

Southfields Grid Residents' Association

Minutes of Open meeting held on Tuesday 29th January 2019

1. Apologies

SGRA Executive Committee: Nigel Rawson & Gerard Sebastian

Southfields Councillors: Cllr Terry Walsh & Cllr Kim Caddy

2. Chairs Introduction

- Charles Runcie opened the meeting by welcoming new attendees and asked that they include their email on the attendance list to receive information.
- He also welcomed the police Safer Neighbourhood Team (Police Constable James Elvy, Police Constable Robert Quijano Amigo and PCSO Don Lopes) who were attending in their free time.
- He introduced members of the Executive Committee, Cllr Guy Humphries and also Gill Habershon of the Southfield Business Forum.
- He had also invited a resident of Trentham Street, Hilary Macaulay, to speak.
- He explained the revised structure and objectives of the meeting in light of local concerns about a rise in crime.

3. Safer Southfields

A number of topics were discussed in relation to crime and safety in the Southfields area. Details of these are given below:

Police Update

- PC Elvy explained that there had not been any recent burglaries. There had been a spate of shed burglaries before Christmas. This was a borough wide trend and bikes had been stolen.
- Three or four Audi Q5 cars had been stolen since the last meeting. Theft from motor vehicles was still happening. The police regularly check the car doors and find them open and this allows theft of items from cars. Signals from the electronic fobs for cars are being intercepted which facilitates theft. He recommended the use of Faraday boxes or bags for these and keeping them at the back of the house. A recent Which report indicates that 99% of new cars are at risk of being stolen. Charles highlighted an item in The Times about criminals using new technology.
- PC Elvy said that tools had been taken from two local house refurbishment sites. The SNT had spoken to builders warning them to protect their tools.
- Charles asked about lighting and the general safety of local people. PC Elvy said that the lighting is not great and there is no Council CCTV on the residential part of the Grid. The use of CCTV cameras is a Council decision and this depends on the amount of local crime and the cost of the equipment. The SNT had asked for one but this had not been approved. The CCTV camera installed in Coronation Gardens had been effective but was now in use elsewhere.

Safer Neighbourhood Board

- Charles asked about the Safer Neighbourhood Board. This does not involve the local police but is a high level Council group that is attended by the Borough Commander,

Inspectors and above and deals with issues at ward level. Clive and Amelia had attended a recent meeting on behalf of the SGRA as observers.

- The SNB has four meetings a year, three closed and open. Members of the public can attend all meetings as observers, but can only participate at the open meeting. Clive also explained that, due to the recent changes to the police structure, Wandsworth now shares its Borough Commander with the boroughs of Merton, Kingston and Richmond.
- Amelia said that she had talked to Robyn Thomas, Head of Community Safety at the Council and explained that crime is an issue on the Grid. She asked about a CCTV camera and Ms Thomas had agreed to look into it but it depended on the crime statistics. Charles said that he had invited Ms Thomas and Inspector Barrie Capper to this meeting but they were unable to attend. Amelia said that she had managed to discuss issues that had been raised by Trentham Street residents Hilary Macaulay and Danielle Cyrus.

Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panels

- There is also a tier of community involvement called Safer Neighbourhood Ward panels. These work alongside Neighbourhood Watch. Guy explained that the Council wish to regenerate the Ward panels including one in Southfields. These are formed to work with the police and the community and Charles said that we might be interested in this to promote the concerns of local people. It would need local residents to be involved with the support of the SGRA. Clive stressed that this is a Ward initiative not just the Grid area which is only a small part of Southfields. Guy said that there are 20 wards and each one would have a panel in place by May.
- However, policing was not an issue that can be micromanaged. They provide an avenue to which people can bring their concerns. It will be a forum for discussion for the police, residents, community associations and other stakeholders. He was asked why this had not happened before and explained that they had gone into abeyance. PC Elvy had asked for support by email without a response. The focus had been on high crime areas.
- The SNT hold quarterly public meetings here at St Barnabas but there was low attendance. This had been taken as a good sign that local crime was not an issue.
- Ms Sucheta Samant, Principal Librarian, was introduced as the manager at Southfields Library. She would like to provide a venue for local residents to meet the SNT. PC Elvy said that, because of the location, this would have to be the West Hill team. Charles said that he would pursue this via the Council as he thought it could be negotiated and the Library used for our area as a meeting place for this purpose.

Crime Information

- An article in Auto Express was quoted showing a 50% increase in car crimes in 2018. Wandsworth had more vehicle theft than any other borough in 2016/17 but this was mainly mopeds. Charles said that he would distribute links to the relevant current crime statistics by email by the end of the week.
- Information about the Safer Neighbourhood Board was on the Wandsworth Council website and one could use those words to search. If one put in a local postcode, then it would give links to the Met police website giving details of crime for Southfields. Clive said that he had seen the rolling 12 month details for crime and this could separate motor vehicle theft from theft from motor vehicles. This record showed that theft of vehicles had gone down in Wandsworth. Charles said that there had been a recent spike in car thefts and there were similar issues in Wimbledon Park.
- PC Elvy explained that the two police stations are at Earlsfield and at Mitcham. A response team can reach Southfields quickly. A resident asked about the effect on resources of the borough merger. PC Elvy explained that it did not affect the SNT

provision here and is a management change that is not affecting officers on the ground. Resources are shared with the other boroughs. Guy said that they would have to look at the cost of mobile CCTV cameras.

- The Council had increased the provision from 3 to 20 in the past 2 years. These are more beneficial if they are targeted and they act as deterrents. Guy said that he would discuss the matter further with Ms Thomas to see what can be used on the Grid.
- Guy explained that his wife had been a victim of car theft before Christmas and even older cars were vulnerable. This becomes a personal matter rather than a numbers game and he recognised this. He also expressed the council's concern that Wandsworth is the only inner London borough amongst the four in the group and they did not want to see the loss of resources to the other boroughs.

Trentham Street

- Charles invited Hilary Macaulay of Trentham Street to speak. She gave details of damage to cars locally including wing mirrors being cut off and vehicles that had been stolen. She listed the actions she had taken to notify the theft of her car and the subsequent action she took to recover it from Essex. It had been parked with many other vehicles in a field, but all were missing when Essex police attended. She had used Nextdoor, the social media site, to collect information about local car crime and had details of what, when and where and whether it had been reported. She had also been in contact with Gridmummies.
- Much of the local vehicle crime had not been reported because people believe that this will increase their insurance premiums. Some insurers are refusing car insurance in this area because they regard it as high risk. This has been reported by three people. She said people are being put off reporting as they feel they are not being believed and nothing will be done. She thought we needed to change this perception. Her information showed this to be a widespread problem and occurring in Wimbledon Park and Earlsfield as well. She could not accept that this is a low crime area and thanked Guy for his empathy. She had been spurred into action with others and was concerned about a local passive response and thought we needed to reclaim the area.
- The SNT said that much of this had not been reported. They had limited numbers of officers so focused on hot spots. There are three local response teams, who work am, late (from 2pm) and nights. There is also an undercover car operating. However, if things are not reported then this area will not be identified as a hotspot. People seem to have time to use social media and to tweet but are not notifying them to the police. Ian Tattum said that low level crime is not being reported and this is a national trend. People seemed to be concerned about it affecting their insurance but they must have a sense of responsibility. It is they who are making the choice not to report because of the risk to increasing insurance.
- Hilary said that there had been a recent change in the Grid and this is impacting on people despite such good initiatives such as Green the Grid. We have had moped theft, car theft, burglaries, damage to locks and back doors and cars are being taken away on low loaders.
- Guy said that this is our community and it is down to us to help. This includes police, councillors and residents. Using social media to tell people about crime can add fuel to the fire. We need to change the vocabulary we are using. Ian Tattum commented that social media is changing perceptions of the area and creating animosity if some consider it a fuss about nothing. Charles said that we are all on the same side and we had been doing things. He thanked Hilary for being such an effective spokesperson. We now need to come up with an action plan to move forward.

Crime Prevention

- In response to a question about security locks the SNT said that mechanical steering wheel locks were useful and anything similar that acted as a deterrent. PC Elvy explained that after the spate of Audi Q5 thefts they had checked for other similar cars locally, then identified the owners and spoken to them personally about protecting their vehicles.
- He was asked to explain why the owner of a car that was reported stolen in 2017 was sent an automated reply after 48 hours to say that the case had been closed, and whether anything was being done. PC Elvy explained that the registration number plate was recorded and if it was recognised by an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) camera then it would be followed up. He said that number plates are often changed and false plates used.
- The procedure is to receive details of the car that it is lost, or stolen, and make a report. If there is no CCTV evidence, then there is no further action. and as the Grid houses are not covered by CCTV there is little that can be done. We need to ask for CCTV cameras. If something is reported it will be dealt with. He recommended that victims or witnesses use 999 rather than relying on email. 101 is heavily overloaded and can take half an hour to get through. Clive said that number plates are also being stolen and it is a good idea to get security screws to secure them.
- Charles said that we will put something in the next newsletter. He had been looking for relevant literature but there were no longer Crime Prevention Units and no funding. He had been referred to the Council for advice and the officer concerned is Andrew Jolly. PC Elvy explained that they were now using Twitter and Facebook to try to alert people.
- He was asked about the rules for home CCTV cameras. It is supposed to only point down to your entrance. Guy recommended video doorbells.

Burglaries

- Charles then moved the discussion on to burglaries and general security. Danielle said that although doors were being damaged this did not appear to be vandalism but interrupted burglaries. PC Elvy said that they did patrol early in the morning. They would send a response team to a 999 call. If more crime was reported, then they would get more resources. They need the data to get the patrols. People should have the confidence to make the call as the operator will grade the call. He makes a check each morning of the overnight crime reports. They will notify 15 neighbours of a crime and use Twitter and Facebook. If there is a theft of the motor vehicle they will attend and he also maintains contact with local shops who are sources of information. A report will make things happen.
- A resident asked about parcel theft from doorsteps. This is generally the fault of the delivery drivers not getting them taken in and the thefts are opportunistic. This is now an affluent area and so the parcels may be of value. PC Elvy was asked the legal perspective of putting videos of crime on social media. He said that it was better to let the police know.

Businesses

- Gill Habershon questioned whether the businesses were being the same priority as residents. She was concerned about two break ins on Wimbledon Park Road which they had not dealt with. PC Elvy explained that this was in West Hill ward so not for his team. She said that stealing was rife in the shops. PC Elvy explained that there were three of them to cover the whole of Southfields, including Southside, and the shops. They spent 80% of their time on the Grid.

- Gill reported an incident when someone was observed stealing from a pharmacy but it was difficult to get the police to act. Managers at Tesco's have told staff not to intervene. Don explained that he often had to deal with a local man who was causing a nuisance in the shops. PC Elvy said that their role was to follow up not to investigate. He explained that his objectives were to highlight local crime, to try to stop it happening, to educate local people and to deal with victims of crime. It is for the shops to prosecute.

Next Steps

- Charles then reviewed what we could do as a community. We need CCTV and need to ask Guy to request one or more for the Grid. This was for the SGRA to take forward.
- Guy said that we should focus on education and Charles agreed to use the newsletter and other social media.
- We could place signs on lamp posts but this can cause concern. PC Elvy said that the previous notices they had put up about protecting items in cars had been taken down very soon after. Charles said that he had been told that the large notices in Wimbledon Park had been at the initiative of their SNT who had approached Wimbledon Park Residents' Association for matched funding. They had funds from a community trust available so they could help with £750. This was a long standing project and not connected with the spike of car crime in the area. A local resident was unhappy with the large signs which she found intimidating. She was less concerned about smaller signs.
- We need to educate local residents. We need to encourage them to remove valuables from their cars. Karen Gregory asked for evidence based remedies so that we know what works and can be learned from other areas. PC Elvy said that the signs had worked in Thamesfield but had not worked here because they were taken down. There is an option to have signs up for a short period only and not permanently. Chris Puleston suggested a sign saying CCTV operating here, even if it wasn't.
- Smartwater had been made available for some residents during a recent initiative. It had been introduced in light of burglaries elsewhere. Although it could be used for cars but as these were sold on it was not appropriate. PC Elvy said he would find some for a resident. Windscreens can be etched.
- Charles raised the options of the police holding public events outside the Tube or shops. He suggested a drop in coffee morning closer to the centre. He wanted to find ways to bring people together and find more ways of reaching the right people. The police hold regular meet and greet sessions at St Michael's Church cafe to listen to concerns.
- Tim asked whether there is any central reporting of trends like areas, times of day or night, types of crime. PC Elvy said that he can break down the data. Cars are stolen overnight. Valuable new cars are at higher risk of being stolen. Clive suggested being more observant and looking closely at any car transporter in the Grid. PC Elvy reinforced this ' See it, report it, 999'.
- Guy hoped that more people would become involved in the new Safer Neighbourhood Board. The SNT can make a bid for funding. An approach could also be made to the London Mayor.
- Charles said that he wanted to draw together a group of people, trying to get all the interests together. The group would meet to devise an action plan that was well thought out and well communicated within a short period. This would be a satellite group of the SGRA and would have to be representative of the area. We have street reps in place but it was suggested that more were needed within each street to be representative for this purpose. The SGRA could be the point of contact. Neighbourhood Watch was the quasi legal organisation for this. Guy said that the Council were trying to get this going but how it operates is restricted by confidentiality issues.

- Sucheta Samant said that she could see that we are passionate about the Grid. Her view is that our main resource is ourselves. We could become more aware and suggested varying a late night drive or when out walking so as to keep an eye on things locally.
- Charles said that the street reps had met last week to consider their roles and how they could be the eyes and ears of the street. They report things that need attention and things get done, in addition to newsletter delivery. We could all do a little bit more to improve the environment. Everyone should be involved. He thought we should be a position to go forward in two months' time. The newsletter will be out by the end of March and we will use that.
- Charles thanked the SNT for attending.

3. Friends of Wimbledon Park Update – Nick Steiner

Nick Steiner of the FOWP gave an update on recent FOWP news:

- There are now three owners and he is meeting them. There should be planning ideas from AELTC in April.
- The FOWP are having a close look at improving the Revelstoke Road entrance which is very shabby but negotiations are with TfL and this is a slow process.
- The Capability Brown veteran tree from 1780 has now been fenced off. Unfortunately, the logs that the children climb on have also been enclosed and FOWP need to retrieve them.
- The black poplars have reached the end of their lives and are being felled. They have 14 hornbeams to replace them. Amelia added that there is tree planting on 9 February and they would welcome help.

4. Planning Update – Margaret Brett

The following planning updates were reported:

- The two planning applications by Z Group at 2 Replingham Road for a sign and shop front have been approved although we are told that the property has been sold.
- The two applications for 243 and 239 Wimbledon Park Road to develop the basements as small studio flats have been approved. The planning officer decided that a commercially viable retail space would be retained at ground level so the application complied with permitted development.
- The appeal against refusal of the roof development for 143 Clonmore was dismissed. The inspector took the view that proposed extension over the whole of the back addition would dominate the roof and compete with the original building.
- 89 Replingham was a hairdressers and the application to convert to residential and combine with the first floor flat has been approved.
- The telephone box outside Oxfam has been removed.
- There is to be a new post box, possibly on Heythorp Street, so that there is one nearer to the Post Office - but not for another two months or so.
- There is work being done on replacing the parking meters.
- Southfields Improvement Scheme. There is to be a stakeholder meeting but there are no details of this yet.
- Cllr Sutter has advised that the new byelaws for the parks are in place. They are now on the Council website. This is good news for local primary school children.
- The SGRA sent a response to the central government consultation on 'Planning reform: supporting the high street and increasing the delivery of new homes'

- The consultation on the Council's Licensing Policy ends 1 February and the SGRA will respond.
- Council planners are consulting on a revised Local Plan and two subsidiary documents - responses by 6 February.
- There is a new consultation on Heathrow. Meetings are at Elm Grove Conference Centre Roehampton 2-8pm 30 January or Antoinette Hotel Wimbledon on 12 February 2-8pm. Justine Greening is having a public meeting to discuss on Wednesday 20 February 7pm at the Community Church in Werter Road Putney.

Charles provided an updated on the current Sainsbury's works:

- The new Sainsbury's construction timetable is that they would start on the ground floor slabs on 20 June, do the internal fit out of the residential areas from 15 July and this is expected to last 17 weeks. They aim to open the new store on 9 September. The front part of the current Sainsbury's will become another retail area.

5. Merton Road Zebra Crossing

- Kit Somers reported on the zebra crossing on Merton Road. She had initiated a petition which Guy had presented to the Council.
- The officers asked for post codes but this raised data protection issues. As most people had provided statements about their use of the crossing, they accepted the petition.
- Highways will repaint the stripes and look at marking the lights. In addition, those at the Council dealing with in the School Travel Plan will look at possible improvements later in the year.
- Another issue is that the crossing is raised and traffic is not aware of this and hits it at speed.

6. Coronation Gardens

- Charles said that we are hoping to create a Friends Group for Coronation Gardens. He has circulated an email and hopes to get a Friends Group established by the end of March.
- A Friends Group involves a range of users and can also gain funding to improve the park. Guy said that the local councillors' election pledge included improving the Gardens.

7. Southfields Library

Sucheta Samant gave a brief overview of the work of the Library.

- They had received an award based on numbers visiting and books issued. She attributed their success to the staff who are friendly helpful and welcoming and work as a team.
- She mentioned a new travel club, Digipals run by Age UK and a new Maths Club being run by a DofE student volunteer. They have fiction and non-fiction best sellers, and well-being books. They are grateful for local support from the schools and residents.
- She was clear that there is no threat to the Library here. Charles congratulated her on the success of the Library.

8. Forthcoming Events

- The Window Wanderland event will be held again on the weekend of 9/10th February (5.30-9pm) and it's not too late to join

- The SGRA Spring Tea Party will be held at St. Barnabas Hall on the 13th April 3-5.30pm
- The SGRA AGM will be held on Tuesday 21st May at 7.30pm at St. Barnabas

A number of other events are being at St. Barnabas including:

- 21st February Ismena Collective: The Language of Love 7.30pm
- 7th March Greatest story ever toured: The Bible 7pm
- 17th May Barn Dance

9. Any Other Business

- Ann reported that repairs to Riversdale School wall are imminent. Some of the delay is due to it being a listed building with a listed wall.
- Charles also said goodbye to Robert Feitelberg, a long standing member of the SGRA, who is moving away.

Appendix 1 - Dates of Future Open Meetings

All meetings commence at 7.45pm unless otherwise stated.

Date of Meeting	Type Of Meeting
Tuesday 26 th March 2019	Open
Tuesday 21 st May 2019 – 7.30pm	AGM

Appendix 2 – Attendance List

Name	Role
Charles Runcie	SGRA Executive Committee - Chairman
Cllr. Guy Humphries	
Clive Williams	SGRA Executive Committee
Rosemary Langford	
Nick Steiner	SGRA Street Rep
PSCO Donald Lopez	Southfields SNT
PC James Elvy	Southfields SNT
PC Robert Quijano Amigo	Southfields SNT
Margaret Brett	SGRA Executive Committee
Ann Kerr	SGRA Executive Committee
Peter Jackson	
John Habershon	
Gill Habershon	
Chris Puleston	SGRA Executive Committee – Treasurer
Amelia Obertelli-Moriarty	SGRA Executive Committee
Diane Brennan	
Robert Feitelberg	
Kit Somers	
Shelia Friel	
Karen Stacey	
Danielle Cyrus	
Lisa Davies	
Brett Greve	
Simon Wright	
Brigid Rietcher	
Sucheta Samant	
Johnny Perkins	
Diane Nielsen-Smith	
Karen Ryan	
Jackie Pearce	
Diane Miles	
Ian Tattum	
Leila Halkias	
Joanna Wroblewska	
Sam Patton	
Ross MacConnell	
Chisa McDonald	
Tim Lynch	