



Telegraph Hill Local Assembly

Telegraph Hill Centre 9 February 2013

1. Welcome and introductions

Cllr Joan Millbank, welcomed everyone and introduced her fellow Cllrs, Cllr Dan Whittle and Cllr Paul Bell.

2. Lewisham Private Tenants- Zoe Fishel—member of Lewisham Private Tenants

Local community group, recently set up before Christmas to look at private renting experiences/issues. Currently there are 33,000 people renting privately in Lewisham.

2.1 Feedback 1.

In Avenue road there is a house that has 9 people living in it. HMO (Houses in Multiple Occupation) has been introduced in Newham but not in Lewisham. Scotland has a good system with regulations where landlords need to be licenced, fees are paid yearly which reduces many of the problems. Very little is done to support neighbours dealing with problems of HMO. Zoe responded by saying that this issue is coming up frequently in meetings, Lewisham Cllrs support this initiative and are attending meetings; there is a will to support community and wider actions around HMO, but there is a resource issue. Cllr Millbank said that Lewisham Council has a scheme of working with private landlords to encourage good practise. The issues around HMO is likely to increase as the benefits system changes and housing benefit is decreased for people under 35. Lewisham is looking into setting up a scheme similiar to Newham. Cllr Bell leads on housing, he commented that if there is occupancy of more than 6 in a household this needs to be licensed, this is a legal requirement that if not adhered to, action can be taken. He also said that Newham currently only has a 30% take up from landlords, Lewisham Housing Select Committee is waiting to find out whether Newham has positive outcomes from their scheme.

2.2 Feedback 2.

Landlords find it difficult to manage properties as they rent to 1 person who then allows different people to come in and out of the property. Zoe said that landlords had different motivations and they are not an anti-landlord group and realise that there are good landlords who care about their tenants but there are many examples where this isnt the case.

2.3 Feedback 3.

Not every landlord gives out the correct information around deposits. Tenants should ask their landlord about the DPS (Deposit Protection Service). Zoe said that many tenants do not fully understand their rights and responsibilities.

2.4 Feedback 4.

This ward has a lot of students living in the area. The council needs to be kept an eye on this, as there is concern for students housing issues. Zoe said that in their meetings at New Cross Learning, they had attendance from students and Student Welfare officer who are very concerned about housing for students. Foreign students are often being ripped off and people move through housing a lot which effects the local community. The whole issue of student housing is being looked at.

Zoe and Lewisham Private Tenants is very interested to hear from people who have views or want to get involved. They can be contacted via LewishamPrivateTenants@gmail.com, [facebook.com/LewishamPrivateTenants](https://www.facebook.com/LewishamPrivateTenants), or @LewishamTenants

3. New Cross Fire station

Paul Cartwright, Station Manager from New Cross fire Station explained that £45 million cuts are to be made to the fire service. 12 stations proposed to close including New Cross and Downham. Peckham is to lose 1 fire engine and all these closures will affect Lewisham specifically. Priority is that every address needs to have the first fire engine covered in 6 minutes and the second in 8 minutes. New Cross is targeted because figures have been worked out to show that with New Cross closed, other fire stations can cover the area and meet the 6 minute timeline.

Authorities will meet next week to discuss proposals and a decision will be made in June /July 13. If proposal goes through it will come into place on October 1st. Old Kent Road site will be closed for refurbishment so New Cross will stay open whilst that takes place.

Following the decision made in next weeks meeting you can see an update, by googling London Fire safety Plan 5, where you can also put forward your say on the proposals.

Len Duvall, 1 of 25 London Assembly members representing Greenwich & Lewisham explained that emergency services are under threat. He questioned whether these cuts are really necessary at this time. Fires are going down so people are getting better at protecting themselves, but the fire prevention messages need to keep going. Issues are the interconnections between all services including the proposed cuts to Lewisham Hospital.

In yesterday's GLA budget meeting they put forward proposed costed programmes on how to save the 12 stations. Cuts will continue in the future- there is a need to find a collective voice to stop them as it affects lives.

Handout given out on how to raise issues

Local meeting arranged for 14th March , 7pm at Barnes Wallis to discuss the Fire station proposals.

Q1 In the costs planning does that include getting money from other areas and if so what other areas/ budgets will be cut ?

A1 There are a couple of initiatives where Boris has been given extra money and under what is known as 'Localism', national business rates given back may be used to put money into certain areas. Within the group budget at the GLA you can move money around to support certain services and we are advocating putting some of this money into the fire service and policing.

Q2. Any response we put in needs to be evidence based- where do we get this evidence from- eg what effect do these changes have on the average time to get to a property in this area?

A2. You can find arguments around times on the Fire Authority website due to be published soon. We have to get as many people to respond to the consultation and I'm happy to talk to people about this.

4. Police

Cuts are being made to the Police service, - last week there was a consultation meeting. Issue raised around police station counters and closures. The meeting urged officers to look at what the impact of not being able to go into a police station; getting through via telephone is very difficult unless it's an emergency. More importantly are the changes to neighbourhood policing, Safer Neighbourhood teams are changing. With the reduced resources, how are they going to be used? Discussions/ debates continue, contact Len Duvall for further information or if you want to get involved on 020 7983 4517 or email len.duvall@london.gov.uk.

5. Cycle Super Highway

Introduced with the aim of safety for cyclists and raising participation in cycling. Proposed super highway to come from Victoria through Vauxhall to Lewisham Town Centre. However TFL have discovered that the road patterns are too difficult to ensure cyclists safety and therefore it will stop at New Cross Gate. Cycling groups feel they haven't been consulted . One of the major issues is that if the money is not being used to take the cycle route to Lewisham Town Centre why can't the money come back into Lewisham. A comment was made that where the super high way ends is dangerous as it just stops and normal roads follow. There has been a number of deaths at Bow road junction and cycling groups have been raising the issues around dangerous cycle lanes. Cllr Dan Whittle is leading on this on behalf of Telegraph Hill councillors.

Chris Hall, local resident, is very concerned about Queens Road 3 lane traffic and where the cycle road ends. He wrote to TFL during the consultation period and advised that Besson Street would have allowed a good 2 way traffic flow for

cyclists. He urges other residents to put forwards their views on the cycle lanes and other issues raised.

Oliver Wells, local resident, says deaths were predicted on the Kender St. triangle. There were plans to put a cycle lane off Queens road but could not go ahead due to the land being owned by a Housing Association.

Roger Stocker, chair of Lewisham cyclists, is liaising with Lewisham Council and urges them to put pressure on TFL for the money that wasn't used to extend the cycle lanes to Lewisham Town centre. He says there is a positive message in the lanes being stopped as TFL have acknowledged that the plans were not as safe as they could be instead of continuing and building substandard, unsafe cycle lanes. He wants Cllrs to ask Lewisham Council about Bike Parks as an opportunity to bid for funding for this was missed.

6. Community Safety Update

Liz Fowler works for Lewisham Council with a role around case work and anti social behaviour and projects in the community. She is working to increase Neighbourhood Watch Schemes in the area and will be inviting everyone to a meeting in partnership with the police looking at ways of getting information out to people and finding leads for Neighbourhood Watch Schemes.

She distributed burglary packs- how to keep your house safe. She also advised that there are drop in sessions on bike marking and information on personal safety. Further details can be found by contacting her on 020 8314 7565 or emailing Elizabeth.Fowler@lewisham.gov.uk.

Cllr Millbank said that Liz and her team were also very instrumental in getting people together and reassuring them after the shootings on the Honor Oak Estate as well as the dog issues on the Somerville Estate. On 9th March at TH park, Battersea Dogs Home are offering a free service on micro chipping and advise on how to look after your dog. Praises given to Liz and he team for all the work they have carried out in the ward.

Q1 Relating to arson attacks in the park, are the fire brigade getting access to the key so they don't have to climb over the fences?

A1 This would be something Glendale would need to respond to but will make a note for parks officer.

A Comment was made that on the edge of Somerville green area there are high issues of dumping, dog fowling, alcoholics , beer cans and other rubbish and the garden cannot be used by children. After raising the issue with the Council several things have been done but it continues. Cllr Millbank said that this needs to be raised by the Somerville Housing Association. Cllr Bell said the dog protection orders are in force in the Lewisham Borough.

Also noted that if you do see fly tipping and you are able to get the vehicle registration number safely, then it is enough to prosecute. Any incidents of fly

tipping can be reported through the Lewisham website and Love Lewisham this will get you the quickest response.

Another comment was raised on the 20 mph speed limits that are not being adhered to especially on Pepys Road, Jerningham Road bus routes. There is a police unit that can come down and monitor speed control. Cllr Bell is leading on this on behalf of all Telegraph Hill councilors.

7. Save Lewisham Hospital Campaign

Dr Louise Irvine, local GP and local resident spoke about the threat to Lewisham Hospital is still as strong as ever. Following 31st January new proposals are to have a small A&E that will still see 75 – 80% of people who attend it and the Maternity Unit will be replaced by a midwife lead Maternity Unit. What this means is the A&E ward will not be admitting patients apart from a tiny ward; it is unclear on what it will be for, maybe elderly people who have been off their feet for a couple of days and need supervision. Basically it has always been argued that closing an A&E is like closing a hospital – it is the front door of a hospital where sick people are admitted and if you don't have an A&E you can't admit medical, surgical or children's emergencies. Children's services include a high number of children who have sickle cell problems and need to be admitted in an emergency – Lewisham has a high expertise in this area.

So under Hunt's new proposals, all these services will be going, leaving only minor incidents dealt with, and although he said it will still have 24/7 emergency medical cover it is really unclear what this means. It would be difficult to sustain A&E type Consultants and emergency department doctors in a place that is basically dealing with aches and pains and coughs and colds – they would not be able to maintain their competencies and it would not be approved for training purposes.

Currently, the maternity unit has a midwife led unit alongside other services that can deal with complications and emergencies. Lewisham hospital has not had a maternal death to do with their care within the last 16 years or so. Those services would go and the midwife led unit would only be able to take extremely low risk births which would also exclude first time mums as they are deemed as moderate risk. This reduces choice for women in Lewisham and women outside of Lewisham who choose to have their baby at Lewisham Hospital. If a woman were to experience complications during childbirth she would have to be transported by ambulance to a full maternity ward like Kings or Queen Elizabeth in Woolwich. In recent weeks these maternity units have been on divert and unable to accommodate booked deliveries- overflowing, overloaded hospitals. This is not showing waving that there could be deaths of mums and babies. This is the fear.

Q1 Where are the special care baby units?

Q2 There is one in Lewisham but that will have to close as well. There is one in St Thomas's and possibly one at Queen Elizabeth.

The Campaign must continue. They are working closely with the hospital management as they do not agree with the proposed cuts. Cracks are appearing

in Hunt's decisions. Changes cannot happen overnight, there is 2- 3 year plan with the messages that are 'use it or loose it' – keep choosing Lewisham Hospital- if you have a bustling service it will be harder to close it down and puts a strong message across to Hunt. Also Legal challenge – the council is taking legal challenge its message is challenging the TSA's right to go beyond its remit and whether that was appropriate. Separate legal challenge is also being undertaken by the Save Lewisham Hospital Campaign. Next stage to be updated shortly. Confident that fund raising can cover costs.

Aim is to get this decision pushed back, keep the hospital open as long as possible, keep the campaign going and to see if one or both of the legal challenges are successful. If the decision is pushed back enough we will be at the time when it is incredibly politically embarrassing for Hunt to close the hospital because economy will probably be the main election issue with NHS second. This is now iconic. Campaign meetings are held most Tuesday evenings at the Waldron Health Centre. This Friday 15th February , 1pm a rally is being held opposite the hospital, Saturday 16th will be spent giving out updated information leaflets in Deptford, Lewisham and possibly Catford dependant on volunteers. 16th February also has an event in Hammersmith 12 -2.

If you want to get involved go to www.savelewishamhospital.com.

Cllr Millbank praised all the work undertaken so far and in particular the 20,000 (police estimate) turnout for the march on 26th January.

8. Community information

Telegraph Hill Play Club Laura Seabright

Following the last Ward Assembly – the campaign to stop the closure of the play club has included petitions, media, community and Telegraph Councillor support. It is likely that the decision to close the club will be agreed during the week commencing 11th February. The Council has committed to provide up to 1 years transitional funding to move the play clubs into community offers to run them. Questions are raised as to what this actually means- will private providers be coming in and making money out of parents? Will it become a building yard or a Tesco where community groups won't use them? At Telegraph Hill we want a play club that is free at the point of access and accessible to all and are concerned about any offers coming in that will charge parents. There are options to fund raise to keep the core service running. Currently public meetings are being held with consultation, including online, to decide what users want from the play club and what the alternatives would be. Particular focus is on the safety aspect of offers that come in, which also need to include high quality service provision, community led. The Children's Society might be interested in supporting the community offer so there will be an area of expertise included.

Any support and volunteering to help with the campaign would be welcomed. Cllr Millbank added that the decision to close the play club is due to the Central Government cuts which are now £110 million over 5 years. The Mayor and Cabinet meeting on Wednesday 13th February will look at this (1of 7 play clubs)

and numerous other proposals that are up for being cut. The play club would save about half a million on the Councils Children & Young Peoples budget. The Council is keen on the community offer and with the help of parents and voluntary organisations, including the Telegraph Hill Centre, is confident that it can happen. She thanked everyone who has been involved in the campaign and urged continuation to keep this valuable service. Several established organisations have put forward proposals to run the community offer. The big challenge is the funding issue to allow free access and the limited space to run multi-purpose activities that could potentially raise income to maintain the service.

Oliver Wells updated on the Community Payback Scheme for youth offenders who are currently working on a project in the parks and carpentry workshop in the Honor Oak playground. As money is an issue at the moment there is potential to utilise this programme more to cover aspects such as clearing communal spaces or add capacity to individual projects.

A comment was raised regarding the issue of speeding buses and lorries on Avignon Road. He says buses are ignoring the speed humps, driving at 40+ mph and sometimes accelerating at the speed humps. Cllr Bell has been supporting the campaign. He has had meetings with the Council and the bus companies and this issue has not been resolved. Its time to reconvene the campaign.

Cllr Bell, who leads on this said that the main bus involved is the 343 which is run by Abellio . There was an incident where a bus caught fire outside the Telegraph Hill Centre last March and there is still not a full report on what happened. Despite the procedures in place some bus drivers will not turn off their engines when waiting and speeding is a problem. TFL are not listening and addressing these issues. He is starting a campaign for environmentally friendly buses and bus drivers that are properly trained and follow prescribed speed limits which are there for the safety of everyone.

Telegraph Hill Festival is happening at the end of March and programmes will be distributed in the next couple of weeks. Volunteers needed to distribute south of Drakefell Road and north of New Cross Road. If anyone can help contact Tamsin Bacchus – tamsin_bacchus@hotmail.com.

9. Close and thanks

Cllr Millbank thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

No declarations of interest were made at the meeting.