

Councillor Chris Best Sydenham Newsletter

Winter 2010/2011

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My aim is to build a stronger community in Sydenham as well as across the borough through developing:

- **healthy and caring communities**
- **safer and secure communities**
- **vibrant, active and inclusive communities.**

Since this isn't the place to go into any topic in too much depth please contact me if there is an issue you would like to pursue with the Council on cllr_chris.best@lewisham.gov.uk. Please have a look at my web site on www.lewisham.gov.uk/cllrchriscrist and also [my photos](#) for a range of images. You can text me on my mobile 07725 143020 or call me on my landline 020 8659 6445.

Sydenham Assembly

Due to the inclement weather the Assembly meeting planned for Thursday 2 December was cancelled and rearranged for Thursday 13 January. The meeting was provided with feedback from "Our Lewisham Our Say" including the [comments from Sydenham](#). This presentation included the budget situation including the financial settlement for 2011/12.

Part of the cuts for 2011/12 including the closure of the Town Centre Management Service and the closure of the Opening Doors Service. This means for Sydenham that there will no longer be a Town Centre Manager working two days a week and that the Opening Doors Service at Sydenham Library will close. Please see the [report](#) for more information. Tim Lund spoke about Future Sydenham and how residents could volunteer to help the Sydenham Traders Association.

An update was provided on the previous [Mayor's](#) and [Locality](#) Fund

The four projects bidding for the £25,000 Mayor's Fund for 2010/11 were successful:

- Sydenham Arts Festival 2011 - £10,000 presented by Pat Trembath
- Sydenham Community Radio - £5,000 presented by Simon Banks
- Sydenham Film Club - £4,500 presented by Joyce Treasure
- Switch It! Football and life – £4,000 by Jeremy Zulu

As a project has been withdrawn the £1,500 left in the Fund was rolled over to next year.

Local Assembly Fund

As part of the cuts the Mayor's and Locality Fund has been reduced and for 2011/12 there will be a £15,000 Assembly Fund and £3,750 Locality Fund. It was agreed to seek bids for the Assembly Fund in March with a closing date in April so that the next round of bids can be presented at the June Assembly meeting.

For more information and the priority plan please visit
www.lewisham.gov.uk/LocalAssemblies/SydenhamAssembly.

Update on local priorities

Priority One - More activities for children and young people

Sydenham Well's Park Youth Centre

The **Myplace funding of £3.5 million** for the proposed state-of-the-art youth and community centre has been confirmed. A planning application has been lodged with Lewisham Planning to demolish the church hall in Wells Park Road and construct a three storey building. The proposed youth club, which will contain a large multi-use hall with theatre, a cafe, climbing wall, IT/education studio, recording studio and multi-use games area, is expected to go before a planning committee in spring 2011 and be completed by spring 2013.

The centre will open from 9.00am until 10.00pm seven days a week providing a modern, safe place that local young people will have a main role in developing and running. Along with having fun young people will be able to seek help and advice at the centre on issues such as finance, substance misuse, sexual health and housing. Partners to help deliver the project include the Rio Ferdinand Foundation and the Stephen Lawrence Centre. For more information please see the [January](#) update.

Sydenham and Forest Hill Youth Forum

The Sydenham and Forest Hill Youth Forum <http://sfhyouthforum.org.uk> gives a voice to young people in the area. The meeting in November 2010 discussed future fundraising and how to involve more young people.

Hillcrest estate

Hillcrest Estate was awarded £50,000 from the 2009/10 Playbuilder Funding to refurbish the existing play area using natural materials and local residents have submitted their proposals. Following the grand opening in July a fire destroyed the structure in September. Lewisham Council have now used the final £25,000 of the funding to rebuild the structure.

Priority Two – Improving community safety and tackling anti-social behaviour

Controlled Drinking Zone

Signs are now in place in Sydenham Road to remind people they are in a controlled alcohol zone. The scheme will run until the end of February 2011. The Designated Public Place Order (DPPO), commonly known as a drinking control zone gives police discretionary powers to stop people and confiscate and dispose of any alcohol within the boundaries of Lewisham borough. Unfortunately the street drinkers are still causing a nuisance on Sydenham Road.

Following the end of the DPPO, Lewisham Council and Lewisham Borough Police will review the effectiveness of the Order to see whether it should be introduced permanently across the borough. The DPPO is not a ban on alcohol consumption in a public place, and does not make drinking in public an offence, but it is a measure that can assist in tackling street drinking linked to antisocial behaviour. The intention is to provide police with a tool to address alcohol-related disorder in a quick

and effective way. Failure to comply with a request from the police to hand over alcohol can result in arrest and/or a fine of up to £500.

Priority Three – Vibrant high street

I chair the Sydenham Town Centre Steering Group which is a working partnership between the Town Centre Manager (TCM), Sydenham Traders Association, Sydenham Society, SNT police team, residents and the Council. The top four priorities for the TCM are helping to bring back into use the vacant shops by working with the letting agents and promoting Sydenham as a destination to shoppers and visitors; working in partnership with the Sydenham Traders Association including developing their web site; the extension of coverage to lower Sydenham ending at Bell Green and improvements to Girton Road car park. The vacant shop rate in the core retail area is still under 11% which compares favourably with other parts of Lewisham and London. A toolkit has been produce to help with 'pop up' shops for the creative industry to help is the use of vacant shops. Although we will no longer have a Town Centre Manager covering Sydenham the Sydenham Town Centre Steering Group will continue meeting to manage local issues with the traders. There will still be some central support for business advice and use of online advice for example:

Using empty shops

<http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/Business/BusinessSupport/EmptyShops/>

Art in empty spaces - including the online empty shops guide etc

<http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/LeisureAndCulture/ArtsService/InfoMarketing/ArtInEmptySpaces.htm>

Shop Local

<http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/Business/BusinessSupport/ShopLocalApplicationForm.htm>

The Council doesn't manage utility companies' works, so if you have specific queries about the activities of Southern Gas Network or Thames Water, contact SGN's contractor Morrisons on 01622 762 135 or Thames Water's contractor McNicholas on 020 8687 8350. However, if after speaking to the relevant utility company you want to discuss an issue with the Council, please call 020 8314 7171 or email highways@lewisham.gov.uk. For further information and for a timetable of the different phases of work see www.lewisham.gov.uk/sydenhamhighstreet. Here is the [briefing](#) dated the 12 January 2011.

Sydenham Mosaic

The front of the Naborhood Centre is going to be redecorated and embellished with a mural representing scenes from Sydenham life. The next stage to apply for further grants and more fundraising to reach the £50,000 target. Oliver Budd who has been chosen to work on the design is an internationally renowned artist and currently President of The British Association of Modern Mosaicists (BAMM). His brief has been to celebrate the history and achievements of Sydenham and its current diversity while enhancing the 1960s building and with a name change to The Sydenham Centre.

The design is planned to cover the two white cement bands across the front of the building which contains the Naborhood (Sydenham) Centre, and the Post Office. It will have a background in swirling neutral colours creating a feeling of movement, and fourteen or fifteen roundels or "spheres" in coloured mosaic. Designs for the spheres are currently being developed. One of the spheres has been completed in mosaic– the design for the Croydon Canal another, of Pissarro, with his painting of St Bartholomew's Church, is currently being made. Please see the [latest newsletter](#) for more information.

Sydenham Arts Festival

The programme for the 2011 Sydenham Arts Festival which will take place between 1 and 17 July is coming together including the Visual Arts Trail for the weekends of 9/10 and 16/17 July in various venues throughout SE26 and SE23. **Sydenham Road Celebrations** will be held on Saturday, 16 July with **Forest Fest** – Forest Hill School's celebration of the Arts on Saturday, 2 July.

Plans are being made for a **“Pop-up” theatre performances** in vacant shops in Sydenham Road on Saturday and Sunday 3 July and, again, during the following weekend.

If with you would like to get involved in any way please contact Festival Director Jonathan Kaufmann (07904 505923) or Assistant Festival Administrator Pat Trembath (8659 4903).

Priority four – Environmental improvements to provide a cleaner greener Sydenham

Sydenham has access to three parks although only one is situated in Sydenham ward which is Wells Park. Friends of **Home Park** have developed the community garden with Groundwork London. **Sydenham Wells Park** has again retained a green flag.

Grow Mayow Community Garden

In 2009 the Community Garden received a grant from Capital Growth to start the garden and 2010 saw all that hard work come to fruition with a wonderful garden and showcase onto Mayow Road. There is a cottage garden, herb spiral and some good examples of using recycled materials.

Open work days are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10am – 3pm.

<http://growmayow.blogspot.com/>

Green Peas are a local not for profit organisation that relies solely on volunteers and grant contributions. They are currently developing permaculture at Grow Mayow

<http://greenpeasuk.blogspot.com/>

Sydenham Green Waste

The free seasonal garden waste service is back at Girton Road car park from 19 March until 27 November 2011 on Saturday and Sunday mornings from 9am to 12 noon. Garden waste includes flowers and plants, grass clippings, hedge trimmings, leaves, and twigs and branches up to four inches in diameter. Kitchen waste, vegetable peelings, soil, turf, stones and Japanese knotweed will not be accepted and no trade waste or trailers, vans or open back vehicles will be allowed.

Priority five - Transport improvements for Sydenham

Sydenham high street

For further information on the £3.6 million improvements please see [Sydenham high street](#)

Lewisham Council is currently working on a £310,000 renovation of Sydenham Station Approach which will greatly improve access to the station.

Consultation on the proposed closure of CEL's Kirkdale Centre

The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) have announced that the skills budget for adult learning will reduce by 25% over the next four years from September 2011, and there will also be reform of the Adult Safeguarded Budget. CEL receives funding for:

- Adult learner responsive – funding for courses which provide a nationally recognised qualification
- First Steps – funding for initial courses which will provide progression onto Adult learner responsive provision and which is used to fund Skills for life and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses
- Employer Responsive – funding for learning which is provided directly with employers.
- Personal and community developmental learning – also known as Adult Safeguard funding – funding for all unaccredited personal community and developmental learning
- Family learning – which is further divided into separate funding streams of family literacy, language and numeracy (FLLN) wider family learning (WFL) and family learning impact funding (FLIF). FLIF has ceased with effect from September 2011
- Neighbourhood learning in deprived communities (NLDC) provision offered in partnership with local community groups

Grant funding levels from the SFA have dropped by 18% since 2006/07, and the indicative figure for 2011/12 is some £3.8 million. CEL has been unable to sustain the same number of courses on offer in each centre. and therefore course delivery hours have also reduced over the period. The cuts have necessitated limiting the use of off site provision and a review of the usage of all CEL sites and all associated costings. There will need to be further focus on reducing non teaching costs in order to minimise the impact on learner provision.

Due to this latest reduction in funding and the costs involved in running four adult education centres, CEL has proposed the closure of Kirkdale Adult Education Centre. I presented a [report](#) on sites used by CEL to Mayor and Cabinet on the 23 March. The report explains that Kirkdale is one of the smaller of the centres and is currently underutilised due to a variety of reasons including lack of DDA compliance due to the building's limitations.

The consultation on the closure started on the 30 March as part of the Forest Hill Assembly Meeting. This was followed by a public meeting at the Naborhood Centre in Sydenham on April 7. CEL staff and learners have been canvassed for their views and the consultation is on the Lewisham website until May 20 to allow comments to be left.

Sydenham Library

As part of the budget proposals discussed by the Mayor and Cabinet on the 17 February the Mayor agreed to the closure of libraries at Blackheath, Sydenham, Crofton Park, New Cross and Grove Park with effect from 28 May 2011 and to instruct officers to immediately seek formal proposals for asset transfer to deliver community library services in the affected areas. The scrutiny of this [report](#) was by Healthier Communities.

Following this decision Lewisham Council is looking to grant leases for four library premises in order to secure their continued community use. These are Crofton Park Library, Grove Park Library, New Cross Library and Sydenham Library. Each building will contain a community library service for local

people to use and I will present the recommendations to the Mayor at the Mayor and Cabinet Meeting on 11 May.

Lewisham Council recognises the broader role that library buildings can play within communities, as a meeting place, a source of community information and focus for community activity. Therefore, before a decision on which organisation should be recommended to take on a lease for each building, the Council will assess the proposed use of the building and associated community benefits including plans for community library services.

Anyone submitting a proposal for a lease will need to grant appropriate rights to the Council so that part of the premises can be used to provide community library services. The conditions of any lease will carry with it a responsibility for the full repair and maintenance of each building. Proposals submitted may relate to one, some or all of the properties.

Given that the Council is keen to ensure these premises play a central role in the life of the local community we expect proposals would include any community use in addition to the community library provision to be facilitated by the Council. Ideas that might result in income generation are not precluded.

Those interested in submitting a proposal should contact librarybuildings@lewisham.gov.uk. Application packs are available and formal proposals must be received with all necessary supporting documentation by noon on 4 April 2011.

Further information is set out in the application pack, but interested parties should be aware they will need to submit a full business case which demonstrates the viability of their proposal. They will also need to set out details of how their proposal will benefit the local community.

As part of this assessment the Council will be holding a Community Interest Event to enable local residents to view the proposals and comment on them held in the Civic Suite, Catford on the 12 April.

World Book Night – Saturday 5 March



Over 50 people celebrated the UK's first World Book Night at Forest Hill Library, when over 100 books were gifted by book lovers to other members of the public. The event was also used to showcase published writers who live locally with readings from Chrissie Gittins, Bronia Kita, Lucreta La Pierre, Steve Smith, Nii Ayikwei Parkes and Jaki Thomas.

It was a real pleasure to support this event by gifting books to delighted readers Joanne, Marcia and Billie. It was a thoroughly enjoyable three hours of high quality entertainment, sustained by the enthusiasm of local readers and writers and the welcome provided by Caroline and the team at Forest Hill.

Forest Hill Pools

Willmott Dixon started on site in January and I was delighted to be part of the ground-breaking ceremony to mark the official start on the 21 February. Hosted and officiated by Mark Tant, Managing Director of building contractors Willmott Dixon, I was able to thank Mark for demonstrating a real commitment to building a strong relationship with the architects Roberts Limbrick and the Forest Hill Pools Stakeholder Group that I have been chairing for several years.

Willmott Dixon has made excellent progress since we awarded the contract to them in November. Not only have they moved quickly to prepare the site but they've also completed necessary remedial work on Louise House so the building can be used as their site office during construction. In the long term, both the Council and the local community stand to benefit when the building is handed back over because of the essential maintenance carried out.

The new Forest Hill Leisure Centre will consist of two new pools and other leisure facilities on the site of the former Forest Hill Pools. Facilities in the new building will include a 25-metre pool, a 16.7-metre learner pool, fitness gym, two studios, community room and a café. The new development will include facilities and access for those people with disabilities. The existing Victorian frontage of Forest Hill Pools will be retained. We are well on target to ensure the leisure centre is open to the public by the end of 2012 so that we can benefit from the legacy of the 2012 Games.

Please visit www.lewisham.gov.uk/foresthillpools to keep up to date.

Update on Planning

The [report on housing and development](#) was discussed at the last Assembly meeting on the 3 March and provides an update on development taking place in Sydenham.

This comprehensive report also includes a list of the off licenses in Sydenham with the times for the sale of alcohol.

[Planning applications can be viewed online](#)

Links, events and up and coming meetings

Friends of Mayow Park - <http://friendsofmayowpark.blogspot.com/>

Friends of Home Park - <http://homepark.wordpress.com/>

Grow Mayow - <http://growmayow.blogspot.com/>

Big Lunch Sunday 5 June – 12 noon to 3pm

You can read more and get inspiration from www.thebiglunch.com. You can put in your postcode to see the nearest lunch near to you

St Christopher's Hospice - www.stchristophers.org.uk

Concerts on the first Thursday of the month

Sydenham Arts Festival – www.sydenhamartsfestival.com

From 1 to 17 July – please see the web site for the full programme

Sydenham Assembly - www.lewisham.gov.uk/LocalAssemblies/SydenhamAssembly

Sydenham Community Radio - <http://sydenhamradio.co.uk/>

Sydenham Film Club - <http://www.sydenhamfilmclub.org/>

Sydenham and Forest Hill Youth Forum - <http://beta.sfhyouthforum.org.uk/>

Sydenham Garden – www.sydenhamgarden.org.uk

Sydenham International Music Festival – www.sydenhammusic.org.uk

From 20 May to 26 June – see Sydenham International Music website for their full and exciting programme or pick up a promotional leaflet at Kirkdale Bookshop.

Sydenham Safer Neighbourhoods Team -

<http://www.met.police.uk/teams/lewisham/sydenham/index.php>

Sydenham Society – www.sydenhamsociety.com

Sydenham Town Forum – www.sydenham.org.uk

Please subscribe to the Arts Service [ebulletin](#) on the web site and the Be More newsletter for the range of events coming up over the next month.

Surgery details: from 10.30 to 11.30 on the 1st Saturday at Sydenham Library, 3rd Saturday at the Naborhood Centre, 44a Sydenham Road (next to the Post Office) and 4th Saturday at Hillcrest T.A. Club Room, High Level Drive, SE26

Please email onto others and if you'd like to receive information this way please let me know of any changes to your email address