

## Whitton and Heathfield Community Conversation

**Date:** 6<sup>th</sup> Oct 2021

**Time:** 6.30-8.00pm

**Venue:** Zoom

### AGENDA:

Agenda Item One: Update from Councillors

Agenda Item Two: Presentation (on video/Slides shared with attendees)

Agenda Item Three: Key theme breakout discussion groups

Agenda Item Four: Open floor questions

### Ward members in attendance

Cllr. Coombs: (Heathfield) Vice-chair of the Planning Committee, Spokesperson for Arts

Cllr. Pollesche: (Heathfield)

Cllr. Wilson: (Heathfield) Vice-chair, Finance, Policy and Resources Services Committee (Spokesperson for Communities, Equalities & the Voluntary Sector)

Cllr. Humphreys: (Whitton)

Cllr. Jaeger: (Whitton) Deputy Leader and Vice-chair of Adult Social Services, Health and Housing Services Committee (Spokesperson for Housing)

Cllr. O'Carroll: (Whitton) Disability Champion

**Chair:** Paul Clements, Independent Chair

### Agenda Item One: Update from Councillors

Headline Topic: Ward Achievements	
Councillor	Update
Cllr Wilson (Heathfield Ward)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Turing House and Hospital Bridge Road safety corridor study carried out. Looking at school crossing on the brow of the hill crossing towards Montrose Avenue and then further safety assessment of pedestrian/cyclist/vehicle interaction. The railway bridge has similar limitations to the A316 in terms of making alterations. The school is due to open in early 2022. There are concerns around the issues that staff parking may create as well.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heathfield Recreation Ground has the Friends and the Council Parks Team applying for planning to designate as an open green space. The MUGA is being refurbished at present.</li> <li>• The slip road where vehicles were being sold has had the vehicles removed</li> <li>• Additional rat running on the Hanworth Road and Nelson Road.</li> <li>• Hanworth Road parking near the shopping parade on the cross overs has been addressed with pavement markings and parking enforcement. Also looking at quick turnover bays for that parade.</li> <li>• Hounslow Heath Estate fire prevention works have been completed with a sprinkler system installed in the dwellings with only a few residents refusing access.</li> <li>• Cllr Jaeger and Cllr Pollesche are closely involved in the Community Centre on Percy Rd has and are in discussion with RHP in relation to improved use of the Hounslow Heath Community Centre.</li> <li>• The Well Mind Project has been running on Heathfield Recreation Ground thanks to the Friends of Heathfield recreation Ground applying for the Local Area Fund</li> <li>• The CPZ has been operational since March 2020 during the lockdown and there has been little need for Police enforcement. A review is due in November 2021. Some feedback that there is a lack of painted bays and short-term parking bays.</li> <li>• In Crane Park Hounslow and Richmond Police cooperating on Anti-Social Behaviour in the park by motorcyclists.</li> <li>• Conversation being had with Powdermill Lane and Hanworth Road shop owners have been approached for a potential community access point for the library.</li> <li>• The Duke of York developer has put in a new application for a community centre/housing/retail development.</li> </ul>
<p>Cllr Humphreys (Whitton Ward)</p>	<p>- Kneller Hall has been sold. It has been purchased by Dukes Education who own and manage private schools. The plan is to open a senior school for Radnor House School, currently based in Cross Deep in Strawberry Hill. The current school site is a combination of junior and high school combined but the Kneller Hall site will provide a senior school allowing the existing site to offer reception/early years provision.</p> <p><b>Cllr Jaeger:</b> Mr Hassan is the Chair of Dukes Education and Chair of Governors at Radnor House School.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The aim is to open the senior school in Kneller Hall in Sept 2025.</li> <li>• Have had the opportunity to walk around the site with Dukes Education and there is an obligation to preserve the main hall, chapel, guard house and boundary walls as they are listed. The green open space is Metropolitan Open Land and many of the trees have Tree Protection Orders which all need to be considered.</li> <li>• The Supplementary Planning Document developed by the Council with residents is known to the developers.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This was always a private sale between the MOD and a private buyer, with the Supplementary Planning Document giving planning application guidelines.</li> <li>• They intend to develop sports facilities, an ecological green corridor, and a swimming pool. They want to maintain the bandstand for open air concerts and performances.</li> <li>• For the Ward Councillors the priorities are:</li> <li>• The community have use/access to the facilities</li> <li>• That the travel plan is well considered as there are several educational sites nearby</li> <li>• Dukes Education will be required to engage with the local community as part of the planning process, so we plan to have a community conversation specifically on Kneller Hall.</li> <li>• There has been a proposal from the Boundary Commission to reduce the size of the constituencies in Twickenham as the population size has become too big. The suggestion is to move Whitton into the Hounslow constituency. This would not affect the Borough residents lived in, but would apply to the Councillors and elections in terms of the Parliamentary constituency that Whitton residents lived in. An objection has been sent to the consultation by the MP Munira Wilson and Ward Councillors. To split Whitton from Heathfield would result in Whitton becoming an 'orphan' ward in that it would be a Hounslow constituency and yet managed under the Richmond Local Authority which makes representation of residents difficult.</li> <li>• With the Local Area Fund (£10k), half has been used for the Wild Mind Project operating in Heathfield Recreation Ground and match funded by the Friends of Heathfield recreation Ground and Environs. Part went to the Friends of Murray Park to run a junior park run, and part went to the Purple Elephant project for a new play therapy group based in the old caretakers House in Chase Bridge School, Whitton. The therapy is geared to primary age children and will develop a play therapy garden.</li> <li>• Issue with the junction of Hospital Bridge Road and Nelson Road with the right turn. There is pavement on only one side of the bridge which requires you to cross to the other side of the road to cross the road. The width of the pavement over the railway bridge continues to be an issue</li> <li>• South West Railways propose to cut the service of trains to Whitton Station and have recently circulated a consultation on the changes in the timetable. The ward councillors and the Council have submitted a response to the consultation stating it is premature to make timetable changes based on the current slow return of residents to work/office sites.</li> <li>• The 110 Bus service new route is a great improvement joining Heathfield Ward to Whitton High Street, but now the train service is threatened with reduction.</li> <li>• There has now been the loss of all banks in the High Street.</li> </ul>
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**Agenda Item Two: presentation on High Street and Local Plan**

<p><b>High Street Rejuvenation</b></p>	<p><b>Paul Clement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development of High Streets has had its ups and downs, but current changes are unique due to the Covid 19 pandemic.</li> <li>• The pandemic has had a devastating impact on business and sped up the evolution of the High St.</li> <li>• In the last 18 months there has been an opening up of the local neighbourhood and reconnection with the values of local community.</li> <li>• People have been travelling less and appreciating their local services.</li> <li>• People’s lifestyles have changed with hybrid working and thereby spending more time in the local area moving away for out-of-town retail options.</li> <li>• The Homogeneous High Street is breaking down.</li> <li>• Points of difference have become more important appreciating independents and living/working closer to their local offer.</li> <li>• The Council’s part is to provide leadership and a plan of action for business, but they cannot solve all the problems.</li> </ul> <p>The Council Partnership Conference in May 2021 came away with 5 key themes for the development of the High St:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. People wanted town centres to be a destination point</li> <li>2. People wanted walkable/pedestrianised, green spaces in their High Streets.</li> <li>3. People wanted a more balanced usage in town centres – including civic uses</li> <li>4. The local authority needs to have a creative approach to town planning and repurposing spaces</li> <li>5. Need for digital offer on the High St – embracing mobile revolution</li> </ol>
<p><b>Local Plan Presentation</b></p>	<p>Grace Crannis talked through the current consultation on the Richmond Local Plan that offers a detailed outline for local development. Presentation is available on the Community Conversation website page of the Richmond Council website. <a href="http://www.richmond.gov.uk">www.richmond.gov.uk</a></p>

**Agenda item three: Key themes arising from discussion groups**

<p><b>Theme Retail / Hospitality</b></p>	<p><b>Group’s Key Comments</b></p>
<p>Suggestions/issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No farmers market, no hub, lacking cultural contribution</li> <li>• No evening offer, need more evening licensing for cafes/restaurants – Teddington preferable in the evenings</li> <li>• Build a canopy over the High St to allow for all year round outside use/café society</li> <li>• Needs more variety, more healthy choices...too many takeaways</li> <li>• Need to change planning policy to encourage more independents and start-ups, too many nail bars</li> <li>• Once after school rush has finished, High Street dead after 5pm</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would like to see a toy shop in the High St, clothes shops to try on clothes and haber4dasher</li> <li>• Council need to be more supportive of extended licenses for cafes/restaurants</li> <li>• Window dress empty units, so look less neglected</li> <li>• After uplift of pavements in Whitton, space was made for market stalls/street traders, would be great to see that made better use of regularly</li> <li>• Pubs on the High Street are not particularly family friendly. Need to diversity offer, more inclusive atmosphere to compete with Richmond and Kingston</li> <li>• Needs more independents rather than chains, only useful for top up shopping. Need wider offer of groceries</li> </ul>
Existing positives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whitton High Street best in the borough, great community spirit, but only really go there for the supermarket and the station</li> <li>• Lovely coffee shops and independents</li> <li>• During pandemic made greater use of local shops and cafes -easy walking distance and great variety</li> </ul>

<b>Theme Leisure / Arts / Cultural Events</b>	<b>Group's Key Comments</b>
Suggestions/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More live music, live music licences to add to night life</li> <li>• No night time offer, after cafes close at 5pm nothing to entice you to the High St.</li> <li>• Murray Park is a hub but lacks a café /central meeting point.</li> <li>• Could do treasure trails around businesses, cultural events to attract residents of local businesses similar to Teddington. Use empty shops for exhibitions/music workshops/local history exhibitions etc</li> <li>• Need for low-cost gym. Gyms are quite costly in the area</li> <li>• Use empty shops for meeting places for elderly (similar to old Whitton rest rooms)</li> <li>• Pop up clubs/shops for crafts/arts</li> </ul>
Existing positives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Film club in Whitton Library could be publicised more as excellent offer</li> <li>• Community events in Whitton are excellent – St George's Day, Christmas Light Up</li> <li>• Whitton Network does incredible work for elderly and disabled locally</li> </ul>

<b>Theme Transport and Traffic</b>	<b>Group's Key Comments</b>
Suggestions/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too much parking, need to encourage active travel – too much commuter parking for the railway station</li> <li>• Lidl car park is underused as people prefer to park on streets – needs better signage or to be repurposed</li> <li>• Parking on High St needs to be marked into bays to make drivers more considerate when parking</li> <li>• Curbs are very high in the High Street, need to be even with parking bays as cause issues for elderly and disabled</li> <li>• Consider closing High St after a certain time eg 6pm and Sundays to encourage night life and social use and discourage car use</li> <li>• Need for tactile surfaces on High St paving as not disability friendly at present</li> <li>• Issue with bikes and e-scooters/scooters on the pavements – safety issue for elderly and frail, no enforcement of laws by Police</li> <li>• Percy Road has become an overspill for commuter parking, sometimes long-term parking for Heathrow connection</li> <li>• Level of bike theft is shocking, need more security around bikes</li> <li>• Takeaway delivery bikes taking over parking on the High St</li> <li>• Access road by Iceland not properly marked for their delivery lorries, causes issues on the High St.</li> </ul>
Existing positives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whitton station useful and convenient, good bike storage unit</li> <li>• Bus links have improved</li> </ul>

<b>Theme Look and Feel</b>	<b>Group's Key Comments</b>
Suggestions/issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do planting around existing trees and ask businesses to sponsor and care for them</li> <li>• High Street needs to be softened, more greenery</li> <li>• Needs new community noticeboard, as current board filled up with Council notices</li> <li>• Many street drinkers on Montrose Avenue, needs addressing</li> </ul>
Existing positives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whitton is a much better High St than it used to be, the Council has invested in the High St.</li> <li>• Became a real meeting place during the pandemic as more people shopped locally</li> <li>• Wider pavements helped with social distancing during pandemic</li> </ul>

#### Agenda item four – Open floor questions

<b>Headline Topic</b>	<b>Kneller Hall - housing</b>
<b>Question 1</b>	With the sale of Kneller Hall, what will happen to the existing army housing adjoining the site? Could it become social housing?
<b>Response</b>	<b>Cllr. Humphries:</b> The Duke of York Street is already run by a Housing Association on behalf of the MOD and is likely to still be for army personnel. With Kneller Hall being a private sale, the Supplementary Planning Document will have some influence which may result in some housing, but there are no decisions yet Need social housing/affordable housing in Whitton area, but it is too early in the process to say what will happen.
<b>Headline Topic</b>	<b>Duke Of York development</b>
<b>Question 2</b>	<b>Nick Dexter:</b> what is the planning brief for the redevelopment of the Duke of York Pub on Hanworth Road?
<b>Response</b>	<b>Cllr Coombs:</b> The plan is for a retail outlet on ground floor and flats above with a community centre. The first planning application was rejected as there was not enough affordable housing catered for on the site and the appeal also failed. A second plan has been submitted including parking for the flats, but there is still no affordable housing on the site. The local authority would prefer retail and social housing to be provided.
<b>Headline Topic</b>	<b>Street lighting</b>
<b>Question 3</b>	<b>Barbara:</b> the lighting of the High Street needs to be audited, especially Rodney Road.
<b>Response</b>	<b>Cllr. O'Carroll:</b> Issue with Rodney Road is that the house align the railway line which limits the level of street lighting due to the impact on the trains. The alleys behind the High Street have issues with ownership to try to establish who has an obligation to improve lighting ie retail outlet/Council Highways Department. There is a need for better lighting for safety and to avoid anti-social behaviour, but there is also the need for more Police presence.
<b>Action</b>	<b>Cllr O'Carroll:</b> to follow up with Police
<b>Response</b>	<b>Cllr Pollesche:</b> connection with the Police Liaison Group and the new Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) lead Inspector. McCloughlin, who was previously leading the Whitton Ward SNT. There is a need to report any observed ASB (Anti-Social Behaviour) on the 101 line/online reporting service or contact Cllr Pollesche.
<b>Headline Topic</b>	<b>Murray Park – dog free area?</b>
<b>Question</b>	<b>Umesh:</b> Would it be possible to section of part of the park to be dog free. Only the playground is currently dog free at present
<b>Response</b>	<b>Cllr Humphreys:</b> Difficult to be dog free. Owners should not allow their dogs to foul the park and they can be fined for not clearing up. The park is for all residents.
<b>Headline Topic</b>	<b>Speeding on 20mph roads</b>
<b>Question</b>	<b>Hannah Keates:</b> The introduction of the 20mph limit was a good idea, but there is still excessive speeding. There is a need for an active travel plan for the area of Whitton and to implement the concept of the 15 minutes neighbourhood.
<b>Response</b>	<b>Cllr. Wilson:</b> Joan Gibson, Chair of Friends of Heathfield Recreation Grounds and Environs, has also raised this point.
<b>Action</b>	<b>Cllr Wilson to encourage Cllr Ehmann and Cllr Mansfield to meet with residents and work on the 15 minute neighbourhood.</b>

<b>Headline Topic</b>	Active travel in Whitton
<b>Question</b>	<b>John Keefe:</b> There is a need for separated cycle paths, especially on Whitton Dene.
	<b>Cllr O'Carroll:</b> finding space to insert cycle lanes is difficult and many disability groups are against shared pedestrian/cycle space. To put a cycle path on the road would require the removal of street parking, such as has been introduced on Kew Road, near Kew Gardens. The current administration is keen to promote active travel in every form.
<b>Response</b>	<b>Cllr. Humphries:</b> Warren Road's driveways have insufficient width to allow for a cross over on the pavement to access the driveway, so they therefore are restricted to street parking. There is an ambition to reduce car usage and improve air quality. There is also a need on Warren Road to have a further pedestrian crossing as there is a large gap between crossings.