

# AREA FORUM (HESWALL AND PENSBY & THINGWALL)

Wednesday, 22 June 2011

## Present:

Councillor	A Hodson (Chair)
Councillors	L Rowlands P Johnson R Wilkins D McCubbin
Older People's Parliament	Sandy Cameron
Area Service Co-ordinator	Tracey Smith
Streetscene Manager	Phil Miner
Community Safety	Jim Thompson & Mike Collins
Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	Lesley Metcalfe
Merseyside Police	Inspector Steve Hall
In Attendance	Steve Foulkes leader of the Council, Helen Pike-Waterhouse, Surestart West Kirby Children's Centre
Apologies	David Armstrong, Councillor Mark Johnston, Merseyside Fire & Rescue

## 1 **WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES**

- *Minutes are a summary of the meeting, issues raised with individual officers after the main meeting are actioned separately.*

Chair Andrew Hodson welcomed Forum Members and 33 members of the Public to the Heswall, Pensby & Thingwall Area Forum.

Chair Andrew Hodson welcomed the Leader of the Council Steve Foulkes, who has been visiting all Wirral's Area Forums. The purpose of his visits is to meet as many residents throughout Wirral, and to launch the Neighbourhood Plans. All Elected members are signed up to this and plans/reports will be shared with the scrutiny committee, and want residents to have more power/control to help shape services, allocation of funding etc through the area forums. 20.8 Million is our saving for the next year therefore services do need to be looked at

and delivered in a smarter, cost effective way in the future. Neighbourhood plans will lead departments on how services are delivered

**Libraries:**

- No plans at present to close Pensby Library
- Future of libraries does need to change
- Libraries are to stay open for the foreseeable future
- Library Strategy in place and going to Cabinet

**Council:**

- Reduced budget of approximately £91 per head in Wirral
- 51 Million pound savings made
- Staff went Early Voluntary Redundancy (1,100)
- Lost fantastic members of staff with a vast amount of experience
- Difficult times ahead with less money in budget and less staff, the way forward is to get involved at a local level and ask residents how budgets should be spent and what services they want

Cllr Steve Foulkes informed the forum that he was going to attend as many area forums as possible to introduce himself, promote the neighbourhood plans and to hear the views of those attending. He informed forum members that he was 'here to help' and is very 'approachable'. He gives his backing to the neighbourhood plans and how they are about evolving power and resources, to re-invigorate and to get the community involved with the area forums and for residents to play a huge part in developing our neighbourhood plans. Steve also explained that the objective is to have plans approved by December 2011. These plans will also influence our budget thinking.

## 2 **AREA CO-ORDINATORS REPORT: INCLUDING MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS FORUM**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February agreed with two corrections:

- (i) Greenwood Drive should read **Greenbank Drive**

Tracey Smith gave a brief overview of updates that were in the papers for tonight's meeting. Tracey also highlighted that we were looking for suggestions from residents for the Highway Maintenance Programme for 2012/2013 any roads or pavements that you think need addressing/improving to let us know. The programme of works for 2011/2012 were detailed in the report (pages 19-21).

Tracey Smith over 500 requests for additional bins has been requested. Each area forum had a budget of £5,000 to purchase 10 bins. All suggestions have been collated and all suggested sites are being reviewed and assessed.

Phil Miner Highway Maintenance has all the grit bin new suggestions for 2011 these are being looked at will feedback details and 10 bins will be allocated within this forum area. New requests will go on list for 2012/2013

Requests for bins:

- Wall Rake
- Church Meadow Lane
- Holmes Way

Winter Issues/Grit Routes:

- Council has defined gritting routes through Wirral (Priority routes)

- Severe weather Council will assist residents if these areas has not been gritted or are not on a gritting route
- Help is there for the vulnerable and elderly
- Council did assist a Cul-De-Sac off Seabank Road and were very grateful they cleared the area

### 3 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME & PARTNER UPDATES

#### **Cheap Alcohol:**

MOP – What are your views on cheap alcohol?

Steve Foulkes – Price increase on sales for alcohol needs to be led from Government and to be nationally delivered, all areas of the country needs to put prices up and not just certain areas. Alcohol Free Zones is a way forward and it a huge task for the future for all partners to address and improve.

#### **Libraries:**

MOP – Pensby Library in general, to stay open, used by community and delivers a good service, only has two members of staff and is difficult to open over lunchtime for example as library cant be open and run effectively with one member of staff.

Steve Foulkes – Need to maintain libraries we have, services to be streamlined, change to opening times etc i.e. why closed over lunchtime, closed on certain days, to be open longer, to encourage more users. Less funding to deliver our services, public sector/private sector all to be flexible. Some library staff have gone on EVR and Council are looking into the recruiting of staff for libraries in general.

MOP – Felt Steve had miss understood her question, she was merely pointing out that that due to H&S that one member of staff can not run a library on own, and having the responsibility of the users in the library and young people in there. Access to library has two doors and staff have to be vigilant and supervise users.

#### **Vacant Site/Empty Shops:**

MOP – Garage Site (Grange Road/Pensby Road)

Bob Wilkins – There has been a public hearing by Sainsbury's, for and against for this new development, after the hearing there will be site visit. 1<sup>st</sup> refusal and Sainsbury has the right to appeal. The main concern was the amount of traffic this new development may bring and the Council suggested a crossing for the area.

MOP – How many times can they appeal?

D McCubbin – once and then it goes to high court

Empty shops is a concern for the area, Heswall has a vibrant shopping area with good local shops, however there are a few empty shops, the feeling of the area forum is that if funding is available for anyone to apply for then this does need to be reviewed and they don't want lots of charity shops, as this effects the other retailers business.

#### **Traffic Issues:**

MOP – M&S area is grid lock can anything be done?

Phil Miner – to get a traffic officer to re-visit the area and to an assessment

Steve Hall – it does get extremely busy and grit lock at certain times of the day. Council and Police to work together and review this issue.

MOP – Commerical Vehicles parking on pavements, Cornelius Drive also in Ashley Road

Steve Hall – Police to visit and monitor the area.

Parking on pavements:

- Clear obstruction that pedestrians can not use the pavement
- Difficult to apply legislation

- Leaflet drop to houses in that area explaining the issue around parking on pavements
- Common sense all round is needed

MOP – suggestion for a mini-roundabout Denver Road/Delavor Road

Andrew Hodson – No possible to have one here

Phil Miner – there has been no recorded major accidents, Phil to organize an inspector to visit the area and look at other possible solutions.

#### **Caravan Park:**

MOP: Raised the issues and concerns about the wall at the caravan park

Peter Johnson – planning permission was never implemented, and the caravan park has appeals and this has been turned down. An enforcement has been put on the caravan park and they have 6months to appeal against this.

Andrew Hodson – advised that David Ball and his team are looking at the improvement of the issuing of enforcements and having time scales attached to them.

#### **Children & Young People:**

MOP: raised a comment about the lack of activities and facilities for children, young people and their families to access in the local area, the area over the years has grown with young families moving in.

- No Benches in parks and local area for all to use
- Lack of Youth Provision
- Wait for over a year to be able to attend a play group

#### **Health:**

MOP – why is the health service thinking of moving services from Arrowe park Hospital to the Countess of Chester?

Lesley Metcalfe – We are reviewing all services at all sites, this is for the development of the “bigger footprint” for the health service and we are working in partnership. Reviewing the way we administer the “back office” of services, preventing duplication not shutting down services people use.

MOP – Vascular services are these moving/changing

Lesley Metcalfe – Vascular services across the northwest (Chester, Wirral & Warrington) under review. Wirral will stay as it is. Also the Neurological Unit at Arrowe park will stay as it is.

Site Strategy review has been completed with all staff, there is 5 options to be considered and this will to get he Board looking at after 29<sup>th</sup> June 2011 for the next step.

On a positive note.

- Arrowe Park & Clatterbridge Hospital were judged to be “best performing” and ranked in the top 10 in the country for primary care trust areas.
- Cardio Obstructive Pulmonary disease (COPD), pulmonary rehab and home oxygen service based at Victoria Central Health Centre won the first NHS North West Respiratory Award for Best Oxygen Service.
- Birkenhead Community Midwife Team scooped one of the UK’s top midwifery prizes the “Innovation in Midwifery” Award for their “mums and Midwives” shop project, at the recent Royal College of Midwives Annual Awards.

#### **Police:**

Tribute to Heswall Neighbourhood Home Watch and Police both worked together addressing the current incidents one area was experiencing with burglaries and theft from vehicles since 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2011 there has not been one offence. PSCO’s have made the area a little safer.

A police community visit also took place in Heswall recently and this has been a step forward in a positive way. Should have more of these.

Steve Hall Homewatch groups are excellent way of looking after the local area and residents to communicate. This week is Homewatch week, Steve look like more areas to be part of the Homewatch scheme.

Suggestion was made for the Council through the area forums to have a link to the Homewatch website.

Lowest level of ASB compared to figures in previous years.

Successful in the seizing of booze of underage young people this was a total of over 100 units a few weeks ago.

Slight increase of domestic burglaries February showed 9 a month, where to May showed 15 a month, nothing to panic about, make sure windows are shut when not in property, doors are locked properly, nothing at all left on show in your car's, thieves are opportunist. 62 arrest for Wirral.

Gratitude to the PCSO's who deal with most of these incidents.

Ray Squire encourage residents to join the Homewatch scheme, and was happy for residents to join his group.

Jim Thompson Community Safety – If anyone is interest in this to contact him and he would forward on information to the relevant officer. [jamesthompson@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:jamesthompson@wirral.gov.uk) 0151 606 5443.

Crime overall has fallen by 63% since 2008 and continues to stay at these levels. However, recently we have seen a slow increase in burglary in people's homes and thefts from their motor vehicles. With burglary the main method of entry is through an unlocked front door or an open window, please remember, if you have a plastic or aluminum coated door to lift the handle and turn the key otherwise it will not be secure. With the recent warm weather we have all been opening windows, remember to shut them before you go out, it is surprising how large a person can get through a small transom window. A lot of our burglaries are an attempt to get hold of car keys, don't leave them in the hall, keep them safe. With your cars make sure you don't leave anything on show, if you have a sat nav remove the holder as well as the sat nav. The thief doesn't know you have taken the sat nav and will not care what damage they cause just to see if it's in the car, if it is on show it will go is the message to remember.

Despite the slight increase in these crimes Wirral remains a very safe place to live and to keep it that way we all just need to play our small part by being a little careful and thoughtful about our property.

One issue we face in the summer are fires in our open land, we have worked with our colleagues in MFRS and now Community Patrol and the Ranger service have Pack Gliders with them to allow them to put fires out when they are still small. These fires can be started deliberately or by accident, sunlight through a discarded bottle will be enough in the present dry conditions to start a major fire. So please be careful with your litter and for the smokers among us your cigarettes. If you find a fire no matter how small call the MFRS.

With the police, Firs Service, Youth Services and colleagues in the voluntary and community sector we have put in place plans to address ASB this summer with a broad range of enforcement and diversion operations in place. We are also already planning for bonfire night.

Most fires are happening in the kitchen, it is important that when using appliances in the kitchen that they are not unattended or forgotten about. The fire service offer free home safety

check including escape routes for the home, they also install free smoke alarms if required. Contact Fire Service Direct on free 0800 731 5958.

**Older People's Parliament:**

Sandy Cameron gave an update on the success of the Health & Well Being Agenda organised by the Older People's Parliament and in partnership with Wirral Council, this was hosted at the Floral Pavilion 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> May, this two day event had over 60 stalls covering a range of services and activities for older people. The event was a huge success with over 1000 people visiting over the two days. The plan will be to host another event in 2012.

For more information re: the Parliament 0151 666 2220, based at 42-44 Market Street, Birkenhead. CH41 5BT [parliament@ageconcernwirral.org](mailto:parliament@ageconcernwirral.org).

**Advertising/Promotion:**

Sandy Cameron also suggested that there should be more done about the advertising of success stories and achievements from the Council/Area Forums.

Andrew Hodson did advise that our press/marketing team work hard and produce press releases daily. It is down to the local papers if they want to use our press releases we can not make them use them.

- Council advertise on the website, local papers, have a database on contacts where information is emailed or posted to those who have requested to be kept updated on area forum dates & events.

#### 4 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS PRESENTATION

Tracey Smith gave an update on the development of Neighbourhood Plans – a vision for your community. 11 area forum meetings for Wirral, Established in 2001, Engage with local residents, Since 2003 forums have distributed over £1,470,707 funds to local community and voluntary groups through initiatives such as Funds for You and Big Lunch.

Next few months each area forum will develop a neighbourhood plan, Reflect the real challenges for the area based on engagement and consultation with local communities, Set the vision for the community, Identify local priorities, Influence the way the Council invests resources and delivers services, Determine the future distribution of forum funding, Community Consultation will be at the core of developing the neighbourhood plans, We will engage with local residents and community groups in a number of ways: Community Events, Community and residents group meetings, One Stop Shops, Libraries, Leisure Centers etc

Timescales: Launch of neighbourhood plan consultation - June 2011. Programme of community consultation events - July to October 2011, Findings to be collated – October. Findings reported to area forums and local action plans - October/November 2011. Local Plans in place – December.

Funding Available for Forums: - Empty Shops Fund £17,500, Funds for You £15,500, Public Health Fund £4,577, Community Energy Efficiency Fund (£110,000 across Wirral)

Advertisement for all the funding will run from 1<sup>st</sup> July to 9<sup>th</sup> September 2011

Other funding available - You Decide £20,000 for additional council services and Improving Road Safety & Promoting Active Travel and Health £20,000

**How YOU can get involved - Let us know of any community events and meetings we can attend, Register your interest, email: [engage@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:engage@wirral.gov.uk), tel: 0151 691 8391 or website: [www.wirral.gov.uk/area\\_forums](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/area_forums)**

5 **AOB**

**Dates of future meeting: Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2011 – venue to be confirmed**

- Andrew Hodson closed the meeting at 9pm and thanked everyone who attended, the meeting this evening was interesting and informative.
- Anyone who is interested in being part of the Nieghbourhood Plan developments to contact the Community Engagement Team.