



Twentieth Sydenham Assembly

**Thursday 29 November 2012, 7pm - 9pm
Sydenham Community Library
210 Sydenham Road SE26 5SE**

Minutes of Meeting

1. Introduction and welcome

Cllr Chris Best welcomed everyone to the Sydenham Assembly and introduced the other Sydenham Ward Councillors, Cllr Marion Nisbet and Cllr Liam Curran.

2. Sydenham Community Library

Darren Taylor started off by thanking the staff and volunteers who help to make the Library a success, without these people it would not be working. Darren also thanked the Friends of Home Park, the Friends of Sydenham Library and the Sydenham Society for all their support. He then provided the Assembly with a review of the progress made.

Darren talked about the repair to the building. The roof of the building has now been repaired enabling the rooms upstairs to be decorated and prepared for use. There will also be repairs made to the ceilings, the area covered by the tarpaulin and the windows.

Darren advised the Assembly about the activities taking place at the Library, these include, exercise classes, children's storytelling, language classes, knitting, IT and knitting. There is also a reading group and the Library took part in celebrating Black History Month. The Library continues to support older citizens as well as young people with over 150 people trained in IT over the past year.

In terms of funding, the Sydenham Assembly funded 'where is the library' signage and this will be in place within the next 3 weeks. There is an award of some Heritage Lottery money to initiate a history project centring around the history of the Library and the building. Darren stated that the planned Library Cafe has been delayed, but there is the £2,000 from Nat West Bank and he is now starting a project with London Quadrant for a Cafe academy where staff will complete their NVQ in Customer Services.

The Library continues to provide free green waste bags and there has been an increase of 3,000 visitors to the building over the last year.

Q Have you helped people into work?

A Yes we have helped 30 – 40 people find work over the last 6 months.

Q Who helps you do this?

A I am a Human Resources professional and this is my area of expertise, I am also on the board of the Young Enterprise and I am currently taking over a Charity and saving 9 jobs in the process.

Q We need to see more of this excellent news publicised, how are you doing this?
A I agree, but we will have 5 websites going live shortly and a newsletter. We have also been featured in the Sydenham Society newsletter as well as Facebook and blogs.

3. Friends of Sydenham Community Library

Anthony Scully, the Chair of the Friends of Sydenham Community Library, advised the Assembly that they meet every 10 – 12 weeks and the role of the group is to support the work of the Library and to help raise the profile. At present they are looking for new volunteers. The next meeting of the Friends of Sydenham Library is on 29 January from 7.30pm at the Library and everyone is welcome. Ise advised there were some leaflets and the next workday is Sunday 13 January from 2 – 5pm.

4. Sydenham Community Radio

Sandra Honeysett, a Director and the Treasurer for Sydenham Community Radio (SCR) spoke to the Assembly. Sandra started with the background and that the project has been established for about 4 years, located in several areas including the old Eco Computers building on Sydenham Road. They are now based at the Library and they have a new Director who has some really good ideas for moving the organisation forward, primarily focus around young people.

Sandra stated that at present SCR is offline, but a new streaming company has now been found so it should be back online soon. SCR always needs to raise money and runs the Car Boot Sale in Girton Road Car Park and local quiz nights. They are still trying to raise their profile in the community and are always in need of volunteers, not just for presenting on the radio, but various types of support work in preparing the programmes.

5. Street Lighting Proposals

Paul Burman from Skanska told the Assembly that the contract for the new street lighting is a joint contract with Lewisham and Croydon. Each street will be looked at on an individual basis with 44,000 lamp columns to be replaced. There are lots of requirements to meet and this includes placing columns at the back of footway, unless in exceptional circumstances. This is to ensure that they meet the British Standard and the Equalities Act. Paul stated that trees have been an issue in Lewisham and they are working to rectify this. The lights are monitored centrally, so Skanska will know if there is an issue. Sydenham will receive its new lights in the new year and Skanska will write to residents on the street affected 4 weeks before the works take place. Once the works are started it will take 2-3 weeks for completion.

Paul stated that in the Conservation Areas there will be appropriate lighting with a heritage style column, there are 2 different styles and these are similar to what there already is.

Q Why are these columns black, they are not illuminated and you can walk into them as I have done?

A The colour was chosen by the local authority

Q Why have you placed the lamps in areas totally obscured by trees?

A This has been issue and is being corrected

Q I know that the new lights are brighter, but there are less of them, so there really is a contrast to the existing lights?

A The old amber lighting did give more of a glow, the new lighting is blue / white so the eyes see it differently, so there will be more of a contrast and greater shadows.

Q What about proposed areas of special character, how will these columns change?

A This is a question for Lewisham Council

Q Are pedestrian crossing lights included?

A Some are, for example the ones in the centre of the road.

Q Can we see what lights we're going to get, I live in a conservation area, but I understand we won't be getting the heritage lights?

A We can talk after the meeting.

Q What about the Swan Neck?

A Yes we have this design

Q Have the columns for that part of Sydenham Road that is in the Thorpes Conservation Area been chosen yet?

A Yes this was decided by the Council

Q How do you select the height of the column?

A A variety of factors such as the width of the road, the wider the road the higher the column. Other factors will include if the road is used by buses but as I am not a Lighting Engineer I cannot be precise with the answer.

Q What about the wattage?

A Roads have different settings, but they are all energy efficient and there will be less light spill

Q So we can see the night sky better than now?

A You should be able to

6. Update on SEE3 and Christmas Events

Cllr Best told everyone about the exciting Christmas Programme and asked whether the attendees had received their Christmas Calendar. SEE3 has now filled the roles of Town Team Manager, Hub Coordinator, Artist in Residence and these roles are joining Louise Brookes at Shop Revolution and Deborah Efemini

who is responsible for the markets. The Community Hub at 27 Sydenham Road is now on target to open on Saturday 1 December. There have been a few setbacks in getting "Jill" open, but there are the fabulous Sydenham artists coming to showcase their work – and hopefully have some sales.

The Big Launch on Saturday includes the three pop up shops at 4 Station Approach with Conquer Gear selling unique urban clothing; 161 Kirkdale hosts Pen and Grave and Modernish with intricate designs on lampshades, posters, ceramics and 49 London Road has a quality butcher. As part of the launch at 27 Sydenham, there will be some workshops run by Lisa Comfort in the morning from Kirstys Homemade. At 1pm the Lewisham Mayor Sir Steve Bullock will officially open the hub and this will be followed by local poet Ronnie McGrath.

The Retro Market will take place at Kelvin Grove school and will open at 10.30 with a performance from Alex Carter and Serge singing 1930s and 50s music. On Saturday 15 December we will have the Forest Hill Pools Festive Food Fair and on Sunday 16 December our Festive Food and Gift Market on Station Approach with lots of entertainment from 10am – 4pm. Residents have been asking for a variety of goods in the high street so now is the time to support local traders.

Cllr Best told the Assembly that she is pleased to announce that JB Riney will be paying for the Christmas Tree this year. The switch on event will take start at 5pm on Friday 7 December outside the Post Office on Sydenham Road. We will be joined by celebrities and Jim Dowd MP. This is followed by Sydenham late night shopping until 9pm – and a host of shops are joining in with special offers. Once again there will be carol singers starting at 5pm – the Sydenham Singers and a special Sydenham choir. At 6.30pm there will be the Harmony High Glee Club and other entertainment to provide some festive cheer in the high street..

There is going to be a seasonal shop window display competition to increase the eye appeal of Sydenham shops. This will start with Christmas 2012. The winner will be voted for by the people that visit the high street. Voting will take place online via www.sydenhamtowncentre.com or through a ballot paper into a ballot box in the community hub, Jill, at 27 Sydenham Road. The prize will be a plaque to display in the window that receives the most votes plus a bottle of bubbly to mark the success. The winner will be announced at the Sydenham Festive Food Market on Sunday 16 December.

Community Clean-up – Cllr Best told the Assembly that the Council have agreed to support this and provide the equipment necessary to remove the fly-posting. Volunteers are needed to help and the date agreed was Thursday 13 December to join in smartening-up our high street.

Q What about the Lantern Parade

A We are still looking for volunteers, Pen Else is the person to talk to as she plans to organise this for Saturday 16 December but needs helpers to make the lanterns and steward the parade.

7. Proposed Closure of Lewisham A&E

Cllr Liam Curran introduced this item and told the Assembly that it is good to see so many people here at the meeting who were at the March which was organised by the Save Lewisham Hospital Campaign. He stated that this was the only March that he has been on where people were joining in from the street and cars were tooting their horns in support. Cllr Curran urged people to reply to the consultation by the deadline day which is 13 December. He stated that once the Accident & Emergency and Maternity Unit go many other facilities will follow that support A&E. Furthermore the nearest alternative A&E will be at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Woolwich which is not easy to get to. All of this is due to the merging of the South London Hospital Trust as a result of poor financial affairs elsewhere. At a recent Council meeting all the political parties voted unanimously to fight this, which is somewhat unprecedented.

Cllr Best told the Assembly that there is a public meeting at Sydenham School on Thursday 6 December and Dr Jane Fryer, the Clinical Advisor to the TSA, will be speaking. Cllr Best also explained that this will have a huge impact on Adult Social Care in Lewisham as we have an integrated approach with the hospital and local GPs.

Q Is Beckenham Beacon under threat too?

A Yes this is also threatened, the land is leased and is included in the financial package.

Q If they sell off the property who may want to buy?

A Not sure at this stage but it could be redeveloped for housing.

Q Is this threat of closure purely financial?

A Yes

Q What about the impact on ambulance response times?

A The report sets out the extra times to Queen Elizabeth Hospital but the local clinical advice says that this will add time and delay.

8. Feedback from the last Sydenham Assembly

Cllr Best told the Assembly that Andrea Chaney had resigned from the Coordinating Group due to time commitments and that we are currently looking for new members. The Coordinating Group helps to plan Assembly meetings by shaping the agendas, evaluating what works / does not work at the meeting and much more. There are approximately 4 evening meetings per year, so there is not a great deal of time pressure. Volunteers were asked to speak to the Cllrs or officers after the meeting. At this point everyone was asked to fill in the feedback forms and give ideas for future meetings.

9. Information items, open questions and answers

Sydenham Road Update – Cllr Best stated that there was an update sheet regarding the works on the information table and that we are still waiting for the land transfer on Station Approach to go through. Cllr Best introduced Jim Stacy from JB Riney, the works contractor. Jim gave a brief update of the progress of the improvement works and that that we are now in the Christmas moratorium. This is to help the traders so there are no temporary traffic lights for road working – this will start again after the 13 January. Works will continue on the pavement and the Venner Road piazza.

Q Will all the railings be coming down?

A Yes and the bollards as part of an anti-clutter process

Q What about the slip resistance of the pavements, they seem very slippery to me?

A These were selected by the Council, but we have used the same ones before and I am sure that they are fine. It may be the works residue that is causing it.

Q Venner Road Piazza looks very good, can children play there?

A We're only the contractors, you'll have to ask the Council

Q Will you be doing the contract for Lower Sydenham?

A Hopefully, but this has not been decided yet

Q At the meeting a few weeks ago I was told that there was an alternative to that awful pillar outside the Post Office at Crown Point, we have looked for it but cannot find it, where is the example of the alternative?

A We are none the wiser on this

Steve then stated that on 14 January work will start on the Cobbs Corner new roundabout and there will be a requirement for temporary lights to accommodate this.

Transport Improvements – Barry Milton told the Assembly about the East London Line extension and stated that the Sydenham trains will not be affected. It will also cut the journey time to Denmark Hill so people will be able to get to Kings. People that travel to Central London will need to plan their journey carefully due to the major works at London Bridge Station.

Sydenham Energy Efficiency Scheme – This is a London wide scheme run by Renew consisting of selected intensive areas. Sydenham has been chosen to be Lewisham's intensive area. The offer is to anyone in Sydenham whether they own or rent or if they are on benefits or not. It involves a free visit which lasts 45 minutes to an hour, so it is very comprehensive. The visit will ensure that you know how you can be more efficient with your energy. There is also a pack of free energy efficiency items. Bookings are being taken tonight for anyone with an SE26 postcode, the scheme is available London wide to anyone over 70 years or who is on certain benefits.

Lewisham Budget Savings – Cllr Best told the Assembly that there is an article in Lewisham Life about the latest cuts and that a balanced budget will be set in February.

The Parking Review – Cllr Best confirmed that there are no plans for a Controlled Parking Zone in Sydenham given that the feedback shows most residents do not want or see the need for it.

Proposed Closure of Sydenham Police Station – Cllr Best told the Assembly that there is still no news on this. However, there is a crime update from the Safer Neighbourhood Team on the information table.

Open Questions

- Vincent told the Assembly that he is very concerned about what is happening to Wells Park as in his opinion industrial chemicals are destroying the habitat killing animals and harming the soil. He also stated that cutting back the trees is increasing pollution.
- Kocoo Brown from Image Create Express and Jean Beckford thanked the Assembly for funding the Hazel Grove Intergenerational Film Project. They have been working on a Christmas Showcase since October half term and currently need items from the 1940s such as clothing, old radios and anything else that can be lent to them. They also need old photographs.
- Ilse reminded the Assembly that they need volunteers for the Library, not just Librarians, but IT people.

Cllr Best then reminded the Assembly about all the Christmas events in Sydenham and the meeting at Sydenham School on 6 December regarding the proposed closure of Lewisham A&E.

She then told the Assembly that the next meeting will be on **Tuesday 5 March 2013 from 7pm at the Naborhood Centre**. She then thanked all the speakers and everyone for coming out on a very cold night

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.