



## **Thornton Heath Community Action Team (THCAT) Minutes from meeting held on 15 October 2024 at St. Andrews Church Hall from 19:00 to 20:30**

The meeting started shortly after 19:00. Thornton Heath Community Action Team (“THCAT”) Chair Linda Watson (“LW”) explained to new attendees who we are and what we do as volunteers plus how she and THCAT’s Environmental Team members have met several times with the mayor and his team to discuss and progress local issues. There was a round of applause for this team’s work. LW then introduced Executive Mayor of Croydon Jason Perry (“JP”) and thanked him for attending the meeting. LW explained that audience members would get an opportunity to ask questions after JP had finished his talk on the various topics.

JP opened by saying he had been asked to provide updates and take questions on amongst others:

- The Thornton Heath Blitz Clean (“BC”)
- The Public Spaces Protection Order (“PSPO”)
- Policy Developments.

JP went on to explain that he had been elected Executive Mayor in May 2022 and had connections to Thornton Heath as relatives resided here.

JP explained that the BC was about putting pride back in the area by cleaning the streets. JP said that 600 metres of graffiti had been removed from shopfronts however 25% of the graffiti had returned which did not happen in the previous BC in Norbury. The blitz also entailed new signage and checking whether business had Waste Licences. JP revealed that 3 business did not have Waste Licences and 10 out of 77 businesses were displaying the wrong Food Hygiene rating. And 288 PCNs (Penalty Charge Notices had been issued for parking offences.

JP added that there is “more work to do” and he hoped that the Blitz Clean would re-visit Thornton Heath.

There were questions on the BC:

Q. What was done to help wheelchair users travel across uneven pavements?

A. JP asked the gentlemen to speak to him at the end of the meeting and he would take details and he (JP) would investigate.



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Q. What was the long-term strategy for removing cars from Livingstone Road and dealing with the garages leaving cars on Parchmore Road and nearby?

A. JP explained that cars were removed from Livingstone Road because the DVLA delegated powers to Croydon Council, and this will continue. JP said that for years the Parchmore Road issue had been put in the “too difficult box” however 9 cars had now been removed and this would continue and, a closure notice had been issued to one business and another business owner had intimated that he would “move away”.

Q. There was a question on fly-tipping on Bridport Road with the suggestion that the council should introduce a “Rapid Service” for the collection of bulk waste and charge a bit more for the express nature of the service.

A. JP said that he thought the bulky waste charge puts people off using it and it was not likely that people would pay more. He said that he and officers were looking at ways for people to dispose of bulky waste more easily and for people not to use unlicensed waste carriers. There was a supplementary question as to whether the Council could produce a list of licensed waste carrier. JP said he would look at this idea.

JP moved on to discuss the PSPO. He said that there were PSPOs in Central Croydon and the Thornton Heath area. (*For info parts of Selhurst and South Norwood are also in the “area” but JP restricted comments to the 3 Thornton Heath wards*) He added that the police had used the PSPO on 116 occasions mainly around Thornton Heath Recreation Ground, Thornton Heath Pond, and Thornton Heath Clocktower. He added that the PSPO use mainly occurred with men with alcohol. Most of the men had addresses and often at hostels. One person had been stopped 6 times and that would be looked at closely.

JP went on to say that there was no Enforcement Teams across the borough although there were 2 Officers who dealt with serious cases. JP explained that a new Enforcement Policy was being considered whereby a “self-financing” enforcement team would be built and it would have to deal with other investigative issues rather than just fining for dropping a cigarette butt.

Questions weren’t taken at this stage on the PSPO as it was agreed with LW that JP would continue with “Policy Developments” and the audience would then have opportunity to pose questions.

JP spoke about Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and the anomaly caused by planning legislation and HMO legislation which required a 1-year HMO license to be issued despite planning permission having not been given. JP said that a way was to be found to get applications before planning faster.

Questions were then taken:

Q. Why was there a boat parked on a single yellow line on Quadrant Road.



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A. JP said he would ask officers to investigate.

Q. What can be done about dog excrement which gets on people's feet and then ends up on bus seats and bus drivers are then frightened to approach people who have their feet on seats.

A. JP said that dog excrement on the footpath can be reported via the Love Clean Streets ("LCS") app but ultimately it is up to dog owners to make the initial clearance. JP added that TFL had posters on buses asking passengers to refrain from placing their feet on seats.

Q. Multiple questions from one questioner re dropped kerbs, bins left on pavement and potholes.

A. JP said residents should take bins in after Veolia collections and potholes could be reported via LCS. JP added that dropped kerbs being blocked could be reported via LCS for the Highways Team to look at.

Q. Winterbourne entrance to Thornton Heath Recreation Ground has had longstanding issues with groups of people congregating at this area causing ASB and triple parking in the cul-de-sac. Local residents are being asked to get evidence, but the police don't seem to have any power and parking enforcement won't turn out. What can JP do?

JP. Said that he was talking to the police about using different powers and mentioned an update of the Park By-Laws He asked residents to keep making reports to the police and to keep records but not to put themselves at risk when gathering evidence. JP asked the questioner to speak to him at the end of the meeting.

Q. Re Sandfield Road. There was a multiple question about an individual's personal experience of parking problems on Sandfield Road, for example people from other roads and streets parked on Sandfield and there was a question about CCTV. Apparently when phoning the council, the questioner was told there was no money for CCTV.

A. JP said there was CCTV which was often moved around to the various hotspots and the council were looking at deploying a new CCTV system. He asked the questioner to give their details to him at the end of the meeting and he would ask officers to investigate.

Q. There was a question regarding the maintenance of green spaces and larger plans for greening Thornton Heath and the surveillance at green spaces as there had been a large increase in crime and ASB.

JP acknowledged that green spaces were partly maintained by volunteers, among others "Graham" and pointed to the plant/adopt/fill a tree-pit initiatives. JP also mentioned the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and some of the money would be spent on greening the parklet on Colliers Water Lane and funds would also be spent on The Pond and Thornton Heath Clock Tower. JP said here had to be visibility of the police but over the previous months many officers from Croydon were abstracted to deal with demos etc. elsewhere.



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Q. There was a question on why we had so many takeaways and the late opening hours.

A. JP said that Licensing can control opening hours and Planning can control the number of take aways but there must be diversity of business.

Q. There was a comment on the PSPO not being taken seriously and on Beulah Road the signs are too small and obscured. It was mentioned that for help residents had to go on Facebook for help and Graham was thanked with a ripple of applause. When residents phone the police about boys on motorbikes racing around, they were told to phone the council. There are men around harassing people, and nothing ever changes.

A. JP said the PSPOs lapsed and had to be reintroduced and it was unfortunate that the initial signs were printed wrongly but now there must be a partnership with the police to take us on journey of improvement. Police had been trained in how to support the PSPO.

Q. Comments made about ASB getting worse every year and Enforcement Officers needed and there was no visibility of police and there were people racing around and revving engines. Commenter said that Enforcement Officers should have been the first thing introduced by JP.

A. JP said that when he was elected, Croydon Council was a broken organisation but after just over 2 years, he was building back basic services, but these were difficult financial times and areas had been allowed to decline. JP said that “breaking an area is easy but putting it back together is not easy”.

Q. Comment on HMOs on Quadrant Road. Quadrant Road was upcoming but with three HMO’s and rubbish dumped on the street particularly by one HMO that has

changed. And a property recently acquired at auction was being turned into an HMO and had been reported to Planning.

A. As this was a comment rather than a question JP didn’t answer and we moved on to the next question.

Q. What was being done about fly-tipping on Stuart Road and could ANPR be used to catch culprits. Questioner also asked about what was being done to help young people.

A. JP said that there was support for young people via Voluntary Sector Groups and by drawing down funding from the GLA and engaging with young people and supporting Samuel Coleridge Taylor Centre. JP asked questioner to give him his details at the end of the meeting regarding the ANPR/Box Junction.

Q. More a comment. Thornton Heath is not what it was, and Laxton Court residents had been assaulted but we all need to work together, and the police are doing what they can to enforce but, police say problems are financial and council also say problems are financial.



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A. JP said that Laxton Court had been made secure for residents but there were people at The Clocktower affected by mental health, drink, and drugs issues and rather than moving people on we must help them.

LW brought the questions to a close and thanked Mayor Perry for attending and answering the various questions. A round of applause was forthcoming.

LW then introduced the latest THCAT project as the "Spring Daffodil Competition 2025" and asked the attendees to participate to try and make Thornton Heath more colourful in Spring 2025. Linda explained application terms and added that there would be prizes for winners in the three categories. Application forms were available.

The meeting ended at 20:35.

**Graham Mitchell – THCAT Secretary**