

MAIDENHEAD TOWN FORUM

THURSDAY, 8 JULY 2021

PRESENT: Councillors David Coppinger (Chairman), Helen Taylor (Vice-Chairman), Gurpreet Bhagra, Ross McWilliams, Clive Baskerville, Chris Targowski, John Baldwin, Geoff Hill, Greg Jones, Gerry Clark and Gurch Singh

Also in attendance: Councillor Catherine del Campo, Councillor Simon Bond, Councillor Andrew Johnson, Councillor Donna Stimson, Councillor Samantha Rayner, Councillor Amy Tisi, Catherine Griffiths (Thames Valley Police) and Jeff Pick (Thames Valley Police)

Officers: Mark Beeley, David Cook, Christopher Wheeler, Jason Mills and Neil Walter

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 18th May 2021 were approved.

THAMES VALLEY POLICE UPDATE

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the order of agenda items was changed, so that Thames Valley Police Update would be considered first.

Catherine Griffiths, Thames Valley Police, gave the Forum an update on recent crime in Maidenhead. In the last 31 days:

Theft from cars & vans:

- Car driver's window smashed – 10
- Vehicle entered by unknown means – 4
- Index Plates stolen – 2
- Theft while stopped at traffic lights – 1

Theft of a motor vehicle:

- Cars - 4
- Audi A3, Land Rover Defender, Mazda 2S (found by owner – forgot where it was parked), Volvo S 40, VW Golf, Ford Focus.
- Motor Bikes – 1 (Kawasaki 100 E8F motorbike)
- Disability Scooter – 1
- Vans – 2 (Peugeot Partner van, Ford Transit van)
- Theft of Bicycles - 5

Burglary – which included houses – sheds garages & outbuildings – businesses – building sites:

- Burglary Dwelling – 3

- Attempted Burglary Dwelling – 2
- Sheds Garages & outbuildings – 3
- Businesses – 2
- Building sites – 2
- Assaults - 32
- Public Order offences - 15
- Racially aggravated offences – 7

Catherine Griffiths confirmed that there had been no major issues relating to Euro 2020 in Maidenhead or Windsor.

The Chairman asked what Catherine Griffith's opinion was of the resident who painted the England flag on some roundabouts in Maidenhead.

Catherine Griffiths said that she had no objection to that but would need to understand the context from a police perspective in case there was an issue.

Jeff Pick explained that often missing cars were due to members of the public forgetting where they had parked. Burglaries were generally down on usual figures as it was harder for thieves to predict when residents would be home. Much of the car crime around Maidenhead was due to a few individuals who had now been arrested.

Councillor Baldwin asked if any of the cycle thefts had occurred from the new lock up at the train station.

Jeff Pick said that if a theft occurred on station property then it would fall under the responsibility of British Transport Police. Cycle thefts were hard to spot when they were in progress but having a number of locking devices made it easier to prevent.

Councillor Bond said that the community speed watch scheme included members of the local community who were concerned about speeding. He had noted that the support for the scheme could end after 19th July but in Windsor the volunteers would continue to work in conjunction with the police.

Catherine Griffiths said that she was not aware of an issue with the Maidenhead scheme but there were a number of volunteers who could assist the police on projects like speed watch.

Jeff Pick explained that volunteers would not be used until the Covid situation was better. Communication messages would be sent out when volunteers would be able to join.

Councillor Taylor said that video doorbells were useful in recording suspicious behaviour outside homes. She asked if the information was being sent to and used by the police.

Jeff Pick said that there had been a lot of promotional work undertaken on the security benefits of video doorbells and the response had been fantastic. People had been sending in footage of suspicious activity which had been captured by video doorbells and this could be used to see which roads and times were a target for criminals.

Councillor Singh asked how the number of crimes compared to previous months and where most crimes took place in the town.

Catherine Griffiths said that there were different hot spots for different crimes and she would be happy to find the figures.

ACTION – Catherine Griffiths to send Councillor Singh figures relating to different crime spots around Maidenhead.

Councillor Rayner joined the meeting.

Councillor Bhangra thanked Catherine Griffiths and her team for all their hard work. He received the monthly newsletter from Mike Darrah and it was pleasing to see that crime was down overall. However, Councillor Bhangra had noticed that sexual offences had increased and asked if there was any reason for this.

Catherine Griffiths said that she would take this away and find out if there was any reason linked to the number of offences that had recently occurred.

ACTION – Catherine Griffiths to report back to Councillor Bhangra if there was an explanation for the increase in sexual offences over the past month.

Councillor G Jones said that he had come across drug bags when out on walks. He asked how these should be sent to the police to deal with.

Jeff Pick said that the neighbourhood teams could be emailed and they would be able to investigate.

Councillor Baldwin said that he reported all drug related material to the police, they could take custodial action and also worked with local communities on things like resilience.

TRAFFIC/ROADWORKS UPDATE

Chris Wheeler, Highway Services Manager, gave an update on traffic and roadworks around the town. The work on the roundabouts was part of the housing enablement project, with three roundabouts now complete. Oldfield Road roundabout was now complete, with some small tweaks to the timing and flows needed. Additional signs were being implemented to help residents use the upgraded roundabouts and ensure that driver behaviour changed to match the new layout. On Braywick Road roundabout, traffic management would be looked at and work would take place across 16 weeks. A major project with city fibre would be taking place and small sections of works would be approved at any one time to minimise impact on traffic. The resurfacing programme would start in mid July 2021, with further details available in the Highways newsletter. The M4 would be having three full weekend closures in July, August and September. Chris Wheeler recommended that Members and residents visit the One.Network website which listed all roadworks that had been scheduled.

Councillor Singh asked if the train station work had a completion date. He said that the work on Oldfield Road was looking good.

Chris Wheeler said that the project was led on by a different department. Works were progressing but he would ask the relevant department if a date was confirmed for work to be completed.

ACTION – Chris Wheeler to ask if a date for Maidenhead Train Station work to be completed had been confirmed and report back to Councillor Singh.

Councillor Tisi joined the meeting.

PARKING

Neil Walter, Parking and Enforcement Manager, explained that due to the numerous redevelopment projects around the town centre, a number of on street parking bays had been removed. Disabled parking had been affected and work had been undertaken with the Disability and Inclusion Forum to relocate these bays to various other locations. Some of the

impact had been from Covid measures, for example wider pavements and cycle lanes, most of which was still in place. Decisions would be made on whether to make these schemes more long term. Car parks around the town centre were open like normal, with multi story car parks being particularly quiet. Surface level car parks and the site at the Landings had proven to be popular spots for residents and visitors to park when visiting the town centre.

Linda Lesley, a local resident, said that there was hardly any on street short term parking left. Availability on West Street was very limited and residents might want to use short term bays to pick up things, for example Click and Collect services. However, residents would now need to pay for at least 1 hour of parking. This was not encouraging residents and visitors to shop in Maidenhead.

Neil Walter said that there was no net loss of the time limited waiting bays. The bays that had been lost had been relocated elsewhere in the town, for example on Queen Street, King Street, St Ives Road, York Road and Bridge Street. There was no net loss on the overall number of bays available to residents.

Councillor Taylor mentioned that there were half hour bays available at the bottom of the Nicholsons Shopping Centre. Neil Walter confirmed that there some available but they were not free.

Councillor Baldwin questioned Neil Walters claim of there being no net loss of bays and asked if it really was net zero. Residents were saying that it was harder to park so he was surprised if this was true.

Neil Walter explained that the loss of parking space due to the reallocation of the disabled bays had been repositioned elsewhere. This meant there was no net loss due to the disabled bays being moved. Residents generally preferred to park in surface car parks. Regeneration was the main cause for the lack of space.

Councillor Singh said that bays in areas like Bridge Street were well used. Businesses on the road had put forward a proposal to change the stretch of road to one way to maximise parking and the permanent space available.

Neil Walter said that he assumed existing bus routes would be the main issue. The Highways team would be able to review the feasibility of the proposal.

Councillor Hill asked if the RBWM parking strategy was likely to change. Parking had been lost at the Town Hall, Grove Road car park would soon be going and the Landings site was only temporary.

Neil Walter said that residents preferred surface level car parks. Regeneration did not include loss of the parking and Nicholsons Shopping Centre car park would soon be the main place for parking.

Councillor Hill said it was important to consider other trades, for example plumbers and electricians, who also needed to park around the town.

Neil Walter suggested it was worth discussing with the Cabinet Member for Parking, Councillor Cannon.

Councillor Stimson said that due to the amount of regeneration going on around the town centre, residents needed to get used to parking in different places. Other car parks would still be close to shops and other businesses in the town centre.

Linda Lesley said that she did not understand the logic, multi-story car parks were harder to access and more confusing to use. She had recently visited Marlow and found the parking

situation there to be a really pleasant experience. The parking situation in Maidenhead was discouraging people from visiting the town.

Councillor Singh said that the car park on Reform Road was very quiet and asked if the council was able to let people use the car park.

Neil Walter clarified that Councillor Singh was talking about the Clyde House car park, which was a council owned building. There was no reason why the public could not use the car park at the current time.

COVID MEMORIAL PRESENTATION

Councillor Johnson, Leader of the Council, introduced the item to the Forum. He said that there had been strong support for a memorial to all those residents lost to the pandemic. Councillor Stimson and Councillor Taylor had been pushing the project forward and it would be a fitting tribute to all those who had passed away.

Jason Mills, Countryside Manager, explained that Councillor Stimson and Councillor Taylor had approached him with the idea of having somewhere for reflection. Oakley Green Cemetery was quickly identified as a suitable location, with the area containing a wildlife pond which had been installed some time ago. The pond was now overgrown and the pond lining had been compromised, so this was a good opportunity to reinstate the pond and create a memorial. The pond had to be completely redone, with a new liner put in. Jason Mills shared some photos of the older liner, the new liner and what the pond currently looked like. Officers would now need to wait to check that the lining was secure and let the water settle. The area surrounding the pond had been seeded with grass, while the area around the edge of the pond had been seeded with wildflower mix that would attract various insects. The next stage of the project was to put aquatic flowers in the pond. A sign would also be implemented so that people understood what purpose the area had and also to reinstate the bench at the site.

Councillor Taylor thanked everyone that had helped with the project over the past year. A Facebook group had been set up called 'RBWM Covid Memorial Volunteers Oakley Green', where interested residents could help with the project. There were plans to plant a tree at the site too.

Councillor Baldwin said that he might have some photos of the site in previous years, he would send them to Jason Mills if he could find them.

Councillor Baskerville asked if it was known how many people in RBWM had died due to the pandemic. He asked if a memorial plaque would be added to the site.

358 people had died from Covid in RBWM. Councillor Stimson said that the team wanted to keep the site low key and be more of a natural memorial. Being out in the garden was good for wellbeing. The project was for residents so if there were things people wanted to see, Councillor Stimson encouraged them to get in contact.

Councillor Taylor added that it was the purpose of the Facebook group, to allow residents to shape the project.

Jeff Pick suggested that information on the project could be shared out as part of his alert messaging system.

The Chairman passed on his thanks to Jason Mills and all those involved with the project.

'JOINED UP THINKING' OF RBWM

Councillor Stimson briefly explained that RBWM was looking to join up much of its thinking so that there could be better collaboration across the council. The new Corporate Plan would look to address issues and how to deal with them in an effective way.

ITEM SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE FORUMS

Councillor Baldwin said that he would email the Chairman to discuss the future of the Hindu Society. If necessary it could come to a future meeting as an agenda item.

Linda Lesley said that redevelopment, parking and traffic all needed to be consistent. The memorial pond was wonderful and an item at the previous Forum meeting on Maidenhead Waterway was also very interesting. Linda Lesley said that she would like to see an item on high rise flats that were being built in the town centre.

Councillor Singh asked if there would be a big screen in Kidwells Park for the Euro 2020 final on Sunday.

The Chairman said he would ask officers but short notice meant that it would be challenging to do.

Councillor Hill said that he had been asking for a parking strategy in Maidenhead for a while. Developers did not have to provide parking and Councillor Hill felt that it was a disaster waiting to happen. It was important that the town had a parking strategy going forward.

The Chairman said that it could be worth asking the Cabinet Member for Parking, Councillor Cannon, to attend a future meeting of the Forum.

Councillor Baldwin said that he would liaise with Naomi Markham in the Waste Management Team regarding a little pick after the Euro 2020 final, if a big screen did happen in Kidwells Park.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting was scheduled to take place on Monday 6th September 2021, starting at 6.15pm.

The meeting, which began at 6.15 pm, finished at 7.40 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....