



Tuesday 4 July 2017

7.30-9.30pm

Birchmore Hall, Highbury Quadrant Estate

Chair	Councillor Osh Gantly	Highbury East ward
Councillors	Councillor Aysegul Erdogan	Highbury East ward
	Councillor Caroline Russell	Highbury East ward
Council officers	James Blythe	Ward Partnership Co-ordinator
	Bhupesh Thapa	Assistant Parks Manager (Central)
	Lara Ellington-Brown	Projects Officer
Other	Jason Frisby	London Fire Brigade – Islington Fire Station Manager
	Graham Carter Laura Leporati Jessica Taylor Gareth Edwards	TfL / Hochtief
	PC Jennie Young PCSO Nina Griffith	Metropolitan Police – Safer Neighbourhood Team (Highbury East)

MINUTES

1. Welcome and introductions

Cllr Gantly welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the ward councillors, explaining that there was a very heavy agenda for the meeting and items would need to be dealt with relatively swiftly.

2. Minutes and matters arising

There being no objections to the minutes of the previous meeting, Cllr Gantly signed them as an accurate record.

3. Fire safety

Cllr Gantly introduced the item, reminding everyone present of the importance of fire safety generally but in particular given the recent tragic events at Grenfell tower in Kensington and Chelsea.

Jason Frisby, Station Manager for Islington Fire Station, was present and reminded the meeting of key points relating to fire safety, namely:

- Stay put: although many people have concerns about the advice to stay in your property unless you are directly affected by fire or smoke, this remains the Fire Brigade's advice and there are good reasons for it. Staying in your property, protected by the building's fire safety mechanisms such as fire doors, will generally be safer than trying to escape, and you may also hinder the work of the Fire Brigade by attempting to escape.
- Consider your own safety and how your behaviour affects the safety of others: keeping appliances switched off where possible; shutting internal doors; using a deep ashtray if a smoker, for example, could help slow the spread of a fire and save lives.
- The Fire Brigade do offer home safety visits free of charge. By visiting their website (<http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/HomeFireSafetyVisit.asp>) you can find out more about these visits and book one for your home.

There were then a number of questions and answers from residents and councillors.

Cllr Gantly asked about the rumours that a fridge had exploded in Grenfell tower and caused the fire. Jason confirmed that, while appliances are generally safe, they do occasionally malfunction and residents should keep a regular eye on manufacturers' websites for any recall notices. He was not able to comment on the specifics of the Grenfell incident, given the likelihood of legal proceedings in future.

A resident asked whether the stay put advice from the Fire Brigade, which is repeated on the council's website, was really appropriate given that by the time someone is directly affected by fire and / or smoke, it may be too late for

them to safely evacuate a property. Jason commented that, where buildings are well designed, you were likely to put yourself at more risk by leaving your property than staying put.

A resident asked about whether Islington towers had fire doors, and about the question of illegal sub-letting, which is rumoured to have been common at Grenfell. Cllr Gantly responded that the council had a very tough enforcement approach with tenants who sublet properties illegally and recovered a number of such properties each year. More generally there was currently an active review of fire safety in all public buildings. Cllr Russell informed the meeting that the recent meeting of the full council had resolved to publish the Fire Risk Assessments for all council buildings, and that preparation for this was underway.

A resident asked about whether the recommendations of the coroner conducting the inquest into the Lakanal fire in 2009 had been implemented in Islington. Cllr Russell confirmed that its recommendations were informing current thinking, for example the publication of Fire Risk Assessments (which the coroner had recommended).

A resident asked about non-council owned buildings. Cllr Gantly responded that, while council tenants were the immediate priority for the council, the Planning Service were reviewing all planning applications over the last twenty years to get a sense of any buildings which might give cause for concern.

Bike shelters were raised as being very helpful for residents who were being affected by the council's currently tough enforcement of the ban on keeping bikes in corridors. Cllr Gantly confirmed that there was funding for more bike shelters but safety was the council's priority, and Cllr Russell agreed to take the matter up outside the meeting.

A resident asked about the specific issue of bikes being left outside the Highbury Grange Medical Centre. Cllr Russell undertook to investigate the matter.

Cllr Gantly concluded the item by inviting those present to join in a round of applause in recognition of the bravery and hard work of the Fire Brigade, and thanked Jason Frisby for attending.

4. Highbury Corner works: update

Cllr Gantly welcomed Graham Carter, Laura Leporati, Jessica Taylor (TfL) and Gareth Edwards (Hochtief) from the Highbury Corner works team to the

meeting and Laura then gave an update on progress and next steps for the replacement of the bridge under Highbury Corner.

The key points were:

- A section of the bridge was replaced over Easter, and these works were completed ahead of time, allowing utilities companies to begin the work of relocating utilities earlier than planned.
- The next major phase would be in December and the current road and pavement layout would remain until then. Over the Christmas period there would be an 8-day closure on the East London and North London lines of the Overground, and a 20-day closure of the Holloway Road to allow for the replacement of the two remaining sections of the bridge.
- This would be the final major piece of work to be done, and then the project would move on to tidying up the local area and returning various pieces of street furniture to their previous locations in the first few months of 2018.

There were then a number of questions from residents to TfL representatives.

A resident asked what the overall end date for the project was, and whether this was a delay on the original proposals. In response, Graham Carter confirmed that the substantial works would be completed on schedule by the very early days of 2018 and that the overall end date was now mid-2018.

A resident asked about the knock-on impact on other local roads, and Laura confirmed that TfL were working closely with Islington Council and other bodies which do work on roads to ensure that no one else worked on the roads to which traffic would be diverted during the closure period. TfL representatives were also committed to learning the lessons from previous closures.

A number of residents asked about cleanliness around the site, with varying opinions expressed about whether it had improved in recent months. TfL representatives explained that they worked to keep their site as clean as possible, but that the council was responsible for cleaning the pavements outside the site. A resident commented that the area around Barclay's bank was a particular priority for cleansing, and councillors agreed to raise that with the relevant teams in the council.

A resident asked about whether Highbury Place could be re-opened to traffic. This was not possible during the works as some utilities work needed to take

place there and it was a key storage area, but it was expected that it would reopen after the works.

A resident noted that some signage was incorrect and confusing around the works, and TfL confirmed that they had already taken action to get it changed.

Cllr Russell asked about the surface of the roundabout and whether a risk assessment for cycling had been done recently. TfL representatives agreed that this was an important area and they had recently repaired some major potholes which had emerged and were investigating what else they could do to improve the quality of the road surface.

A resident asked whether a 'KEEP CLEAR' sign or box could be used to allow the free flow of traffic, especially buses, from Upper Street to St Paul's Road. TfL were looking into the possibility of this, although some versions of this measure would require a Traffic Order which might delay action.

There was then a discussion about the possible future plans for the gyratory. TfL confirmed that this was the responsibility of a different part of their organisation but that they understood the outcomes of the 2016 consultation would be published in the autumn. It was not clear how likely the works were to go ahead, but there was a consensus that the ward partnership should have a fuller discussion of the matter at a future meeting, with a view to developing a shared vision for the gyratory and surrounding areas.

[Post-meeting note: the project has its own website which can be viewed at tfl.gov.uk/highbury-corner. If residents have any concerns or issues they wish to raise they can email PLO.HighburyCorner@hochtief.co.uk]

5. Highbury Fields building project: update

Lara Ellington-Brown, the Project Officer responsible for the Highbury Fields building, gave the meeting a brief update on progress since the last Ward Partnership meeting in March. The key points were:

- The council would shortly be issuing procurement documentation to appoint a design team. As part of that procurement exercise tenderers would be expected to produce boards showing their vision for the Fields and their experience, which would be displayed publicly for residents to give an indicative vote about their preference.

- Other current work is focused on a demand assessment for catering provision, for which residents may have noticed recently installed people counters on the Fields.
- An email address had been set up for the project – Highburyfieldsimprovement@islington.gov.uk.

Cllr Gantly then invited questions to Lara.

Residents asked Lara to confirm that there had definitely not been a decision about having one or two buildings, and she confirmed that there had not. She was also asked about whether the tennis courts would be moved, and Lara said that this was not a priority at this point for the council.

A resident asked whether the church extension was connected, and Lara said that this was a different project. In response to a question about the caretaker's hut, she explained that the hut structure had been left standing for now as it contributed to the overall permitted footprint of buildings on the Fields. Its future was certainly in scope for the project.

There was then a discussion about the ways in which the council would involve residents in the process. There was a request for the procurement briefs to be circulated for consultation, but the council was not intending to consult at this stage. There was, though, a general agreement that, at the appropriate point in the process, a wide-ranging and substantive consultation was very important, involving all users of the Fields, not just those who regularly attend Ward Partnership meetings. Engaged residents could support the council to promote the consultation to others. Lara reminded the meeting that she was intending to use a number of means of engagement, not least the website, emails, twitter, letter-drops and noticeboards.

6. Policing and crime: update and discussion

Cllr Gantly welcomed officers from the Safer Neighbourhood team covering the ward to the meeting, and everyone present joined in a round of applause to thank them and all police officers for their bravery and hard work which had been so much in evidence in recent, terrible events at Westminster, Manchester, London Bridge and Finsbury Park as well as elsewhere and in the ward.

PC Young spoke briefly, outlining some recent changes to the policing structure locally, which arose from the merger of the Islington police with Camden, and explained that there was not now a regular night-time police presence in the ward. This meant that officers relied on information received

from residents to help them respond to incidents. She encouraged people to be 'nosy neighbours' and inform the police of crime and anti-social behaviour which was affecting them. PC Young also said that smart water was being rolled out in the ward and encouraged residents to take up the free offer to protect their property.

She also introduced her colleague PCSO Nina Griffith, who spoke to encourage residents to consider setting up Neighbourhood Watch schemes in their area. She said that these were easy to set up and very useful. The email address for the police team is SNTNI-HighburyEast@met.pnn.police.uk.

Cllr Gantly invited questions to the officers. A resident commented on the levels of anxiety about knife crime and the need for a co-ordinated, multi-agency approach. In response, Cllr Gantly suggested that the Ward Partnership invite Pat Green from the Ben Kinsella Trust to attend a future meeting and speak about prevention of serious youth violence. Officers also commented that there was a new safeguarding section in the police locally, with a relatively large number of officers working on education, prevention and support for those affected by gangs and youth violence.

A resident commented that crime in the area and the broader issues around youth violence in the borough were in large part due to government cuts to funding for agencies supporting young people.

A resident raised the issue of drug dealing, sexual misconduct and public urination issues around Aberdeen Park. Officers were happy to investigate and mentioned this as an example of information that was very valuable to them.

7. Blackstock Road Sainsbury's

There was a brief discussion of this item. The consensus of the meeting was in opposition to the appeal by Sainsbury's and all present wanted further information about what action could be taken. As Planning officers were unable to be present, this would need to be taken up by email after the meeting.

[Post-meeting note: this information was then circulated by email on 6 July]

8. Panel question and answer session

Under the general question and answer session, the matter of the transfer of the Sotheby Mews Day Centre services to Highbury Roundhouse was raised.

There was an extensive discussion of the subject, in which the following points were raised:

- Cllr Gantly commented that Labour councillors had run on a platform with a strong focus on social housing, and that a scenario which retained all the Sotheby Mews services at a new site and delivered a substantial amount of new social housing was something they would support.
- Cllr Russell and a number of local residents expressed the view that the culture and activities at Sotheby Mews had not been adequately considered by the council, and that older people's interests were being sacrificed for other priorities.
- The chair of the Roundhouse attended and explained that they were working with the council to try to accommodate the services transferring from Sotheby Mews but that was dependent on service users being willing to move from one location to another (by minibus or otherwise).

A resident then raised the issue of anti-social behaviour on the Fields, and of barbecues. All councillors condemned anti-social behaviour and wanted more to be done. There was a difference of opinion over the matter of barbecues. Cllr Russell was supportive of a ban on barbecues, while Cllrs Gantly and Erdogan wanted them to be permitted, but with restrictions.

A resident asked about getting support from councillors for finding somewhere to park their motorbike, and councillors offered to discuss this with them after the meeting.

Councillors also committed to investigate further the possibility of replacing the postbox at Highbury Corner.

9. Any other business

There being no other business, Cllr Gantly closed the meeting, thanking officers for attending and providing support to the Ward Partnership.

The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 13 September and further details of venue and agenda would follow.