



**Minutes of Community Meeting of Thornton Heath Community Action Team (THCAT)
Thursday 23 November 2023 at St Andrew's Church Hall**

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| Welcome | by Chair Linda Watson |
| Apologies | Wes Baker, Father Sean |
| Health and Safety Notice | Provided by Barbara Richards. |
| Introduction | The Chair provided an overview of the THCAT Code of Conduct, who we are and our purpose "Safer, cleaner, greener, better". |
| Guest | Councillor Scott Roche Cabinet Member for Streets and Environment. |

Councillor Roche was our guest who provided an in-depth and expansive overview of the council's plans for Thornton Heath.

Councillor Roche knows the area well having grown up locally and is keen to change the reputation and perception of Thornton Heath.

The main area of the lively and engaging discussion for the evening centred around issues and initiatives which are set out below:

Parking Policy Review

The council is reviewing the parking policy for Thornton Heath to improve conditions to allow for more parking and better access. The following initiatives are being considered or under review to improve parking options for visitors and residents in the central area (Thornton Heath Station / Tesco / High St).

- Expanding free bay on street parking provision to the area to allow for 30 minutes.
- Replacing pay & display bays with the paybyphone model currently being tested by London Borough of Harrow.
- Reviewing where additional street parking may be added.
- Reviewing 1/2 on 1/2 off pavement parking.
- Improving availability of blue badge spaces.
- Residential parking – There was concern that there is already parking pressure for residents living on local streets in the immediate area.
- Council will be reviewing where EV charging points are to be installed as part of the review.
- Green policy with lowered curbs??
- The council are not expanding CPZ in Thornton Heath area.

Croydon Borough

- There is currently a £10m parking deficit in Croydon which they are trying to address across the borough.
- The Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield redevelopment of the Whitgift Centre and town centre is back on table to regenerate Croydon town centre.

Thornton Heath High Street and Brigstock Road Blitz

Following the success of a major cleanup in Norbury the council is coordinating a focused blitz of Thornton Heath High Street and Brigstock Road starting in Spring 2024.

Working with Virgin, National Rail, and British Transport, the areas the council will be targeting are:

- Graffiti
- Fly tipping
- Gutters and gullies
- Street furniture.
- Tree pruning

The council will clean graffiti off shop fronts and empty buildings on Brigstock Road and the High Street. Once this is completed any further graffiti will be the responsibility of the building owner or tenant. If the council are required to return to remove graffiti or fly posters, there will be a charge levied against the proprietor or landlord. A guide will be provided on how to remove graffiti and fly posters.

There will be a coordinated approach and extensive comms plan with the main stakeholders and engagement with businesses by the council, ward members and THCAT. There will be a letter drop to residents above commercial premises to target fly-tipping.

To support the initiative a new campaign will be announced to rebuild pride in the area and replace the “Don’t mess with Croydon” campaign.

Campaign Initiatives include:

- Introduction of Street champions
- New signage
- Targeting of rubbish hot spots

To support the initiative the council is working closely with Veolia.

Fly Tipping & Rubbish concerns

The council is committed to dealing with fly-tipping and has appointed a number of new team members in this area.

- Waste Senior Manager
- Director - streets and environment
- 4 x contract monitor officers appointed.

Casework – There are currently more than 400 outstanding issues. The council is focusing on meeting targets to get this number down.

HMO’s - Councillor Jeet Bains (Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration) is drafting a new policy.

Domestic Rubbish Bin policy

It was suggested that clearer instructions could be provided to all residents on bin policy, such as visual and translated instructions. Maybe a QR code would be beneficial.

Tenants leave bins on pavements creating issues for pedestrians, people with prams or wheelchairs and those with visual impairment etc.
Street cleaners should be reporting issues.

South London Waste Partnership

<https://slwp.org.uk/>

The South London Waste Partnership is made up of four councils (Croydon, Kingston, Merton and Sutton) that are working together to provide improved and more cost-effective waste management and environmental services to their residents.

There are a number of targeted campaigns being run over period of time. Areas that were commented on were:

Measurable engagement

Issues with residents leaving bins on pavements

There was criticism that the council should make it easier for residents who may have literacy, visibility or language issues to follow advice on rubbish and recycling. It was suggested a QR code would be a good option for bin stickers.

Veolia monitoring

It was further noted that murals and mosaics can make a positive difference to the street.

Scott advised a lot is going on and although under the new Mayor, they are making headway on many fronts, they are not going to be able to fix everything due to financial and resource issues.

Congratulations to Scott. Improvements are already noticeable.

Parchmore Road Garage The issues residents are experiencing with vehicles being worked on by the garage continues to be on the radar and the council are working with DVLA to introduce CPZ and bays and deal with the matter. This is ongoing.

THCAT actions and updates

Festive Fair

THCAT will have a stall at the Festive Fair on Saturday 25 November at the Salvation Army Hall and will be giving out 400 daffodil bulbs (kindly donated by Tesco Thornton Heath) to plant in tree pits in footpaths or at the front of people's houses to encourage pride in the area. Do come and say hello!

The fair will be from 11-4, and will have 35 stalls of local makers and small businesses, Jerk BBQ, vegan curry, tea and cakes and much more!

Congratulations were extended to the organisers of the Festive Fair for organising such a good community event.

Ambassador House Gardening Club

The team continue to do great work at Ambassador House forecourt and are currently in the process of planting several hundred daffodil bulbs kindly donated by Tesco Thornton Heath

The monthly gardening club will meet on Saturday 1st December and will decorate the railings with winter greenery (donations requested) and lights for Christmas. We hope to have live music and carol singing, plus there will be mulled wine and mince pies for attendees. Rambling Rose Garden Shop has kindly provided a donation of the Christmas tree for the forecourt.

Environment Team (fly-tipping, litter, HMO's etc) update

Grass cutting has resumed on a rota basis.

Prior to Covid the recycling centre provided compost made from the recycling waste.

Boundary weeds or maintenance issues on grass verges can be reported via the “love clean streets” app or via their website. <https://lovecleanstreets.info/>

Fly tipping on private land

The love clean streets App no longer allows for waste on private land to be reported given that the NSO team have been disbanded. The council still have environmental officers who need to be more proactive.

Concern regarding anti-social behaviour around the rec and Brook Road in spring / summer was highlighted and closer attention is to be paid to this.

Trees / Bulbs / Planting

Following the council’s initiative to seek funding, Linda engaged with THCAT members to identify where new trees could be planted in empty tree pits in the area and reported back to the council. This has resulted in 97 trees being allocated so far. A huge success... Small actions, such as reporting empty tree pits in your street, can have a big impact when combined.

Some members of THCAT had been very disheartened to see mature trees removed in their streets; Linda consulted the Tree and Woodland Officer who explained that there are many fungi which look small and innocuous but cause major damage to the structure of the tree. They take no pleasure in removing them and the Council will replace these trees in due course.

THCAT to contact Ken Constantine (Operational Manager, Community Development, LB Croydon) to look at where we may work together on matters to improve TH.

Thornton Heath Pond

Freddy Roberson from Christians in Action suggested forming a new friend’s group to do regular planting and clean-up of the pond.

Neighbourhood Watch & SNT Bensham Manor, West Thornton & Thornton Heath Update

VAWG (Violence against Women and Girls) Initiative

On Wednesday the 22nd of November the team launched the VAWG (Violence against Women and Girls) initiative, stencilling information on footpaths and in parks telling people what to do if they felt harassed.

The stencils were positioned in the following locations.

1. Thornton Heath Clock Tower
2. Thornton Heath job centre
3. Thornton Heath Leisure Centre
4. Tesco
5. Thornton Heath train station
6. Thornton Heath Rec
7. Thornton Heath Pond

On Saturday 25th November the SNT will set up a stall outside of Tesco Thornton Heath, distributing leaflets highlighting the app “Street Safe” <https://www.police.uk/pu/notices/streetsafe/street-safe/> where people can submit information on areas where they feel unsafe.

The event is expected to be attended by local councillors, Mayor Jason Perry, Cabinet Member Ola Kolade, and Neighbourhood Watch.

If the event is considered successful it will be rolled out across the borough and elsewhere

Attendees expressed their thanks to our guest.

Linda closed the meeting by thanking our guest, Councillor Scott Roche and attendees.

A date TBA for the next public THCAT meeting in the new year.