted that cycling on Pershore Rd by the new crossing into town does not feel safe, as it is a very narrow lane and even with the very, very short cycling lane there is an increased risk to pedestrians.

#### **3.3 The Ward Plan**

The ward plan is currently on the council website

([https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/download/5875/ward\\_action\\_plans\\_2022\\_to\\_2026](https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/download/5875/ward_action_plans_2022_to_2026))

SC queried the best way to monitor the targets in the Ward plan, and suggested that there could potentially be a liaison with Cllr Locke's Ward meeting with each group monitoring a different priority in the plan.

It was noted that the planters, arranged by Cllr Locke through Section 106 Funding, were being enjoyed.

#### **4. Housing**

##### ***4.1 Ward Forum Meeting Update***

Housing was the key topic of Cllr Locke's last ward forum meeting which featured Cllr Sharon Thompson (Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness) and Dr Justin Varney (Director of Public Health, BCC).

Cllr Locke fed back people over 75 will be eligible for a COVID-19 booster in the winter, and the vaccine will be annual like the flu jab.

Cllr Locke noted there will be guests from the senior leadership team at future meetings, the next meeting will feature Cllr Majid Mahmood (Cabinet Committee, Cabinet Member for Environment) and she has invited Tom McNeil (Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner).

Issues raised at the ward forum meeting included the increased problem of vulnerable people in exempt and supported accommodation being under supported by providers.

It was noted that legislation is very vague for how vulnerable people should be supported in accommodation, and Birmingham City Council is on the forefront of pushing for changes to this.

People with information about HMOs that are being mishandled are encouraged to contact the Council on the following email address, who will then ensure that the information gets to the necessary team.

[prs@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:prs@birmingham.gov.uk)

It was queried if permanent HMO 'To Let' signs were a form of advertising and could be reported.

##### ***4.2 Communities within Stirchley***

It was emphasised that the issue with HMOs is that vulnerable members of our community are not getting the necessary support that they need, and this is a growing problem in the local area.

It was noted that within Stirchley we have vulnerable people from other local authorities coming into Birmingham, and this added further strain to the lack of social housing and waiting lists within the city.

RM posed the question of what is a useful action that the Forum can take using the expertise that exists in the room.

A lively discussion took place about how the community could best support young care leavers in exempt/supported accommodation in the local area, and an idea was raised about coaching/empowerment sessions for young people.

It was noted that we do not know how many young people in specific circumstances lived in the local area, and it was highlighted that many groups for young people in Stirchley include many young people who do not live in the local area.

RW questioned how this work could fit into the neighbourhood plan and if additional SMART objectives wanted to be added; or could it fit under existing categories in the ward plan.

RM noted his concern about the changed neighbourhood of Stirchley and move towards more isolation.

It was asked how the Forum hoped this would be reflected in the ward plan, and SC noted that it was a non-specific aspiration and had to be representative of the shape of housing provision in Stirchley and a need to be inclusive.

It was asked if there was a way of finding out how many young people in supported/exempt accommodation were in Stirchley, and the general consensus was: not very easily.

SC noted that the Children's Trust may have some data.

Cllr Locke stated it would be worth taking thoughts forward and having a meeting in the future about doable actions.

It was noted that the discussion of how we can be useful for the local community was a positive one, and that before leaping into action there needed to be a discussion on first steps.

#### **4.3 Community Action**

RM noted that former types of community leaders who could advise on issues and support local community action, such as GPs no longer had the community ties they once had.

SC noted that Birmingham Observatory was a useful tool to keep watch of for local intel.

Cllr Locke highlighted that local GPs were not forthcoming in attending local events and engaging with council schemes.

A discussion was had on how the Forum learns about the local community, and that we are reliant and thankful for the information from community leaders, church leaders, and groups.

The idea was posited that there could be a Forum representative in local Street WhatsApp groups.

The discussion was concluded with the note that it was a positive discussion aimed at supporting people and finding out need.

## **5. Police Update**

It was noted that the police have not answered the Forum's emails.

A local Sergeant attended a Coffee Morning and expressed an interest in the Forum meeting, but they have yet to attend.

It was highlighted that there has been an anecdotal increase in car crime and more suspicious activity on people's video doorbells.

Cllr Locke assured that crimes are being investigated by the police and people should continue to report incidents.

## **6. Planning issues**

SC (Planning Officer) updated the meeting

**The Corner of Twynning Rd** was refused its modification that would have increased the height significantly. However, they started work onsite the morning of the 15th May, and local residents are concerned.

**Battery Energy Storage** on Fordhouse Lane has yet to have a decision.

**The Social Club** on Hazelwell Lane is misnoted on the portal as being on Pershore Rd. They have applied to widen the access driveway, add a path and move 2 disabled parking bays.

**1721 Pershore Rd** has applied for a Lawful Development Certificate to create a 4 bedroom HMO. From the current plans there appears to be a communal lounge and dining area, but one bedroom has no en suite facilities.

**1750-1756 Pershore Rd** - the former Amber Windows site - has had its appeal dismissed. However, there may be a new modified application incoming.

It was queried how the Dogpool Lane development can close a road for an extended period of time as a private company. SC informed the meeting that they expressed a need that the development could not go ahead without the road closure, but the closure's length had increased since planning was permitted.

SC informed the meeting that new guidance was just released where firms can now be fined if they extend digging into utilities for longer than the council approve them access.

There is a hole in the ground on the pavement near the junction of Pershore Rd/Fordhouse Lane that the meeting believes to be the responsibility of Virgin Media. Cllr Locke has been in touch.

## **7. Networking**

RW informed people of the Commonwealth Games Legacy Funding for events taking place between the 24th July and 31st October 2023.

Applications must be in by **5pm on the 8th June** and applicants must attend a briefing on the **22nd May at 5:30pm or 31st May at 12:30pm**. The briefings will be online.

Cllr Locke informed everyone that on the 2nd June there will be an unveiling of the new blue plaque for Theresa Stewart, the first female leader of the council, taking place at Daisy Farm at 2pm.

Cllr Locke's next surgery will be on the **2nd June 10.30 - 12 noon at Stirchley Baths**.

The mobile recycling unit will be at the bottom of Hazelwell Fordrough on the **31st May, 7am until 12:45pm**

## **8. Any other business**

### ***8.1 Anti Social Behaviour***

It was noted that there was an increase in antisocial behaviour in the early hours of the morning in Stirchley Park, affecting the residents of Bond St.

Cllr Locke has informed the police.

People have also been using the back of the library for similar purposes, including illegal substance use.

It was noted that anyone affected should report incidents to the police by calling 101.

### ***8.2 Food in the park***

The issue was raised that dogs have been unearthing food scraps previously buried in the park. There was the suggestion that this could be foxes scavenging from unsecured waste at Morrisons.

Cllr Locke said she would email the manager to explore the possibility.

It was noted that the foxes are an important part of our local ecosystem.

### ***8.3 Updates from Paula Aubrey (PA, Treasurer)***

The Friends of Hazelwell Park and Friends of Ten Acres have merged into one organisation.

PA has been liaising with Claire Hardwick at BCC, and trying to set up a meeting relating to Neighbourhood Planning.

### ***8.4 Feedback from Community Following Online***

Pavement parking and parking on dropped curbs continued to be an issue in the area.

Cllr Locke has reported and continues to report the issue.

RM thanked Cllr Locke for all of her hard work.

**The meeting closed at 9:05pm**

Disclaimer notice on behalf of the Stirchley Neighbourhood Forum Management Committee

1. The Management Committee does not normally have prior knowledge of items which will be raised as Any Other Business, but the Management Committee will help facilitate such items where it does have prior knowledge, and which are in the interests of Stirchley.
2. The Forum is not aligned to any political party or one group and hence will hold a neutral stance in all political items which are raised at the meetings; the Forum may take a stance (positive/negative) on planning applications discussed at the meeting or on changes to community/neighbourhood services which affect the Forum area
3. The Forum's Management Committee will not allow a person or organisation to use the Forum's meeting as a means to any political end.
4. All residents and businesses within the Forum's area have the right to attend and speak at the meeting. Business owners, not resident within the forum area, have a right to attend and speak at SNF meetings, but they cannot make up quorum.
5. The Forum or its Management Committee will not be held responsible for leaflets or other media which is handed out by third parties either at or following the Forum's meeting. The views of any such leaflets or other communication are those of the distributor/publisher and not necessarily those of the Neighbourhood Forum.