

North Willesborough Community Forum



Open Meeting - 5th April 2017 - Meeting Notes

Willesborough Baptist Church – Hythe Road

The doors opened at 6.30 with a display of various items of local interest.

Councillor George Koowaree (North Willesborough and KCC) was on hand for any questions/problems. Alex Howard (Aylesford Green) sent apologies but no word from Jeremy Adby (North Willesborough) nor Gerald White (Highfield). Cllr Paul Bartlett (Mersham and Sevington) popped in but did not stay for the meeting; Cllr David Smith (South Willesborough) attended as a guest.

The meeting was opened at 7.30 pm by Chairman, Ian Stevenson (ICS).

ICS apologised for there being no open meeting during the winter, due to illness.

Presentation by Tracey Kerly, Chief Executive Officer of Ashford Borough Council

Tracey presented the following:

- A short publicity video aimed at showing the advantages of Ashford.
- Ashford remains the lowest council tax in Kent:

District	Band D Charge 16/17	Band D Charge 17/18
Ashford	£150.00	£154.00
Canterbury	£194.31	£199.26
Dartford	£162.90	£167.85
Dover	£172.44	£177.39
Gravesham	£186.66	£191.61
Maidstone	£240.66	£245.61
Sevenoaks	£197.82	£202.77
Shepway	£232.56	£237.01
Swale	£159.93	£164.88
Thanet	£214.92	£219.87
Tonbridge & Malling	£192.51	£197.51*
Tunbridge Wells	£163.61	£168.59

- Status on Ashford's "Big 8" Strategic Projects:
 - Commercial Quarter - due to open 2018.
 - Elwick Place - first phase due to be complete early 2019.
 - Designer Outlet Expansion - due to open 2019.
 - Ashford International College - open to students in September 2017.
 - Junction 10a - Planning Inspectorate process ongoing.
 - International Signalling (upgrade to allow new Eurostar trains to stop at Ashford) - planned to be complete spring 2018.
 - Chilmington Green - work starting.
 - Jasmin Vardimon Dance Academy - project ongoing.

For more information see <http://www.ashford.gov.uk/strategic-projects>.

- An online "Timeline" showing ABC's achievements. (It is planned to make this available to the public soon.)
- Landscape Management now in-house (Aspire <http://www.ashford.gov.uk/aspire-landscape-management>).
- 'One You' – New community wellbeing project located in Park Mall <http://www.ashford.gov.uk/one-you>.
- Some statistics:
 - Recycling - 55%.

- Enquires handled by telephone - 74,012.
- Face-to-face enquiries - 30,372.
- Council Tax collection - 98.4%.
- Rent collection - 99.5%.
- Planning Applications – Around 70 from householders each month, c.95% granted
- Empty Properties – average 17 days (target 19).
- Kingdom (littering) – 1,500 fines in last 12 months, 78% payment rate
- Report It App – 1,200 since October 2016 (50% fly tipping, 20% abandoned vehicles).

Following the presentation the following issues were raised from the floor:

ISSUE	RESPONSE
Public toilet facilities	ABC is working with local businesses to provide public toilet facilities in the town centre by introducing the Community Toilet Scheme (http://www.ashford.gov.uk/community-toilet-scheme).
Litter	The town centre is cleaned daily. Fixed penalty notices are issued to offenders. There have been anti-littering campaigns. Yet people still drop litter(!)
Town centre shops	National shop chains need a certain size and type of population before opening in a town - ABC is trying to develop the town in a way that will attract these chains. Small, specialist shops are starting up in Park Mall.
Parking	ABC is looking at this.
Health provision.	Planning developments are subject to a levy for community infrastructure but ABC cannot tell the NHS what to spend it on.
Signage for shared space in Elwick Road	ABC to raise the issue with KCC.

Law and Order

ICS and Edward Young met with Inspector Andy Bidmead at Ashford police station on 23rd March to discuss local policing. Amongst many other things, it was explained that PCSOs were split as follows:

- Rural Team - 7 PCSOs
- Urban Team - 11 PCSOs

and that the Urban Team PCSOs were not area specific but allocated according to need.

The Forum had also been contacted by Sgt Jasmine (Jazz) Bloomfield who is the PCSO line manager and would be the contact point for general community policing enquiries.

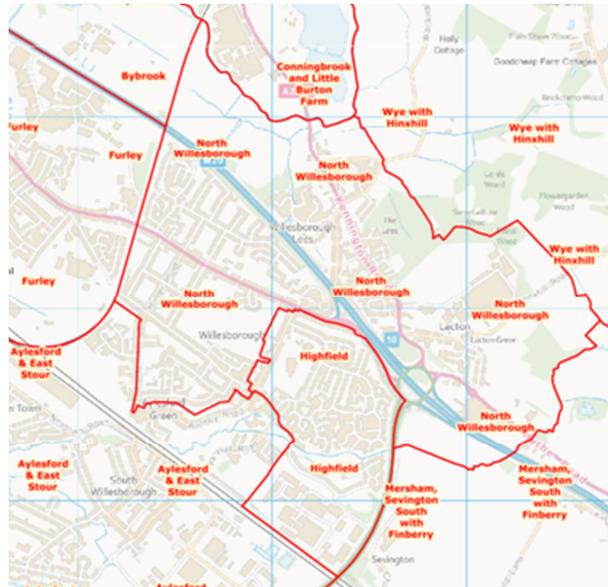
Inspector Bidmead agreed to attend the July open meeting, with Sgt Bloomfield, to brief the Forum.

ICS explained that there was a lot of crime data now available on the internet, with some examples on the display boards. This information is available at:

- North Willesborough: <https://www.police.uk/kent/90/crime/>
- Highfield: <https://www.police.uk/kent/85/crime/>
- Aylesford Green: <https://www.police.uk/kent/74/crime/>

LGBCE Boundary Review of Ashford

- The Local Government Boundary Commission for England was conducting a review of Ashford.
- Due to population growth in Ashford since the last review (2000) LGBCE recommended increasing the number of councillors from 43 to 47.
- LGBCE's Draft Recommendations were published for consultation 7th February and showed warding as follows:



With the number of councillors per ward as:

Ward name	Number of Cllrs
Aylesford & East Stour	2
Highfield	1
North Willesborough	2

- NWCF had made 2 comments:
 - That the ward called “North Willesborough” should be called something else to avoid confusion with the Forum name.
 - That Blake Court should be part of the “North Willesborough” ward.
- The consultation had finished on 3rd April - Final recommendations are due 6th June 2017.

Junction 10a/Barrey Road

Junction 10a - The Planning Inspectorate (PINS) examination was ongoing and due to be complete on 2nd June 2017. If all goes ahead construction is planned to start January 2018.

Barrey Road Junction - At a meeting on 16th January, with Highways England, KCC, ABC, and local residents and businesses, the following options/actions were laid out:

- A temporary 40mph speed limit on the A2070 to see what effect it would have.
- To relocate the bollards in Church Road Sevington to the junction between Church Road and Barrey Road. This would be subject to consultation, especially in view of the potential impact on surrounding roads.
- The long term solution would be to install traffic lights at the A2070/Barrey Road junction, at a cost of approximately £4.5 million.

So far no further progress appears to have been made.

Planning

The following was reported:

Sevington Development (U19)	Agreed, pending outcome of Junction 10a PINS process.
Blackwall Road South (U5)	Construction proceeding apace.
Rear of Waltham Close	Permitted subject to a Section 106 agreement - seemingly no progress as yet.
Care Home by WH Hospital.	Agreed, subject to conditions.

Kennington Rd Widening	Work scheduled for 19 th June to 10 th September 2017.
Highmead House (Part of U14)	Agreed, subject to conditions.
Land at Willesborough Lees (U14)	Planning application submitted but not yet decided.

Obstructed Highways

The Forum had received several reports of obstructed highways, in the following forms:

- Vehicle Access - Inconsiderate parking had prevented residents getting on and off driveways and negotiating streets with larger vehicles (e.g. camper van).
- Parking on Pavements
- Overgrown bushes and trees - NWCF was still receiving reports on this matter and reiterated that complainants should make a report on the KCC web page <http://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem> or contact the Forum.

The Forum is looking at ways to collect evidence and educate people. Residents with problems/evidence can contact the Forum.

Speedwatch Update

- The Speedwatch team is finally back out on the streets.
- Kent Speedwatch was introducing a new system which would share data with Sussex and Surrey, meaning speeders would now be checked over three counties.
- New volunteers always welcome.
- See us on Facebook - www.facebook.com/NorthWillesSpeedWatch

Councillor Report

George Koowaree (GK) reported:

- Pedestrian crossing at the bottom of Church Road - Still no movement- GK had raised and submitted a petition signed by 200 residents.
- Yellow line painting on Lees Road - Seems to have displaced parking into Cornes Close - to be followed up.
- Hospital Parking - To be discussed at the Joint Transportation Board meeting in June following a meeting between Residents, Hospital Admin, ABC and KCC.
- Pavement Parking - Central government is looking to make it illegal (as it is currently in Greater London).
- Potholes - Please report online via www.kent.gov.uk/highwayfaults.

GK also expressed concern over the impact of any movement of the bollards in Church Road, Sevington.

AOB

None

The meeting concluded at 9.10pm. The next Open Meeting will be on the 5th July 2017.
