

DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting of the Council for the hearing of deputations from members of the public. Each deputation may be heard for a maximum of five minutes following which one Member of the Council, nominated by the Mayor, may speak in response. It shall then be moved by the Mayor and voted on without discussion that the deputation be thanked for attending and its subject matter noted.

Notification of one Deputation has been received. The spokesperson is entitled to speak for 5 minutes.

**(a) Deputation concerning Alcohol Misuse and Anti-Social Behaviour
Spokesperson Sir Ron de Witt, Chair Brunswick Town Association**

Supported by: Amy Kitching
Susan Hunter
Fiona Bower
Juliette Hunting
David Sewell

Ward affected: Brunswick & Adelaide

Councillor Daniel, Chair of the Neighbourhoods, Communities & Equality Committee will reply.

PROTECT OUR COMMUNITY FROM ALCOHOL MISUSE AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

This deputation wishes to bring to the attention of the council concerns of residents of Brunswick and Regency wards regarding the sizeable increase in drink and drug propelled antisocial behaviour.

Our residents have been experiencing a steep upsurge in levels of street drinking, alcohol related antisocial behaviour and drug crime which are adversely affecting and compromising their quality of life.

Many now describe Norfolk Square as a no go area due to the large and intimidating groups of street drinkers who gather there, drunken yobs, fighting, smashing of bottles, drug taking and drug litter, and indecent exposure by those using it as a latrine – things that are a daily occurrence. Indeed it has now been designated an antisocial behaviour ‘hotspot’ by the Police. Clarence Square has documented the same problems. One Cross Street resident came out of her house with her young daughter at 10am one morning to find 3 people injecting on her doorstep. Dealing and drug litter – needles, spoons - is regularly seen in Brunswick Road and Waterloo Street’s community gardens, with one resident finding needles so regularly that he has been practising how to pick them up safely at home. Brunswick and Palmeira Squares had problems this summer with tented communities and the associated antisocial behaviour that those brought with them.

There is a clear and well-evidenced relationship between alcohol consumption and antisocial behaviour and crime. There is also a clear evidenced relationship between alcohol availability and consumption. We want the council to play its part in helping communities in the centre of town address some of the underlying problems behind what we are experiencing.

With that in mind we have also raised a petition which I will hand and in that makes-the following requests so that the Council fulfil their duty of care to our community:

(a) Takes a firmer stance with alcohol-related Anti-Social Behaviour and uses the new enforcement contract to control drinking of alcohol in public spaces (DPP Order);

(b) Undertakes to adhere firmly to its Statement of Licensing Policy with regard to new or varied alcohol outlets in the Cumulative Impact Area (CIA);

(c) Undertakes to quickly review the licenses of alcohol outlets that breach license conditions in particular regarding off-sales;

(d) Closely monitors and advises premises with new ‘Café Bar’ licenses in the CIA with a view to minimising the risk of license ‘creep’.

Supporting Information to Item 30(a)

The Coop on Western Road has expressed in much the same terms as many residents their frustration with the lack of a visible police presence and the general feeling that our area is suffering an increase in anti-social behaviour and is at the receiving end of drug and drink abuse. The Store Manager has shared with our local Councillor Phelim Mac Cafferty, photos and footage of people stealing alcohol from the Coop who then drink it on the streets. In September the Coop recorded 21 incidents and in August, 19. Look at the vandalism, the graffiti. Talk to business owners on Western Road about how many times they have had their windows smashed. The signs of abuse are written all over the area. This is not by any means all attributable to street drinkers; much of it is yobbish behaviour by late-night drunks. And let's not forget that earlier this year there was a death when a young man was killed under a truck outside the Temple Inn on Western Road.

For a predominantly residential area we have a very high proliferation of licenses: within a 10 minute walk along less than half a mile of Western Road and through an area of less than half a square mile there are currently 67 on and off sale licenses. A high number are after midnight on weekdays, after 11pm on Sunday, and we have three 24 hour off licenses – four on a Saturday and Sunday. Couple this with increasing numbers of students, HMOs and stag and hen houses propelling the 'night time economy' - booze and drug culture is increasing and has spread from central Brighton and late night and early morning disturbance is common for residents on any given day of the week. This antisocial behaviour may be a low level threat but it blights people's lives.

Ask Stephen, a Norfolk Square resident who has a long commute to London every day and is kept awake until 3am by drunks outside – he and his partner now regularly sleep in different bedrooms because of the noise. Speak to Olive, an elderly Brunswick Road resident who has lived here for many years who has written to us saying 'I certainly cannot say I feel safe out in this area after dark'. Or to Fiona, Chair of Brunswick Square and Terrace, who said an incident she witnessed in the Coop 'would have been almost funny had the man not been so off his head, violent & angry. It's seriously beginning to feel unsafe being out on Western Road'.

There was a disappointing article in the press recently saying the Police can't investigate every incident. Our experience is that it is unusual to even see the Police – if they appear at all when contacted it is often much later and even then they don't come out of their vehicles. Richard, a Brunswick Road resident, has shared his experience of seeing a man injecting in the community garden and then throwing chairs. He called 999 and was told no-one would be attending as the nearest available car was in Rottingdean. Amy, Co-Chair of East Brunswick Residents' Association dialled 999 to report a familiar drug dealer in action to be told that no response would be provided and that whoever had said to dial 999 for drug dealing, 'shouldn't have told you that'. Amy passed this man numerous more times on consecutive days as he appeared to have made the area around The Coop his patch. Residents are frustrated and weary when it comes to reporting.

John says "In calling the police the other night, after a 30 minute wait I told the person taking the call that there will eventually be a confrontation between a resident and someone making a pain of themselves, and it may not end well."

Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne has recently been quoted as saying 'the frontline for neighbourhood policing is 'moving off the street and into our front rooms'. PCSOs offered reassurance to communities by building up a rapport and being a visible link between the police and public - reducing the number of PCSOs means we have lost this link and this is having a devastating effect in our area where we are witnessing an increase in incidents.

A paper to the 10th October Neighbourhoods Communities and Equalities committee states that total police recorded crime in 2015/16 increased by 4.5% compared to 2014/15 and has continued to rise with an increase of 11.8% in the first four months of 2016/17 compared with the same months in 2015/16. Police recorded violent crime has continued to rise in the first four months of 2016/17. That same report also highlights the major role for LATs: "...to enable communities to take a bigger role in progressing local issues and help meet local needs." LATs were set up by the police and local communities in partnerships for intelligence gathering and to build links within communities. Our area has a high turnover and a lot of elderly people, so how our LAT continues is a worry to us. Our most recent LAT just last week was attended by two senior Police Officers and three members of the Street Community teams and we saw our best ever resident turn out. Residents value highly that direct contact with the authorities.

We are aware this is a transitional period with respect to police organisation but with funding for public services being slowly withdrawn, what are the council and politicians doing to ensure that we have adequate resource to manage and respond to the alcohol related antisocial behaviour we are seeing? How will you safeguard against further licensing creep, now that the CIA has been amended to accept applications from 'café-bars'? This change leaves us vulnerable to the classic scenario whereby a venue without a license gains one with lots of conditions, then slowly loses the conditions and extends activities to become a pub/bar, which is where most money is made.

There is a clear and well-evidenced relationship between alcohol consumption and antisocial behaviour and crime. There is also a clear evidenced relationship between alcohol availability and consumption. We want the council to play its part in helping communities in the centre of town address some of the underlying problems behind what we are experiencing.

With that in mind we are making the following petition requests:

We the undersigned wish to bring to the attention of all Councillors our grave concern at the increasing frequency and severity in the incidence of Anti-Social Behaviour in the Brunswick and Regency area, and the declining capacity of Police and Council Officers to address this.

We request that Council takes the following actions to fulfil their duty of care to our community:

- (a) Takes a firmer stance with alcohol-related Anti-Social Behaviour and uses the new enforcement contract to control drinking of alcohol in public spaces (DPP Order);*
- (b) Undertakes to adhere firmly to its Statement of Licensing Policy with regard to new or varied alcohol outlets in the Cumulative Impact Area (CIA);*
- (c) Undertakes to quickly review the licenses of alcohol outlets that breach license conditions in particular regarding off-sales;*
- (d) Closely monitors and advises premises with new 'Café Bar' licenses in the CIA with a view to minimising the risk of license 'creep'.*

We request also that a written response be given to this petition.

