

Southdown and Whiteway PACT meeting, 14th July 2010

This is a write-up on the Southdown and Whiteway PACT meeting which took place on 14th July 2010.

Culverhay School

The meeting began with a discussion on the recent recommendation to close Culverhay School.

Richard Thompson the school Headmaster, together with the Southdown Councillors, expressed their anger that the recommendation followed a community consultation on whether Culverhay should become a co-educational school. It had been made to seem as though the recommendation came out of the community consultation, whereas the consultation had not been about whether the school should close.

Richard Thompson described the recommendation as grossly unfair, because it was taking away from a community that has less than most areas. The decision seemed to have lost sight of the fact that the school is at the hub of the community.

A resident who lives near the bottom of Rushill said that she had once applied to send her son to Ralph Allen School but had been refused because she lived too far away. So what chance would there be for other people in Southdown to have access to that school if Culverhay closed?

Councillor Paul Crossley added that bus services were expensive and insufficient for residents to send their children to other schools in Bath.

Some people spoke favourably of the extra-curricular activities that Culverhay School provides for local youth.

There will be a demonstration against the proposed closure of Culverhay School outside the Guildhall, next Wednesday 21st July at 4pm. After that, a public hearing will be held in the Guildhall at 5pm.

People can also protest (politely) by emailing their concerns to Councillor Chris Watt at: chriswatt@cognisantresearch.com

Then there were the usual reports on what has been done about the key issues raised in the previous meeting. These are as follows:

Youths gathering outside the Beehive Surgery

The Police Community Support Officers at the meeting said that they have been conducting regular patrols and identified a number of places as areas of anti-social behaviour. These include Roundhill Park and Wedmore Park. A few individuals have been linked in with a project to remedy such behaviour. Some areas have also been referred to the Children's Society for outreach work. The Beehive Surgery has received planning permission to build two semi-detached bungalows in the carpark where some young people hang out. The work will start in autumn.

Jenny Hopton from Southside Youth Centre said that she had been asked to do some outreach work in the area. She had met a few youngsters who attend the youth centre but get bored when it is not open, so they hang out at the spot by the Beehive Surgery.

Co-op delivery lorries damaging parked cars

The management of the Co-op at Mount Road have indicated that they will monitor delivery vehicles and ensure that they drive in a respectful manner.

One resident said that the vehicles also block people's drives. The Police Community Support Officers said that when this happens you can report it and they will come out to take action.

Another resident pointed out that the Co-op is a fantastic amenity serving residents up until 10pm at night. It must be very difficult for delivery lorries to negotiate the narrow road where the Co-op is located.

Road surfaces

The road surface at Haycombe Drive is in a very poor state and will be looked at as a priority. The repair work will also extend to Roundhill Park.

New priorities and issues

People spoke of the problems going on behind the flats at Whiteway, which have impacted on adjacent houses at The Hollow. Neighbours have suffered from anti-social behaviour and footballs constantly going into gardens. This had been going on for a long time.

The football pitch at Rosewarn Field will be completed with goalposts next month, so it may draw some teenagers to play football there.

Someone else talked about crime connected to the alleyway at Blagdon Park, associating it with several thefts from his own home. People also ride down that alleyway on motorbikes. He said that he had spoken to neighbours and they all wanted the alley sealed off. This issue has been raised before but it is difficult to seal off a public right of way. Community Partnerships Manager Andy Thomas said that a gating order is possible, but this is a long process and you have to prove that every alternative effort has been made.

A resident said that these problems have emerged at Blagdon Park since the full time warden was taken off.

The evening's discussion produced four priorities. These were:

- 1) Anti-social behaviour by the flats at Haycombe Drive and to the rear of The Hollow
- 2) The alleyway at Blagdon Park
- 3) Lack of a warden at Blagdon Park
- 4) The threatened closure of Culverhay School

The next PACT meeting for Southdown and Whiteway is scheduled for 13th October at 7pm and will be held in Southdown Junior School at Mount Road.