

Minutes for inaugural meeting of Action on ASB!

26 September 2023

Papa's Park Café

Attendance

Co-chairs:

- Lily Kabdebo, Chair, Brixton Terrace TRA
- Peter Impey, Chair, Dalyell Area Residents' Association

Guests:

Metropolitan Police

- Superintendent Gabriel Cameron
- Inspector Andy Scott

Lambeth

- Cllr Mahamed Hashi, Lambeth Cabinet Member for Safer Communities
- Nigel Lambert, Assistant Director, Public Protection, Assurance & Regulatory Services
- Cllr John-Paul Ennis, Brixton North Ward & Lambeth Deputy Mayor

Brixton BID

- Michael Smith, Operations Manager

Acknowledgements

The organisers would like to thank Papa's Park Café for allowing us to host the event in their hall.

Meeting minutes

1. Agenda overview:

- Presentation of the problem
- Discussion on the ASB trends in Brixton and police strategy – Gabriel Cameron and Andy Scott
- Councillor Hashi, Nigel Lambert and Brixton BID perspectives
- Q&A

2. Introductions: Chaired by Lily – people and areas of responsibility

- Superintendent Gabriel Cameron – Lead for Lambeth neighbourhood policing
 - A Chief Inspector Ashlee Gomes starts on 9th Oct
- Inspector Andy Scott – neighbourhood Inspector Lambeth
 - Oversees ward policing teams run by Sergeants, has direct authority re what happens on wards
- Councillor Hashi – priorities are violence, violence against women, antisocial behaviour (ASB)
- Nigel Lambert – director for community safety, portfolio includes ASB, patrols of wardens, CCTV, council officers
- Councillor John-Paul Ennis – Deputy Mayor and Brixton North ward councillor
- Michael Smith – Operations Manager, Business Improvement District – works with local shop owners, there's a governing body for the BID made up of stakeholders, levies paid by businesses spent on the things businesses think are the most important. Currently being spent on security, with a two-person street team Monday to Saturday, and spend money promoting Brixton as a destination and some additional cleaning (some jet washing, graffiti removal etc, cleaning Papa's Park)
- Afewee Training Centre – support young people in the community through football and boxing
- Brixton Mosque
- Brixton Terrace TRA
- Papa's Park
- Dalyell Area Resident's Association
- Stockwell Village Association
- SW9 Housing
- Tunstall Road Resident's Group

- Apologies: Helen Hayes, MP
3. Presentation/discussion the context of why the group was set up and what we want to achieve – Peter
- How the *Action on ASB!* Group started
 - We all have the same issues
 - Not getting the traction we need
 - We want to build community support and to advocate and influence/demand change required
 - Key issues:
 - We don't feel safe at all – a run-through slides outlining that:
 - Safety has been in steep decline (noted by many long-term residents that it's the worst they have seen it in Brixton for decades)
 - Have heard that the town centre police force has been disbanded
 - Brixton Terrace resident provides an update on the serious issues they are facing – drug taking, defecation on doorsteps, despite being right next door to the police station
 - Stockwell Ave resident provides an update on crack users that use his family's doorway to deal and use drugs – the problem has been going on for years and has become significantly worse recently. They provided details of the community triggers (two) that he has been through. 11-year-old daughter had to confront 3 drug users on her own doorstep, CCTV was installed by the council but drug use continues, and not clear whether the CCTV is being monitored
 - Brixton Station Road has become entirely lawless, including drug dealing and taking, XL Bully dogs off lead, and no collars just roaming the street
 - What we want
 - We want to work out how we can all effectively do something together
 - Joined-up thinking is what we are demanding – between the police, the council, including departments beyond just safety, eg environment, Brixton BID, to name a few
 - [Multiple interjections from the audience who are very upset with the state of affairs]
 - Discussion/presentation on the problem
 - No accountability from any agency
 - Difficulty in reporting
 - No police visibility on the streets
 - The problem is being moved around Brixton – when one area gets better, another gets worse
 - Difficulty in engaging the council
 - Lack of transparency on what is happening – we don't know what the levels of crime are, we don't know how the Council is engaging the community, we don't know what, if anything, is being done
 - Concern for the safety of women to be added to the list of concerns
 - Discussion/presentation of the complexity of the issues we are facing, along with recap of what we are hearing from the Police, The Government, Lambeth Council, Labour – all claiming tough actions on ASB & crime – but in reality it's not happening
 - Suggestion from the community to name and shame – bring a spotlight onto the council and police (Action: Create a shared Google file, where we can all upload images of crimes happening and ASB and continually send this to local MPs, Police, Council and push as far up as Whitehall)
 - Presented goals of *Action on ASB!*
 - Make ASB a priority for the Metropolitan Police and Lambeth council
 - Hold local organisations accountable for delivering services to deal with ASB
 - Lobby for more resources to deal with the issue
4. Presentation by Superintendent Gabriel Cameron

- Has drafted a strategy for Lambeth
 - ASB is top of the list
 - Community vulnerability
 - Violence – of top 20 gangs in London, Lambeth has 8 of them
 - Talks about the previous Town Centre team
 - 1 inspector
 - 3 sergeants (currently has 1 sergeants)
 - 20 PCs
 - This town centre resource has now been moved into a new 'Proactive Taskforce' that serves the Central South Basic Command Unit (BCU) that covers Lambeth and Southwark
 - Superintendent Cameron 'bids' monthly for the policing resource that's needed where and when in Lambeth
 - Brixton Town Centre is 20 officers short – effectively, 20 roles still need to be filled. This is how badly short-staffed policing is in this area
 - Audience member raised that she had been told in Windrush they had one police officer for all of Brixton on a Friday night
 - Question from audience member – how can the police address the issue of drug dealers just being moved on to another area?
 - Question from audience member – if police officers do see crimes happening, what powers do they have to do something about it?
 - Making sure there is a visible policing strategy in the local footprint
 - Making sure there are outreach programmes as well
 - ACTION: Need definition of what is a crime versus ASB
 - Afewee comment – we need to think about our youngsters feeling safe, how can we work together and how can we change the problem, ensuring opportunities and empowerment
5. Nigel Lambert - Director of Community Safety
- Has heard the salient points from the meeting
 - Will arrange a meeting at the Townhall for this group – group requested a regular monthly meeting
 - They agree transparency is not good enough – and accountability needs to increase
 - Public toilets going back on the agenda to look at
 - Will try everything – nothing is off the table
 - Is helping the council to bring in more outreach workers – need the council officers with the outreach skillsets to come on those missions
 - Drugs – looking at how they are going to tackle drug dealing
 - Crime reporting – we as residents need to report ALL crime (any time you see drug taking or dealing etc) as data drives resource planning and will mean more police resources provided
6. Inspector Scott
- Have run a drugs operation to take out the drug dealers – still working on this
 - Have been patrolling around Rushcroft Road more regularly
 - Community Protection notices – not the same as arresting, but they issue a warning notice, officer documents who the person committing the ASB is and if they're seen again, they get a second notice and eventually can be asked not to come back to the area
 - If they are committing an actual crime and the police spot it at the time, they get arrested – NOT a Community Protection Notice
 - Recent operation with the BID team – issues with shoplifting, associated violence and intimidation
 - Trying to flood Brixton Town Centre with as many officers as possible (still need to recruit those 20 positions)
 - Had word tonight from Adam Ball – British Transport Police to get some private security to provide extra officers for Brixton Station and underpass
7. Brixton BID
- The three priorities BID gave the police
 - Dealing with beggars – ask the police to move them on
 - Address business-related problems promptly – graffiti, tagging, violence against staff, shoplifting (mainly opportunistic)

- Asking them to look at drug-related activities – and asking people to move on so businesses can serve their customers
- The BID provides two security guards that are Security Industry Authority trained
- Question about whether the BID can help get businesses leverage – ie the Ritzy – asking the cinema to un-recess the doors to remove the place for people to take drugs.
 - ACTION: Councillor Hashi and Nigel Lambert will pick up this action.

8. Councillor Hashi

- Wants to have these meetings regularly
- Notes ASB is the worst he has seen it
- Apologised that we don't feel heard and for lack of transparency, promising better community engagement moving forward
- Talked about trauma everyone has gone through
- Happy to host the meetings monthly at the Townhall
- Audience member - the community's voice needs to be part and parcel of the strategy
 - Community engagement has to be resourced – find the resource
 - Community members have worked hard for years and now it's tumbling down
 - If the community is not at the table, it will be lip service
 - What has got to change has to be a robust community engagement strategy, allows people's expertise and knowledge to be recognised and used
 - Equal space at the table
 - Nigel answered that we will be invited to the Townhall to see the community engagement strategy
- Question from audience – what is the actual situation with the Ritzy and the recessed doors where people take drugs?
- Question/statement from audience member – ASB Brixton has brought everyone together – we all need to support this group which is the mechanism to bring our issues to the council and police

9. Indication of interest in being involved in this group

- Show of hands – ACTION on ASB! to gather names after the meeting – ACTION COMPLETE

10. Open discussion and Q&A session

- Resident from Gateley Rd – neighbourhood watch was set up 15 years ago. Nothing happened. Find some resources and get something done.
- Discussion of reporting
 - Report it, get a CAD number
 - Report it every single time – online or on the non-emergency police number
 - Send numbers to the ASB email address
 - ACTION – attendees to report and send CAD numbers to aoasb@outlook.com
- Question: Wants to know what the timescale is for community engagement
 - Superintendent Cameron explains that's why he is here – to engage with us and hear more
- Question: Audience member says he's reported consistently, explains a situation whereby a man was beaten up badly outside his house. Reported the police officer was rude to the injured man
 - Superintendent Cameron apologised on behalf of the police for this and said it was unacceptable behaviour by the police officer
- ACTION: Community service officers could be trained to do more than fine people for littering – NIGEL to action/answer

ACTIONS:

- Monthly meeting at Townhall – Nigel and Councillor Hashi to liaise with ACTION on ASB! and set the next three months' dates of meetings.
 - Community engagement is integral, and resource must be aligned to this
- Community Service Officers trained to do more than to fine people for littering – Nigel to report back in next ACTION on ASB! meeting
- Start a Google drive to share images and CAD numbers – ACTION on ASB! to ACTION
- Attendees to report and send CAD numbers to aoasb@outlook.com

- Ritzy Cinema and Marks and Spencer recesses, Brixton Rec – Nigel and Councillor Hashi to pick this up with the BID team and directly with these two businesses to get this done
- Definition between ASB and Crime – define the difference at next Townhall meeting