

BALDERSTONE AND KIRKHOLT AREA FORUM

Thursday 21 September 2023
Million Pavilion, Balderstone Park,
Platting Lane, Rochdale OL11 2HD

MINUTES

Present: 10 members of the public

Councillors: Councillors Massey and Meredith

Officers: R Hudson (Townships & Engagement Officer, Rochdale Borough Council)
Y Pickering (Community Safety Officer, Rochdale Borough Council)
J Akhtar (Lead Youth Work Manager, Early Help & Schools, Rochdale Borough Council)
L O'Malley (Rochdale Boroughwide Housing)
Sgt D Hartley-Pickles (GMP)
PC Anderson (GMP)
PC Awais (GMP)
C Mottershead (Chair, Kirkholt Million)

Apologies: Councillor E Blundell
PCSO T Johnston (GMP)
R Adams (Rochdale Boroughwide Housing)
K Tufail (Rochdale Boroughwide Housing)

1. INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES/CODE OF CONDUCT

The Chair welcomed all in attendance to the meeting and apologies were noted. Attention was drawn to the code of conduct, a summary of which was read out. All attendees were asked to abide by the code for the duration of the meeting.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Attention was also drawn to the addition of the Terms of Reference document for all non-constituted local area forums in the Rochdale area. The purpose, objectives, powers, etc detailed within the document were discussed.

3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the previous meeting on 27 March 2023 were agreed.

4. PACT MEETING - GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE

Sgt Hartley-Pickles attended the meeting on behalf of GMP and provided the update. He advised that the subject of PACT meetings is still part of the ongoing discussions on the area of reforming neighbourhood and response policing. The team provide a proactive approach in the area and they are aware of the known hotspots, welcoming the public's awareness and intelligence when dealing with offenders. All intelligence can be communicated via the website, Crimestoppers, and also via 'Bee in the Loop'.

A resident asked whether any additional PCSOs will be recruited for the area. Sgt Hartley-Pickles advised at the moment due to the decision of the Chief Constable, GMP are not employing any additional PCSOs, however, officers are trying to re-post them around different areas of the borough to ensure cover is maintained. Councillor Meredith advised he intends to address the matter with Chief Superintendent N Porter.

'Bee in the Loop'

Cards were distributed to residents in attendance for this new initiative by GMP which is a messaging service, in addition to their social media channels, to communicate with residents/businesses in each area regarding incidents/emergencies, to pass on crime prevention advice and to help shape local priorities for officers to concentrate on. Residents can sign up to it via the website www.beeintheloop.co.uk

Anti-social behaviour

The forum discussed anti-social behaviour within Kirkholt. GMP stated the identity of individuals are being investigated and operations are being planned to target the offenders with the Council's Community Safety Team, Youth Services and also Rochdale Boroughwide Housing all involved in partnership to tackle the issue. Councillor Meredith stressed the importance of police officers being visible in the area to improve the trust of residents affected and worried. He also stated it was positive that an officer from Rochdale Boroughwide Housing was in attendance at the forum and he requested the support and involvement of the organisation to assist this matter. The officer in attendance from Youth Services advised the team can escalate matters to the local schools and assist in the identification of those involved. GMP can visit schools to work alongside teaching staff in speaking to children regarding anti-social behaviour, drugs and knife crime. A discussion was held about the importance of activities like sport, social events, etc for youths to participate in and divert their attentions to positive activities. The local Ward Councillors advised they have been engaging with Rochdale Hornets to fund rugby sessions for youths and outdoor gym equipment is available situated within Green Flag status Balderstone Park.

Ward Councillors would welcome another meeting to be held to discuss anti-social behaviour issues involving GMP, Community Safety, etc in approx. 4-6 weeks.

Action: Community Safety Officer to arrange the meeting with those officers involved

Always call 999 in an emergency.

Call 101 to report incidents, crimes and matters of concern.

You can report a crime or incident or suspicious circumstances online on GMP website or via Crimestoppers

5. OPEN FORUM

Aldwych and Tavistock Road – Cars Parking on the Bowling Green

A discussion was held about cars being driven on and parked on the Bowling Green with the occupants of the cars causing local residents issues with associated anti-social behaviour. The Community Safety Officer advised that the land is owned by Rochdale Boroughwide Housing and not the Council, although the Council's Asset Management Team are trying to find capital funding to obtain a barrier for the site as they have no funding for security, only maintenance. Councillor Meredith considered the issue to be related to the speeding and rat-running problems experienced on the adjacent roads and he has been looking into matters with the Council's Highways Department.

Flower bulbs for Balderstone Park

A previous suggestion for flower bulbs to be planted in Balderstone Park along the road side near the railings was raised with the Council's Environmental Management Department who asked the type/colour of flowers for it to be costed. It was suggested that crocuses and daffodils be planted.

Action: Townships to raise the suggestion with the Council's Environmental Management Department to obtain a full costing for funding consideration

6. MEMBERS/WARD FUNDS

Residents were advised that Township funding for this financial year is still available and any ideas or initiatives to improve the local area or give benefit to any community groups or associations are always welcome. Discuss with your local Ward Councillors or the Township Officer.

Recent funding schemes supported by local Councillors have been Rochdale Hornets Community

Partnership who have received funding for new pads and equipment and also Q Gardens in the Community with a grant to purchase water butts and a strimmer.

7. COUNCILLOR UPDATE

- Councillor Meredith apologised for his non-attendance at the last forum stating he is on a set shift pattern and sometimes cannot swap to attend.
- Hartley Lane has now been resurfaced and the speed cushions have been installed along with Lowther Crescent.
- Speed cushions installed on Darlington Road funded by Township.
- Three other brownfield sites are being looked at for potential affordable housing in the future.
- Q Gardens will be staying in their current site.
- Ward Councillors are working with Community Safety in order to secure the funding for the lighting of a footpath at Gerard Street. The Council are hoping to acquire the land in question back from ownership under Highways England to be able to install the lighting needed to enable safety and security for residents.
- Balderstone Park has now received a Green Flag Award. Thanks goes to all officers and community members involved in this process. Measures to prohibit further off-road biking access are being considered. Balderstone Park was judged as part of the In Bloom competition and the awards evening is being held on 19 October 2023.
- GMP can now access footage from the 360 CCTV camera on the park without needing prior data protection approvals.
- The work has started on the playing fields for the Hornet's Rugby scheme.
- RBH have confirmed that none of their homes contain the reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete materials (RAAC).
- The RBH Christmas event will take place on Tuesday 28 November 2023 with activities and a switch-on at the Christmas tree at the Hub, Kirkholt.
- Responding to a query by a member of the forum, Councillor Meredith updated residents that the layout at the junction of Ruskin Road and Balderstone Road along with a pedestrian crossing and traffic lights will be redesigned by Highways. The details regarding the timeline of these works will be confirmed by the Council in the future.
- The brownfield site of the former surgery on Queen's Drive has received the permission to be demolished and it will be redeveloped for housing on behalf of Regenda Housing Association.
- Grass cutting across the borough will be planned out after a meeting between Councillors and the Environmental Management Department in March.

8. UPDATES

Kirkholt Million

Update was provided by C Mottershead, new Chair of Kirkholt Million due to the recent retirement of the previous Chair. The group regularly consult with those in the community for suggestions and decisions on improvements and they are still looking for either match funding or crowd funding of £60k+ for the purchase and installation of a bike track within Balderstone Park which would be a great resource for the younger people in the surrounding area. Discussions are currently being held between the group and the Council's Environmental Management Department regarding the required 25 year future maintenance plan/costs for the project as the funding for The Millions expires in the year 2026 so would not cover these costs. The group are always looking for residents to join them to provide help and support.

Action: Townships to raise the matter of the future maintenance costs for the bike track with the Council's Environmental Management Department for an update to be given to Councillor Meredith

Rochdale Boroughwide Housing (RBH)

L O'Malley attended the forum on behalf of Rochdale Boroughwide Housing and she advised residents that any queries or concerns they may have can be escalated online or in person via their Contact Centre or the Hub at The Strand.

9. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 18 March 2024 at 6.30pm