

Highbury West Ward Partnership Meeting

Thursday 19th November 2020, 19:00 – 21:00, on Zoom

Chair: Councillor Theresa Debono

In attendance were approximately 50 members of the public, plus:

CTD – Councillor Theresa Debono

CAH – Councillor Andy Hull

CRK – Councillor Roulin Khondoker

PA – Pamela Aristokle, LBI Community and Ward Partnerships Development Manager

MC – Martijn Cooijmans, LBI Head of Strategic Projects & Transport Planning and Interim Head of Traffic

JM – John Muir, LBI Head of Communities

AC – Ayanda Collins, LBI Programme Manager

PL – Parris Langridge, LBI Career Grade Planner

ML – Manny Lewis, LBI Head of Customer Access

LW – Liz Wathen, LBI Traffic and Safety Manager

SD – Satbir Dhillon, LBI Principal Engineer

EK – Elisabeth Koduthore, LBI Ward Partnership Co-ordinator

TS – Taanpreet Singh, LBI Ward Partnership Co-ordinator

SS – Samir Singh, Arsenal in the Community representative

MBL – Minda Burgos-Lukes, Highbury West Covid-19 Mutual Aid Group representative

1. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

- There were enquiries from residents about the council's policy of aiming for a 22%-25% increase in tree coverage in the borough. Residents noted that 55 trees have been chopped down and not replaced in Highbury West. Residents stated that the official policy of the Council is to replace chopped down trees and plant new ones. Residents pointed to the examples of Hackney and Camden Councils, where trees continue to be planted. **CAH** responded by saying that he has been chasing this issue for the resident who previously raised it and it appears that there is a lack of money available for planting new trees. **CTD** also stated that the Mayor is donating 60 trees for use at Highbury Corner, although there is not currently a time or date in mind for when these will be planted. **ACTION: CAH to ask Cllr Rowena Champion about any possibility of increased funding for tree planting in the borough.**
- Comment from resident regarding subsiding pavements on Drayton Park – notes that water is getting deeper at crossing points, as well as pointing out that suckers are growing on pavements that drain trees. **MC** stated that he will follow this up with the Highways team in the Council. **ACTION: MC to relay pavement issues on Drayton Park to the Highways Team.**
- Questions from residents regarding the data collection of traffic and general road activity. **MC** explained that this will be so that a comparison and analysis can be made with the impact of People Friendly Streets (PFS).
- Question from resident regarding rented "dockless" bikes being left on pavements. The resident pointed out the issue this causes to residents with disabilities and children in prams particularly. **CRK** explained in the Chat function that the Council is in dialogue with these bike hire companies and that residents should report any intrusive bikes to the Council so that they can be dealt with. **CRK** explained that there is an understanding that these bike hire companies are obligated to deal with these complaints.

2. Support on offer to residents during COVID-19

We Are Islington phone line and support from the Council (Manny Lewis)

- **ML** gave an overview of the work that We Are Islington has done since launching in March in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We Are Islington brings together voluntary services and council services to support residents. It runs 7 days a week, from 9AM – 5PM, and is accessible via email and phone. We Are Islington provides assistance to anyone who is vulnerable, self-isolating, lonely, or struggling financially. So far, the service has helped 13,500 residents. More recently, We Are Islington has been helping to look after the needs of residents who are clinically extremely vulnerable. 61 residents who fall into this category have made a request for additional help on the Council's website and **ML's** team is in the process of getting in touch with others in this group too. **ML** gave a brief overview of the type of help being requested by residents – 4,000 needed food support, 258 were struggling with fuel poverty, and 46 asked to be referred to community organisations for help with loneliness. Some just wanted to talk, and LBI staff are happy to do so – indeed, **ML** has specifically requested that staff talk to residents for as long as they need to. **ML** then outlined the next steps for We Are Islington: the service has stepped up to deal with increases in terms of need over Winter

and the 2nd lockdown. They have just launched a local test and trace scheme, which will supplement the national system. Staff will phone or visit residents if necessary so that the system works as effectively as possible. **ML** also emphasised that due to the work of We Are Islington, no one will go hungry in Islington and that specifically during the school holiday periods, they will be focusing on families who usually make use of food vouchers. We Are Islington will be open all Christmas and New Year, with staff volunteering to work these days. Finally, We Are Islington will be working with colleagues in Health to ensure that hospital leavers are leaving hospital with the essentials they need and aren't left socially isolated.

- A resident outlined his appreciation for the work of We Are Islington and highlighted the "prompt, courteous" service his wife received whilst shielding.
- A resident enquired about what is being done to help young disabled people who are 6x more vulnerable to developing COVID-19 complications than the elderly. **ML** clarified that We Are Islington actively seek out vulnerable residents so that their support needs can be fulfilled.

How to get in touch with We Are Islington:

By phone – 020 7527 8222

By email – weareislington@islington.gov.uk

An interpreting service (BigWord) is available for residents who speak other languages.

Voluntary and Community Sector support (John Muir)

- **JM** pointed to how the community has pulled together during the COVID-19 pandemic – voluntary organisations, We Are Islington, and local institutions have all worked together to assist residents. 22 community food projects are in place across the borough, with Elizabeth House central to these efforts. The Phoenix project has delivered tens of thousands of food parcels from the central food hub which has been hosted at the Emirates Stadium, and is now at The Cally community centre. Arsenal have provided 8 lorries full of food, and local businesses have made significant donations and contributions also. The council has been delivering food parcels directly, as well as providing gas and electricity top ups. **JM** states that these systems will remain in place until there is no longer a need for them. Currently, work is being done on how this system and legacy of these hubs working together can be maintained. So far, £400,000 has been raised to support the crisis efforts of local organisations - £100,000s of which has been raised through national lottery funding. Thousands of volunteers have signed up to the local community hub, and there has been some redeployment of council officers to organise placements for people interested in volunteering. **JM** is hopeful that this will leave a positive legacy. **JM** highlights the work of mutual aid groups, who were the first responders at the beginning of the pandemic.
- A resident outlined his worry that the UK's departure from the EU will lead to food shortages. The resident enquired as to whether measures are in place to account for this. **JM** responded by saying that, currently, the Council has access to a large supply of food – around 500 boxes if we need it. He states that demand has, however, dropped off recently, and that there is of course a limit to how long food can be stored. **JM** also stated that the Council has a Brexit resilience group. The resident stated that he was reassured by this answer.

- Another resident asked about the link between the Council and mutual aid groups in the borough. **JM** responded by saying that the Council employs a link officer who speaks to the co-ordinators of mutual aid groups.
- **CAH** highlighted the work of Elizabeth House and encouraged residents to make use of their services if they need them. **Elizabeth House has resumed its weekly food support until at least the end of year through the provision of food boxes for people experiencing food insecurity. Their office can be contacted on 020 7690 1300. Elizabeth House are able to offer residents a weekly food box. Currently, they are being supported by local residents to prepare and distribute the food boxes. In addition, Elizabeth house runs a programme of online classes/groups open to all. To access these, visit Elizabeth House's [website](#) (or contact them on the number above).**

Arsenal in the Community, Samir Singh

- **SS** went through the work that Arsenal have been doing alongside Islington Council. **SS** stated that Arsenal are on course to hit the mark of delivering half a million food parcels in Islington, Hackney, and Camden. Arsenal hosted a food distribution centre at the stadium and have been co-ordinating deliveries with the NHS. Arsenal have also encouraged their sponsors and partners to support the community. Arsenal have also supported the NHS with deliveries of PPE, and education providers with deliveries of iPads and laptops to local schools. They have mobilised young volunteers to work at local food banks. **SS** stated that Arsenal hope to be able to host a COVID vaccination centre at The Arsenal Hub. **SS** points to the work Arsenal have done in helping with flu vaccinations this year, as is outlined in an article in the BMJ found [here](#).
- **SS's** presentation is attached to these minutes.

Highbury West Mutual Aid Groups (Minda Burgos-Lukes)

- **MBL** explained that mutual aid groups were set up towards the end of March to create a community response so that people who are struggling with lockdown can be helped. The group works across Highbury, and numbers over 400 volunteers. Volunteers support local people by running errands, walking dogs, and shopping, among other tasks. They have also worked to combat loneliness by matching people up with residents so that people struggling with social isolation have someone to talk to. So far, the groups have received over 150 requests for support via the form on their website and on the phone. They also co-ordinate leaflet drops, as well as working with local groups such as Elizabeth House.

A few relevant links regarding Mutual Aid Groups:

- The Highbury Mutual Aid Group homepage can be found [here](#). Alternatively, get in touch via email at highburymutualaid@gmail.com
- The [homepage of N4 cutting hub](#), which relies on Highbury community members to make, buy, and donate face masks.
- The [homepage of The Bread and Butter Thing](#), a charity that aims to make life more affordable for those on a low income.
- The [homepage of Cooperation Town](#), a new network of community led food co-ops that provide free and affordable food. You can also get in touch via the phone, on 07961 703 751.

3. Update on traffic and transport initiatives in Highbury West

People Friendly Streets (Martijn Cooijmans, Parris Langridge, and Ayanda Collins)

- **MC** led a presentation on People Friendly Streets (PFS). The work on PFS has been informed by feedback from the public via an online Council engagement initiative called 'Commonplace' through which residents were able to say how they wanted their local areas to be improved. **MC** explained that PFS will help to reduce collisions and accidents, as well as make streets healthier places in terms of air quality and being able to lead an active lifestyle. **MC** pointed out that most people in Islington don't have access to a car and that because public transport capacity is currently limited, it is important that residents have access to alternative forms of transport such as walking and cycling. **MC** said that the Council hopes that PFS will encourage people to travel in these ways. **MC** illustrated how the use of C roads and unclassified roads – usually residential roads – has increased by around 72% in the last 10 years or so, compared to other types of roads where usage has remained fairly consistent. A possible reason for this is the advent of satellite navigation, which sends motorists down unclassified roads as short cuts. **MC** briefly covered school streets – the timed closures of streets around schools in an effort to make these areas safer for schoolchildren and encourage children and parents to walk or cycle to school. **MC** went on to explain how PFS will work in practice – a camera "filter" will ensure drivers will be fined if they drive through in either direction, but it will allow cyclists, pedestrians, wheelchair users, and the emergency services to drive through. **MC** then covered the locations where PFS filters will be introduced in Highbury West, including Plimsoll Road, and Avenell Road where physical bollards will be used instead of camera filters, retaining emergency services access to these roads via multiple nearby roads. The fire service also have keys to remove one of these bollards to get through, if need be. **MC** explained that with PFS, every address is still accessible by car but some journeys by car will take longer. **MC** said that the Council hoped that the introduction of PFS would mean that there would be no more cutting through residential areas by car, and that people would be encouraged to walk and cycle short journeys. **MC** then briefly explained that the neighbouring Highbury Fields PFS scheme will be implemented at the same time as Highbury West's so that people don't just cut across the next residential area. **MC** finished by reiterating that the PFS schemes are trials and that there will be a full public consultation after 12 months.
- **MC's** presentation attracted many comments and provoked a lengthy discussion. It should be noted that there was an overwhelmingly positive reception to the presentation in the chat function of the meeting. A resident in the meeting commented that, despite being a car owner, he really enjoyed the presentation and stated that it took other boroughs around 12 months to get used to their Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs), which is what PFS are called elsewhere in the country. Another resident pointed out how many local residents campaigned for a scheme like this and that post-lockdown (#1), traffic and pollution have got worse. The resident pointed out that 70% of households in Islington do not have access to a car, so this change will not affect most people. **CRK** also noted that other boroughs have had success in using these schemes and that Lambeth Council has received £250k funding from the NHS because of the health benefits that PFS has brought.

- One of two main concerns around PFS that residents brought up was the lack of consultation. **MC** reassured residents that there would be a full public consultation after 12 months, during which time residents could get used to the scheme and hopefully see some of its benefits. **MC** also stated that leaflets with detailed information about the scheme are due to be distributed to every household and business in Highbury West the week after the meeting, and that residents will be able to fill in an online feedback survey.
- The other concern was how PFS, combined with an Arsenal matchday, would affect movement around the Highbury West area. **MC** explained that LBI is working with Arsenal to ensure that problems do not arise on matchdays. There was also a question regarding how residents could get in touch to be able to enquire about where to park on matchdays. **PL** also explained that Arsenal have been liaised with closely about PFS and that special arrangements have been made so that people will still be able to leave via Benwell Road on matchdays.
- There was a question regarding the implementation of the PFS. A resident explained that they believed the scheme would cause pinch points at Highbury Corner and other locations. **MC** explained that the scheme has been designed in a way that seemed the most balanced and that impacts on traffic in and around the area will be monitored.
- A resident asked a question about the effects of a new build housing project at the Harveist Estate on pollution and how the construction project will drive traffic on to Hornsey Road.
- A few questions were asked regarding different groups in society. One resident said that they believed the plan was in breach of the 2010 Equalities Act and that disabled residents who have been locked in by COVID are now being locked in by PFS. Another resident was worried about how traffic will now be pushed past the council housing estates. **MC** explained that the needs of different groups have been considered and that the plan was not in breach of the 2010 Equalities Act.
- **Residents can provide feedback on the Highbury West PFS scheme via this [page](#).**

The meeting at this point, gone 9PM, was drawn to a close. Please see below for notes regarding Cycleway 38 from Satbir Dhillon and Liz Wathen.

Cycleway 38 (Satbir Dhillon and Liz Wathen)

- In late February 2020 works began on implementing Cycleway 38. However, due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, work was stopped in late March. LBI restarted work on Cycleway 38 at the junction of Ambler Rd/Blackstock Rd in September. The new traffic signals at the junction became fully operational on the 13th November.
- On the 10th November work started on Drayton Park to introduce a new protected cycle track, starting at the junction of Aubert Park. The junction works will involve a new raised priority junction with widened footways, replacing the existing mini-roundabout.
- Works will continue until the 19th Dec and pause over the Christmas period before resuming with the installation of the protected cycle track in the New Year.

- The works in the New Year are likely to involve the mobilisation of 2-3 works gangs working at various points along Drayton Park with completion scheduled for the end of March.