



ISLINGTON

Canonbury Ward Partnership

Walter Sickert Community Centre, Canonbury Crescent, London, N1 2FB

AGENDA FOR CANONBURY WARD PARTNERSHIP PUBLIC MEETING

Enquiries to : Alastair Hannah
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Date and time : Thursday 26th October, 19:00-21:00

Present:

Alex Diner Canonbury Ward Councillor
Clare Jeapes Canonbury Ward Councillor
Nick Wayne Canonbury Ward Councillor
Diarmaid Ward Executive Member for Housing, Islington Council
Alastair Hannah Canonbury Ward Partnership Coordinator

Agenda Items:

1. Update on fire safety in the borough	Councillor Diarmaid Ward, Executive Member for Housing and Richard Wyatt, London Fire Brigade
2. Police update	Sergeant Paul Spencer
3. Ward Improvement Plan & projects	Presentation by Councillor Nick Wayne Updates from local organisations
4. AOB	
5. Announcements	

Prior to the meeting commencing, a minute's silence was held in memory of...

1. Update on fire safety in the borough post-Grenfell – Cllr Ward and Richard Wyatt

Immediately following the Grenfell fire, staff from Islington including social workers, Housing Operations staff, London Fire Brigade officers and the council's Director of Housing Needs were in Kensington and Chelsea to support the response efforts. This support is still ongoing from Islington.

Every block in the borough will have a fire risk assessment whether it's council-owned, private housing or a housing association property. These are detailed reports which can be requested by any resident for their block.

The council's policy is to check all council blocks every three years, whilst tall blocks are checked once a year. For all blocks of ten storeys or above, the fire risk assessments have been put online. You can search for these on the website and there is also a glossary which explains the terms and language used. Please browse the following link: <https://www.islington.gov.uk/about-the-council/emergency-planning-and-business-continuity/fire-safety-in-islington/fire-risk-assessments>. All our fire risk assessments will ultimately go online, but the priority was to put taller blocks on first.

There is a dedicated email address which can also be contacted: firesafety@islington.gov.uk

Our housing teams and fire safety teams have been working very hard and will be happy to answer questions from residents.

All purpose built blocks are hard-wired with smoke alarms. We are currently procuring a provider to install communal systems in all street properties managed by us or our partners.

There is an Independent Homes and Estate Safety Board which provides oversight of our fire safety management. This has an independent chair from Oxford City Council and our own staff attend, as well as Councillor Diarmaid Ward.

A major concern post-Grenfell was cladding, in particular aluminium composite material (ACM). The council undertook a full audit in the immediate aftermath of the disaster and one block – Braithwaite House in the south of the borough – had ACM on parts of its exterior. One day after the material was found, round the clock fire safety patrols were undertaken and by the beginning of the next week, contractors arrived to remove the cladding. This work is now completed and no council block in the borough contains ACM in its cladding.

Two buildings owned by the Guinness Trust have ACM cladding. The council's work with all housing associations is ongoing.

Questions and answers:

Resident: I live on "the uppers" and I believe that there is breeze block material on the inside and polystyrene on the outside of my block.

Response: Richard Wyatt (LFB) – I have never heard of polystyrene being used as cladding, but there should be a barrier against heat between materials. Cllr Ward – Whilst I am not familiar with the block in question, you will be able to find information online through the resources mentioned earlier. The Council will do fire risk assessments on all communal areas and the London Fire Brigade can be contacted for fire safety advice within your property. Cllr Wayne – We believe it would be helpful and reassuring for people to be given information, this can be relayed to residents via ward councillors. Cllr Ward will follow up this concern with colleagues at the council.

Resident: I went to view the top part of a converted house and want to know about the fire safety in these areas

Response: Cllr Ward – the council are responsible for all blocks, even if managed by partners. We are currently out to procure communal fire systems in all street properties. Richard Wyatt (LFB) – the LFB advice remains to stay put in properties if you are aware of a fire. The LFB can provide risk assessments in your house and give you advice about how to keep safe in your home. Please pop by your local fire station if you would like. There is no cost to any assessments or smoke alarms fitted. You can also visit the LFB website at <http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/>. Nicky Ludgate (Help on Your Doorstep) - HoYD can support in contacting the LFB.

Resident: Is the council supposed to do checks on maisonettes?

Response: The council does fire risk assessments for every council block. If it's a housing association or a private landlord, they will have their own risk assessments. Anyone can request the FRA for their own blocks. The firesafety@islington.gov.uk email address can be used to get in touch.

Resident: Some blocks have no balconies and the lift often breaks down. These blocks don't necessarily fit neatly in to categories we have discussed. What is being done to protect vulnerable residents in blocks like these?

Response: With those brick-built, purpose-built buildings, the compartmentation is very effective. Grenfell was different to this and because there is no cladding on this block, the risk of fire spreading is minimal. Richard Wyatt (LFB) – as part of a LFB home fire safety visit, details of vulnerabilities are put on a database which informs the LFB response. In the home visit, we can give advice on what to say to 999 and how best to communicate your situation. Please get in touch. Cllr Ward – every council tenant has had a letter about fire safety, we have gone to every block and the information is being put online. Please get in touch with us or the LFB if you have any concerns.

Cllr Wayne: Can we have the Fire Risk Assessments visible/available in blocks, where there are concierges, etc.? Cllr Ward: That sounds like a good idea to follow up which we can do.

Resident: Do the council have information on vulnerable residents?

Cllr Ward: Our housing operations teams have all the relevant information for council tenants, including vulnerabilities and other needs.

Update from Southern Housing (partner organisation): Fire Risk assessors have been going round to all properties. Estate inspections are done every two months. We've sent out letters to all residents with fire safety advice and have included fire brigade leaflets.

Cllr Wayne: The topic raises questions about non-council buildings. What responsibilities do the council have for those buildings, for private sector buildings, commercial buildings, etc.?

Cllr Ward: For commercial buildings we have no legal responsibility but we do have a moral responsibility. Our planning department has written to private landlords to remind them of their legal responsibilities. We do have special responsibility for houses in multiple occupation (3 people or more not of the same family) and we have a licensing regime for those properties. We have been proactive in making sure HMOs are safe too.

Cllr Wayne: In terms of fire prevention, what advice can the LFB give?

Richard Wyatt (LFB): In communal areas we have always asked for help residents so we can help them. We have two fire engines covering Islington. If you do see anything which is a concern, please report it to the LFB: give us a call and we can come down, pop in to your local fire station. We can do visual audits to check on the safety of areas. The LFB can be an intermediary between residents and the council.

Resident: Does the council share information with the fire brigade?

Panel representatives: Yes we do share information.

Resident: If people are refusing to cooperate in removing materials, complying with tenancy conditions regarding fire safety, etc. what can be done?

Response: Cllr Ward and Cllr Jeapes will bring up resident's specific concern with Housing officers.

Resident: When changes are made to doors, for instance, would it be possible to speak to residents and update them on fire safety at the same time?

Response: The work will be performed by contractors rather than council staff. Every council tenant should have received information, there is the email address and website to use as resources and councillors are being as proactive as they can in attending meetings and making themselves available. Encourage anyone to get in touch.

Update on the Housing Act and its implementation – Cllr Ward

The government has not given any extra money to fund improvements works following the Grenfell tragedy. Originally assurances had been made about funding but the government has since stated that fire safety is the responsibility of the landlord.

The council's financial situation in relation to housing needs some context. We can only afford to build council properties by cross-subsidy i.e. using receipts from market value properties to fund social and affordable units. On Right to Buy properties, we get one third of the money from the Treasury. We must spend that within 3 years and it cannot be combined with any other grant money.

In any private development of fewer than 10 units, the developer must make a contribution of £50,000 per unit towards affordable housing. If it is more than 10 units, our planning policies state

that 50% must be affordable housing. This is not the government's definition of affordable, which is 80% of market rent, and would therefore be unaffordable to most Islington residents.

Of that 50% in larger developments, 70% must be social housing at social rent. 35% of the whole development is therefore social housing. The remainder is shared ownership which is an intermediary between council rent and private.

In relation to St Mary's Path, which was raised by a resident, the red lines set out by the council state that the development must have as many social units as before and everyone in them must be able to go back to social rent if they wish.

Another element of the Housing Act is the so-called "tenant-tax". This proposed that any household with a household income of £40,000 or more (in London) would have to pay extra money towards their rent. That could mean two parents on £20,000 each, which hardly falls under the government's definition of "high income". This borough was involved in the campaign against this element of the Act and as a result of this campaigning, it will not be introduced. The council have written to housing associations to stay the same too.

In addition, another element of the Housing Act due to begin in April 2018 is the end of secure tenancies for new council tenants. They will get a fixed term tenancy but we have had no secondary legislation on it so do not know the full specifics yet.

The final element is the sale of high value assets, with the government compelling us to sell off our "higher value" council homes. Not only must the homes be sold once they become void, but all the proceeds from the sale will go to the government. In Islington, it is estimated to be 300 homes a year which will need to be sold. The policy has actually been set up as a levy which means that whether we sell the homes or not, the government will charge us for the homes.

Cllr ward is linked in with all the executive members for housing in London and a meeting has been requested with Sajid Javid, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

Resident: How can the government justify the sale of high value council homes?

Response: Cllr Ward states that the government have said the money from sales will enable the extension of Right to Buy to Housing Associations.

2. Police update – Sgt Paul Spencer

The police website has been updated and you can find it online at <https://www.met.police.uk/> or simply search "Met Police". You can put in your address and it will bring up your local ward, with information on crime statistics. I would also urge residents to contact myself and the ward officers, we are available to communicate with residents and want to do so. Our email address is:

Canonbury.smt@metpolice.co.uk.

For residents interested in a more in-depth discussion of crime, the next Safer Neighbourhood Panel meeting for the ward – a 2-hour meeting to discuss crime trends – will be on **29th November 19:00-21:00 at the Walter Sickert Community Centre.**

Resident: Do the statistics accurately represent how it is on the ground? I've heard concerns from people about heightened ASB in actuality, but not in the statistics. What should I say to neighbours concerned about these things?

Response: Sgt Paul Spencer – the website does not break the stats down. There are multiple options for concerned residents: 999 for emergencies, the ward website, there is information which walks you through reporting procedures.

Resident: What has been the outcome of putting in LED lights at Western Isles?

Response: Sgt Paul Spencer – that would be better discussed at safer neighbourhood panel.

Resident: Is there anywhere where the number of hours of ward officers are registered for public information?

Response: Sgt Paul Spencer – PCs will tweet when they're out on ward. Map My PC shows their locations.

3. Ward improvement plan and projects – presentation by Cllr Wayne

Whenever there is a major development, there are consequences as a result of it. In order to compensate the local community, there is a levy against developers. It used to be called Section 106 money. In 2014 the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) came in. Islington has its own scale which it applies in these instances – it can be found on the website. The key fact with CIL funding is that it can only be used for infrastructure/capital investment, not for revenue or day to day expenses. In Islington the rule is that 50% must be spent in local areas via the ward improvement plans (WIP).

This is for ward councillors to decide on through these forums. Historically because Canonbury hasn't had big developments there hasn't been any money. Because of the Dover Court redevelopment, the current balance is £193,000. Some money has been spent on the accessibility project along the New River Walk to create better disabled access to it.

The Ward Improvement plan is a running document. It's a little thin on the ground in terms of ideas and we are always looking for practical ideas. We are very grateful for those who have provided responses such as the Rose Bowl, Almorah Centre and Canonbury Responds. We've also had more informal feedback from other residents and stakeholders, which is welcome too.

Update from Jonathan Gibbs, The Rose Bowl, on their CIL bid: The Rose Bowl is a council-owned youth centre, which the council commissions Isledon Arts to manage on their behalf. The numbers attending are increasing including intermediary age groups. Behind the RB, there is a wooded area. The CIL proposal is to bring this in to Rose Bowl in order to make better use of it.

Update from Paola, Ramsey Flowers: I am a resident of Ramsey Walk and Southern Housing. We started planting flowers after the council gave us permission to do this. In an area of overlap with the RB CIL bid, we are looking at the area between the alleyway and wooded bit. We would like to do a few things such as large planters to prevent delivery drivers, etc. using it.

Update from Margaret, Canonbury Responds (a network across Canonbury).

Resident: Is there a possibility of using CIL money to furnish and provide infrastructure to community centre?

Response: Cllr Wayne – the funding for used to build a community centre should also include furnishings and infrastructure. There is also the Estates Improvement budget which can be used for certain improvements.

Resident: Can the money be used on lighting improvements?

Resident: Have there been any submissions related to Rosemary Gardens?

Response: Cllr Wayne – there are conversations with community safety officers and the police about improving lighting, crime hot spots, etc. There is flexibility around CIL money and how it is spent, so it could potentially be used in this way.

Resident: I remember a suggestion to put a café in the playground of Rosemary Gardens, what happened to that?

Response: Cllr Wayne – That is the sort of proposal where if a community group came forward, we might be able to support in bringing a building up to specification, providing equipment/infrastructure, etc. There would need to be community support and a clear plan, otherwise it would be beyond the abilities of CIL funding to cover it.

Update from Derrick Velloso, Islington Sea Cadets. We have successfully raised some money. Community Payback (criminal offenders who have to undertake community services) come in every Saturday. We've nearly reached a point where the building is finished. However, there's no heating or gas supply or electricity. One suggestion – as it used to be an electric sub-station – is to put solar panels or an air source heat pump. Extending thanks to Cllrs for previous support. Would like to use the building during the daytime for groups and to make sure it's used as much as possible.

Cllr Wayne update on topic of smaller grants. The Local Initiative Fund - £15k a year – is targeted at small projects (doesn't have to be infrastructure) and local initiatives. This fund has previously been used to support the Sea Cadets.

Please get your applications in.

4. AOB

Canonbury Responds will be having a debate next Thursday evening.

Leaders Question Time with Cllr Richard Watts will be taking place on 30th October at St Stephen's Church.

5. Announcements

The Council has set up an energy company offering a cheaper service than the "Big Six". More info here: <https://www.angelicenergy.co.uk/>

Islington is applying to be one of two London Boroughs of Culture. An open call is being done for any creative ideas. Please follow this link for more information: <https://www.islington.gov.uk/libraries->

[arts-and-heritage/arts/arts-partnerships-and-networks/london-borough-of-culture?dm_i=2P53,KL8Q,4I83GX,25PLD,1](#) or type in “London Borough of Culture” on the Islington Council website.

The Council has a pledge to tackle hate crime which can be signed by anyone. For further information on hate crime and/or to sign the pledge, please visit this page:

<https://www.islington.gov.uk/policing-safety/how/hatecrime>