

**Christ Church, Gipsy Hill SE19**

**PRESENT: CPCG BOARD:** Anna Tapsell (Chairperson), Ivelaw Bowman, Gill Kenealy, Shane Collins, Jim Toohill (Ind. Membs), Doye Akinlade (Brixton Society), Ros Munday (Clapham Community Partnership), Jane Warwick (Appropriate Adults)  
**COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY MEMBERSHIP:** Jean Carpenter (Flipside), Brian Mantell (South London Synagogue), Jim Fairweather (WIESA), David Hart, (Clapham Community Partnership), Lloyd Leon (Lambeth ICVs), Nick Mason (Lambeth Summer Projects), Hazel Saunders (Victim Support Lambeth), (Streatham Common Southside NW), John Wainwright (Clapham SWG), Hazel Watson (Milkwood Road Residents Assoc.),  
**INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS:** Habiba Compaore, Richard Dutton, Rosemarie Falaiye, Peter Harris, Lena James, David Prichard-Jones, Clare Moore, Richard Moore, Cheryl Sealey, Fernando Senior  
**STATUTORY MEMBERSHIP:** John Roberts MPA  
**LAMBETH COUNCIL** Cllr. Kingsley Abrahams, Cllr. Lorna Campbell, Cllr. Rachel Heywood, Simon Harding, Adina Bozga (Community Safety),  
**METROPOLITAN POLICE SERVICE:** Ch. Supt. Sharon Rowe, Supt. Paul Wilson, Ch. Insp. Neil Evans, Sgt. Ronnie Whelan, Jezreal Edwards

**VISITORS:** B. Barnes, John Bellaby, Helen Buckley (Lewisham CPCG), John Cheetham (Croydon CPCG), Sharon Facey, June Pilgrim (Lambeth Women's Aid), Arthur Francis, Elette Francis, Cllr. Andrew Gibson, David Green (Gypsy Hill Safer Neighbourhood Panel), Charlie Rose, Cllr. Betty Evans-Jacas, M. P. McVie, Benjamin Simbo, Junior Shabazz, Linda Spashett, Mrs Lynn Thomas, Nicholas Tooher, Leon Watson (South London Press), Alex Wrigley.

**APOLOGIES:** Paul Andell, Maud Estwick, Rowena Estwick, Stuart Horwood, Lena James, Paul Reynolds, Beryl Saunders, David Tomlinson.

\* Minutes in **bold italic** indicate action points

**Introduction**

- 1 The meeting was chaired by Anna Tapsell (Chairperson, CPCG).
- 2 Ms Tapsell welcomed John Pitts, Vauxhall Professor of Socio-legal Studies, University of Bedfordshire, to the meeting.
- 3 On behalf of the Group, Ms Tapsell congratulated Lloyd Leon, Philip Cremin, Joyce Gill, Barbara Glosby, Nicholas Helleur, Claudette Hewitt, Ronald Laidly, Michael Morfey, Beverley Morrison, Graham Nicholls, Saad Qureshi, Claire Rennie, Susan Stephenson, Babatunde Williams and John Roberts upon receiving Civic Awards.

**Minutes of the Meeting 4 March 2008**

- 4 The minutes were accepted without amendment.

**Matters Arising**

- 5 **Supt. Paul Wilson said that he was not in a position to give an account for police using the Dispersal Zone regulations to eject people distributing free meals in Brixton Oval/Tate Gardens on Sundays, and would report back on the matter and other issues more widely concerning the area at the next meeting [Minute 32, 04.03.08]**
- 6 Simon Harding, LBL Asst. Dir. Community Safety said that he was aware that other bodies i.e. Association of Chief Police Officers and Children's Society had come against the use of 'Mosquito' devices as a means to disperse young people but Lambeth did not have an agreed policy position itself. **However, he said that the Council was taking into account the views of outside bodies and reviewing the matter and would bring its findings to the Safer Lambeth Partnership (SLP) board.**
- 7 Jim Toohill suggested that, when consulting on the matter, contact should be made with the Royal National Institute for the Deaf in respect of hearing, and the Institute of Hearing Research in Nottingham to check the manufacturer's claim that the device would not be heard by young children and toddlers. [Minute 35, 04.03.08].

**Guns and Gangs**

- 8 Prof. John Pitts and Simon Harding, gave presentations on Young & Safe in Lambeth: *The Deliberations of the Executive Commission on Young People & Violent Crime, 2007* and the Strategic Action Plan *to tackle violent crime amongst children and young people*, respectively (see attached).
- 9 Referring to the strategy, Jim Fairweather said there had been a successful community programme of activities for young people involving discipline some years previously, which had been very successful but had eventually dwindled along with provisions for youth.
- 10 On the matter of involving the community, David Prichard-Jones said that he had asked for a full copy of the Strategy Report sometime ago but had been refused it only to be given an abridged version. While the Council had the

- right to withhold the report, Mr Prichard-Jones questioned their wisdom in doing so - if the policy was to be effective. He added that he had also been refused a report on the drugs trade in Brixton, which also needed to be made public as it was central to what was happening with regard to gangs and violence.
- 11 Mr Prichard-Jones said that he did not believe that the Council was committed to doing anything apart from producing a placebo in order to calm people and show that they were doing something. He said that if the information was made available there would be a chance to improve the situation by being able to seek funding from central government.
- 12 Mr Harding said that following a decision made to hold back information prior to the media launch of the Strategy on 14 February, documents were now freely available on the Council's website [www.lambeth.gov.uk/youngandsafe](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/youngandsafe).
- 13 Mr Harding said that comments about the decline in youth facilities were applicable across the country. However, as part of the Council's action plan there was provision for a 40% increase in investment in Lambeth Youth Service; an additional £1.7 million, over the next three years.
- 14 With regard to the drugs report, produced by King's College, Mr Harding said that the Council had acted on the advice of the Borough Solicitor to restrict the document to ensure the safety and security of the people who had contributed to it. However, he said that a summary was also available from the Council.
- 15 Rosemarie Falaiye praised the work of a local youth club but said that she would like to see the Council to do more to help them and other communities in the area to keep young people off the streets. She said that those young people that committed crime should be made to pay the community back and not necessarily sent to prison.
- 16 Lloyd Leon reminded the Group that ever since youth clubs began to be closed in the 1990s, and the demolition of Dick Shepherds School, which had provided an array of after school provision, the Group had continually strived to keep the matter on its agenda and to press the Council for greater facilities for young people, not least to prevent them from breaking the law and receiving custodial sentences.
- 17 David Green, Chair of Gipsy Hill Safer Neighbourhood Panel, commended the report which he said highlighted issues that had been raised by many who had worked with young people over the years. However, he said that the success of the strategy would only be realised if resources were made available to the various community groups in Lambeth.
- 18 Mr Green expressed his concern about young people and anti-social behaviour, which was in part due to a lack of youth facilities in the face of temptation from drugs and gangs, which had led to young people being viewed as public enemy number one. Mr Green said that in his view education was a 24 hour, seven day a week activity and that all children should receive the support, facilities and services they needed to lead them along the right path. In terms of such provision, Mr Green said that the Council should hang its head in shame.
- 19 Mrs Lynn Thomas said that she hoped that there would be the finance to put the report into action as parents needed help with their children. Mrs Thomas added that government interference had undermined parents and teachers in terms of disciplining young people.
- 20 As an example of young people turning to crime, John Wainwright gave an account of a intelligent and well-mannered 17 year-old youth with no criminal background who was caught carrying a blade and found to be an 'elder' of a local gang.
- 21 In response, Ch. Insp. Neil Evans said that the fact that an educated young person had decided to embark on crime showed the complexity of gang membership and gang criminality. He said that as everyone was different it was not necessarily through police enforcement that the problem could be tackled but also by diversion and the provision of bespoke services.
- 22 Mr Wainwright said that referral orders allowed for individuals to undertake reparation in the community, e.g. gardening and decorating, and that such schemes did exist. However, he said that the Council was not very good at supporting such initiatives. In response, Mr Harding said that he agreed that there was not enough community reparation in the borough and would recommend that it was used widely.
- 23 A member of the public suggested that a type of national service should be created for repeat and multiple offenders involving discipline,

- which would help young people to become responsible citizens. He added that if the police were aware of the gangs in the borough they should take some action against them, and that parents needed to take charge of their children.
- 24 Jane Warwick said that the Group had been fighting for more than ten years for youth projects but that none of the money made from the sale of Dick Shepherd School appeared to have been used for youth provision, as had been promised at the time.
- 25 Ms Warwick said that having talked to many shopkeepers in Norwood High Street she had heard how unsupported they felt and terrorised by gangs while the police presence was negligible.
- 26 **In response, Mr Harding said that while he was aware of what had happened concerning Dick Shepherd School, it was before his time. However, he said he would look into it and report back.** Similarly, he said that he had taken note of comments about Norwood High Street and would look into the matter, as well as take on board comments about neglect on West Norwood Estate raised by Cllr. Andrew Gibson.
- 27 Cllr. Gibson said that he had some deep misgivings about the evidence in the report, which appeared to come from the 1990s, and the baselines seemed to switch around from year to year. With the electoral roll changing in some parts of Lambeth by up to a third each year, Cllr. Gibson said that he would appreciate it if, during the few weeks left of finalising the report, there could be a review of whether the most recent data had been captured.
- 28 In terms of methodology, Prof. Pitts said that it was in the nature of writing such reports that the baseline wasn't consistent because the data was coming from a variety of different sources and that it was the most recent data available.
- 29 An art director of U.S. origin working with youths in Lambeth for some years said that many young people he met seemed to be disconnected from what England was, and that they were searching for an identity with which to connect. To avoid a U.S style problem of gangs, he said that everyone would have to work together, not just with the government but with businesses, to make young people feel that they were needed, that they mattered and that people did care.
- 30 John Cheetham, of Croydon, proposed that the issue of gangs was a problem not just for Lambeth but for neighbouring boroughs, which needed to work more jointly. With regard to youth provision, he said that it had been in decline for twenty years, while at the same time it was not a local authority's statutory duty to provide it. Therefore, he said, it was vulnerable to being squeezed. Mr Cheetham thanked the Group for inviting him to the meeting and said he would like to reciprocate by inviting Group members to a Croydon CPCG meeting.
- 31 A member of the public said that since members of her family had been victims of gun crime she too felt that she had become a victim. In respect of young people, she said that they were crying out for help and action, and needed to be asked about what they wanted. She added that the authorities needed to spend money and police needed to go into schools to offer security and remove weapons.
- 32 Jim Toohill commended the report and said that the community should use it and the strategy to hold the Partnership to account, in public, as to the credibility of the strategy's funding and to monitor its implementation. He added that he felt we should be wary of implying an inevitable link between deprivation and criminality, at an individual level, for risk of depressing individual expectations and of adding to the demonisation of young people in particular communities.
- 33 Mr Harding said that the document he was preparing would be the action plan arising from the Commission's report by Prof. Pitts, and that the SLP would be looking for contributions from across the board for funding Young and Safe in Lambeth Strategy and.
- 34 In response to Cheryl Sealey and Cllr. Kingsley Abrams, Mr Harding said that the budget wasn't pre-allocated and the reason it had not appeared in the report was because it was not known how much was coming in from central government. Furthermore, he said that the SLP wanted to consult with the community and stakeholders to make sure they had the right recommendations and correct actions before being costed up.
- 35 Mr Harding said that the budget would probably be a mix of current, re-allocated and new money, but said he agreed with Ivelaw Bowman on the matter of having a fixed budget for youth provision without having to take money from other services.

- 36 Mr Harding said that it had been recommended in the action plan that within six months of going live all youth clubs in Lambeth would extend their opening hours to seven days a week whilst staying open later than they did presently. He added there would also be eighteen support workers in schools and community centres to support families whose children were at risk of offending, and a dedicated youth outreach team targeting young people at risk.
- 37 In response to Cllr. Gibson, Mr Harding said that while he could see there was a perception that the Council was acting in silos, with the public realm missing, he didn't think that was the case. He said that his own particular division, Community Safety, was part of Environment and Culture while his boss, Robert Overall, was the Executive Director for Public Realm and Public Protection and linking internally around those agendas.
- 38 Mr Harding said that there had been cross-party support for the Strategy and that would continue regardless of what happens in any future local elections.
- 39 In response to Habiba Compaore's idea of a drop in centre in the evenings for young people, Mr Harding said that was it good suggestion and he would look into it. Prof. Pitts added that ways of making contact with hard to reach young people needed to be found and maintained.
- 40 In response to Jim Toohill, Mr Harding said that once the document had been finalised it would be taken to Whitehall where the SLP would demand additional resources. He added that he believed that the final version of the action plan would stand them in good stead and they ought to receive get a good hearing.
- 41 In respect of the work of the Territorial Support Group, Ch. Insp. Evans said that the key issue was the alienation of young people who had issues with authority, a common thread across the country which needed to be acknowledged. Supt. Wilson added that the police didn't enjoy a particularly healthy relationship with some black youths, however he said that during a project at a school some youths disclosed that a number of their peers carried knives, about which they thought that the police were not being tough enough in dealing with the situation.
- 42 With regard to Stop and Search, Supt. Wilson said that there was a better regime in Lambeth than previously and police did look at data concerning individual officers and disproportionality on a regular basis, although there was still a lot more work to be done.
- 43 In response to Shane Collins, Prof. Pitts said that Class A drugs were not going to be legalised although he agreed that they played a large part in the existence of gangs. However, he said that when police closed crack houses in Waltham Forest some of the elders diversified into high value car theft which had caused some very serious injuries.
- 44 In response to Cllr. Betty Evans-Jacas, Prof. Pitts said that comparing data with other boroughs hadn't been undertaken due to time constraints. However, he said he'd made recent studies of street crime in Lewisham and gangs in Waltham Forest. In respect of the latter, Prof Pitts said that the ethnic make up of the gangs reflected the ethnicity of the estates they operated in, which was different from Lambeth where the issue was more one of social predicament and social exclusion.
- 45 Cllr. Lorna Campbell said that she was aware of past events in relation to young people and while that could not be changed there were lessons for the future. She said that the SLP, working with the community, was committed to delivering the actions resulting from the report, which had identified a collective approach. As for commissioning the report, she added that first and foremost it was undertaken to gather everything together in one place so that a robust pitch for financing could be made.
- 46 Cllr. Campbell thanked everyone for their contribution and said that everyone's points had been noted. She added that the Commission was meeting again and it would keep a watchful eye to ensure that SLP delivered what it said it was going to deliver.
- 47 In response to the Chair's invitation for any pressing issues which the meeting wished to raise with the Borough Commander, Gill Kenealy said that she wished to thank the Police and PCSOs for their commitment and the exemplary way they have been conducting themselves lately in response to acts of violence that have occurred in the borough.

**Next Meeting: 6.00 p.m. Tuesday 6 May, 2008  
Assembly Hall, Lambeth Town Hall SW2 1RW**