

## 24. GRAFFITI – ACHESON AVENUE

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The purpose of this report is to advise the Board of the outcomes from a meeting with shop owners and community groups and others in the Acheson Ave area with regard to graffiti and other issues in the area.

The Board will recall at its August meeting supporting a proposed meeting with shop owners, shopkeepers, local community groups etc to discuss the problem of wilful damage namely graffiti or tagging in the Acheson Ave shopping area.

A meeting was arranged and held on Tuesday 22 August at St Aidans Church. In attendance were Board Members Anne Carroll and Ingrid Stonhill, three shop owners/proprietors (with apologies from two others), representatives from Kulcha Trust, Shirley Community Trust and the Shirley Residents' Association and the Community Constable.

The problems with graffiti were discussed by the group and short, medium and long term possible solutions were put forward for consideration.

There was the feeling in the group that a lot of the tagging was coming from groups outside the area and the message should go out that this is not acceptable and as quickly as it is put it up it will be wiped out. To get a feeling of "ownership" for the area it is necessary to develop a sense of pride in the area. It was agreed that the present appearance of the shopping area and surrounds did not encourage this. Comment was made that it has taken up to 2 weeks at times to get reported graffiti removed.

### **Short term remedies:**

- All shop owners to complete and return the "Authorisation to remove graffiti" forms.
- Kulcha Trust has volunteered to paint out the tagging as it appears. This will require approval from all shop owners.
- Funds from the Board's allocation of \$5,000 for graffiti removal could be made available for painting equipment, brushes, rollers etc for use by Kulcha Trust.
- A competition for the local community for a colour design to help brighten up the appearance of the shops. This will need the full co-operation and an undertaking by all the shop owners to carry out the winning scheme.
- Involving residents in the reporting of graffiti using the 0800 TAGGED hotline.
- A flyer to be circulated in the area advising residents of the above proposals and other proposed medium to long term remedies, including those noted below.

### **Medium to long term remedies:**

*(Some of these may be identified in the survey currently underway in the area.)*

- Holiday workshops/programmes for children in the area with a focus on pride in the community. Kulcha Trust advised they were looking at piloting an overseas programme, Kids Against Crime, in the area. Part of this includes pride in the area and the anti graffiti message.

- The establishment of a “warden system” in the area.
- Murals painted on billboards or similar at each end of the block. These to be changed/updated regularly to help engender ownership.
- Involving the Council’s Legal Art Co-ordinator in programmes in the area.
- Improved street lighting front and back of the premises.
- Use of portable video surveillance cameras.
- Promotion of the shopping area with a view to attracting more shops.
- The provision of a community notice-board similar to the one in the Edgware shopping Centre placed, say, in the grassed area at the northern end of the shops.

An undertaking was given to get back to the above groups with the decisions of the Board following consideration of this report.

To help ensure that this project proceeds it is seen as important to ensure that the shop owners, shop keepers and locals regard this as being theirs and it can be seen that they are driving it with assistance and support from the Board.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the items raised in “Short term remedies” above proceed now.
  2. That the items in “Medium to long term remedies” above be forwarded to the relevant Units for comment.

**Chairperson’s Recommendation:** That the officer’s recommendation be adopted and that a report on the medium term remedies be made to the November meeting.