

AREA FORUM (OXTON AND PRENTON)

Tuesday, 7 October 2008

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	P Williams (Chair)	
<u>In attendance:</u>	Councillors	F Doyle S Holbrook	S Kelly P Southwood
	<u>Community Representatives</u>	Robbie Bell, Devonshire Park Residents' Association	Sarah Goulding, Friends of the Arno and Oxtun Fields
	<u>Lead Officer</u>	Alan Stennard, Director of Regeneration	
	<u>Area Service Co-ordinator</u>	Louise Harland-Davies	
	<u>Street Scene Manager</u>	Garry Cummings	
	<u>Wirral Primary Care Trust</u>	Paul Edwards	Dr Andy Lee
	<u>Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust</u>	Gary Docherty	
	<u>Merseyside Police</u>	Inspector Graham Bell	
	<u>Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service</u>	Ben Ryder	
	<u>Council Officers</u>	Simon Fitzpatrick, Community Safety Team	Paul Roberts, Wirral DAAT
		Mark Smith, Head of Service, Streetscene and Waste (part item 2 only)	
<u>Apologies</u>	Councillors	A Bridson	

Jack Cuffe
Inspector Brian
Griffiths
Patrick Toosey

Alan Dollery
Inspector Paul
Harrison

1 **WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES**

The Chair, Councillor Williams, welcomed area forum members and 40 members of the public to the meeting in Oxton.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A Bridson, Patrick Toosey, Jack Cuffe, Paul Harrison, Brian Griffiths and Alan Dollery.

2 **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS FORUM**

Matters arising:

Mark Smith (Head of Service, Streetscene and Waste) responded to the action points on Traffic Management/Parking Services outlined on page 10 of the Area Co-ordinator's report.

Resolution i. Mark Smith to send a written response on residents' parking scheme policy to Andrew Taylor, and to all those who requested this at the meeting.

Update: At a further meeting with Mr Taylor, the Parking Services Manager had discussed issues about enforcement in some detail. Mr Taylor has confirmed that the matters have been resolved to his satisfaction.

Resolution ii Mark Smith to report back on traffic improvements planned for the area around Asda and Palmwood Close.

Update: A Section 106 Agreement is in place whereby the developer will fund a new traffic signal system at the junction. This will allow vehicles leaving the Asda car park to turn either left or right. The location has given rise to road safety concerns in the past and to address these concerns the slip road leading from the motorway will be the subject of a Council improvement scheme.

Resolution iii Mark Smith to pick up the issue of traffic problems raised by John Wallace in Osmaston Road at the site meeting.

Update: A meeting on site had taken place, attended by about 20 residents. Residents in Woodchurch Road had brought some additional factors to light and after a fairly lengthy discussion, it was agreed that conventional traffic regulations would not be the way forward. Agreement had been reached that the solution would be to consult the residents of Osmaston Road on whether they would be willing to make a financial contribution of £75. There was about 80% support for the

scheme and about half of those were willing to pay a contribution to the scheme.

Mark Smith responded to comments from a member of the public about the level of the charge, and the fact that many residents had not completed the proforma because they did not understand it. He explained that the Head of Service had made it clear to those who attended that the Council would need to draw up a scheme but would have to cover its costs. At that stage, a broad estimate had been given of what the costs to residents might be. The actual figure has arisen from the precise cost of the scheme.

A brief questionnaire and proforma had been drawn up and sent to Mr Bird as community representatives for his comments. Mr Bird had responded in an extensive email with detailed comments on how the documentation should be improved. The revisions suggested by Mr Bird had been incorporated into the documents sent to residents.

It had been accepted at the meeting that many of the concerns about parking had arisen because of Aldi's etc presence in the area. There had been discussion about the practicalities of approaching organisations when looking at residents' parking schemes. Officers had agreed to contact Aldi to bring concerns to their attention. A letter had been sent some time ago.

Resolution iv. Mark Smith to look into the problem of speeding traffic along Prenton Dell Road.

Update: The area would not qualify for traffic calming, but perhaps Prenton could be included in the Accidents to Zero initiative. Mr Taylor was keen to see a report to the Members on the subject and a report is going to Cabinet on 16 October. The report will be in the public domain in the next few days.

Woodchurch Road has been re-surfaced and a scheme for improved road markings has been drawn up in conjunction with Accidents to Zero. It is understood that there is a commitment by the Police to do more enforcement in the area.

Minute 5 Partner Information: Minute decision (vi). Area Co-ordinator to update at forum meeting regarding tree replacement at Mendip Road/Mount Road.

Update: [Area Co-ordinator]: Fencing to be erected along the top of the bank, and investigations on going on how to repair the retaining wall in the slip road. No trees will be planted.

Resolution (vi) Tina Long to raise issue with NHS Trust on its policies and plans for tackling dementia and to report back on this.

Update: Copies of an update by Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Trust were available at the Area Forum meeting.

Minute decision: Resolved that

- (i) Mark Smith, Technical Services be thanked for reporting back to the forum on parking issues raised at the last area forum.**
- (ii) Paul Edwards, Wirral PCT to establish link with the Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Trust in order to provide information at future forum meetings.**

3 AREA CO-ORDINATOR' S REPORT

The Area Co-ordinator presented her report under the three main headings – Section one – minutes and matters arising from previous meeting; Section two – Local Updates, and Section three – Funding.

The Area Co-ordinator drew attention to the information on page 33 of her report on a new and exciting way of giving money to the community.

The Oxton and Prenton Area Forum has been chosen as one of three area forums in Wirral to take part in a national pilot scheme for Participatory Budgeting [PB]. The first PB event was held in July in Wallasey Town Hall. This year, people who applied for funding from the Community Initiatives Fund were invited to give a short presentation on their project and state why it should be funded. The applicants themselves then voted on each other's project to decide which ones should be funded.

The sum of £7,000 CIF funding has not yet been allocated, and a contribution of £2,500 has been received from Wirral PCT under the Small Grants Programme. The availability of funding will be advertised and applicants will be invited to a similar event to present their ideas in December.

A progress report on previously awarded monies [to 2006/07] was included on pages 35/37 of the Area Co-ordinator's report.

Additional information was available at the Area Forum meeting on –

- The Highway Structural Maintenance Programme 2009/2010 – Limited resources are available for footway reconstruction and carriageway resurfacing schemes. The Area Forum is invited to identify roads and pavements in Prenton/Oxton that are in need of repair or reconstruction. Projects submitted will be prioritised depending on need and budget availability.
- A report on the Older People's Parliament
- An update on Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service.

The Chair announced that Mike Walker is retiring. She added that she was full of praise for the work that he has done for Wirral, including introducing CCTV cameras. She paid tribute to Mike as a hard-working and resourceful Council Officer for many years.

4 DRUG AND ALCOHOL ACTION TEAM (DAAT)

Simon Fitzpatrick, Community Safety Team, explained that the Drug and Alcohol Action team (DAAT) is part of Wirral Joint Community Safety Team, which is comprised of staff from a number of agencies including, the Police, Local Authority, Probation Service, Fire Service and voluntary and community organisations.

Young people are one of three key priorities in Wirral's Harm Reduction strategy. This evening, along with Paul Roberts, he proposed to give a presentation on Wirral's Young Persons Alcohol Intervention Programme, and to focus on three themes in Wirral's Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy –

- Young people's alcohol misuse
- Alcohol related identification and treatment
- Alcohol related crime disorder in the community.

Each strand of the programme has a Young People's Alcohol Action Plan. The Young People's Alcohol Action Plan is a key priority for a range of partners, particularly the Children & Young People's Department, the Police and the Hospital Trust and PCT. Wirral DAAT plays a key co-ordination role with partners in tackling issues associated with young people and alcohol. The DAAT team visits schools and gives talks and advice on drug and alcohol issues. Trading Standards Officers are also involved with DAAT, and they deal with complaints about under-age drinking and take action against adults who purchase alcohol for young people.

Mrs Buckley drew attention to alcohol related problems in Balfour Road and in the car park attached to the Art Gallery, where empty bottles are left lying around. Children playing football in the car park is becoming a major problem.

Reply: [CYPD] Although funding is available some young people don't want to get involved. There are tremendous facilities but direct connection is needed with children. Respect Ice cream van can be used to make a connection, for example to get them to play football in the Sports Centre.

Graham Bell introduced himself as Inspector for the neighbourhood and stated that police listen to what people are saying and to see what we can do. There is always an issue of boys and girls getting involved in anything that they see as 'organised' by people in authority or parents. What we are striving to do is get young people to take some responsibility for the organisation of sport or cultural things. We want them to tell us what they want and what they will take responsibility for.

Member of public: The church in Balls Road?

Chair: It is currently being refurbished.

Cllr Kelly: We have just heard the story of what is available and the work that is going on in general. Would it be possible for us as a Forum to say to the service providers and services involved, 'Here is a problem that has been identified over the last 12 months'. Is it something we can monitor and say to the service providers we would like to see a report back to us at the next meeting on what you have done in terms of the children, the services available to address this particular problem in this area. To report back to us and see what the approaches and ideas presented are on the ground and if they satisfy residents in the area in general, not just Balfour Road, but Slaty Road etc., as well. We have heard reports in the past about crime, anti social

behaviour and burglaries in Slatey Road. Do a case study on Slatey Road. What have we done specifically between now and February to monitor and see what has been done.

Insp. Bell: We have had a clear request to see how successfully we are operating in this area and we can probably feed back at the February meeting about the activities they have been engaged in.

Cllr Kelly: We understand the resources have to go to 'hot spots' but within a reasonable period of time between now and February for you to demonstrate that when the resources are available you are able to do certain things. I would like to see interventions, but understand about priorities and resources etc.

Alan Stennard: The work by the Police and other agencies is driven by the biggest problem and problems tend to move around areas. Between now and February I think we could at least understand the current level of the problem and come back to you in terms of reporting back in February a) what we have been able to achieve, and give you a feel of what else we have been dealing with in the area, and b) what we have been able to deploy to the area and what is on offer.

The Chair thanked Simon Fitzpatrick and Paul Roberts for a most interesting presentation, adding that everyone has learned something about the serious problems we have, and she expressed admiration for people's determination to try and tackle those problems.

Minute decision: Resolved that: Alan Stennard to liaise with Inspector Bell regarding anti-social behaviour in and around Slatey Road and Balfour Road and report back to forum in February on any developments.

5 YOU DECIDE RESULTS

Wirral Council has allocated £250,000 new money to be spent on extra council services in Wirral's 11 area forums through a new project called 'You Decide'. To ensure everyone had the chance to take part, a Borough-wide survey was conducted in September asking residents additional council services they would most like to spend the money on. The survey identified four key areas --

- Environmental works (eg new trees)
- Additional litter bins
- Sport and Youth Activities e.g. sports or training nights

Each area forum has been given an allocation £20,000 of new money to spend on extra council services. The Chair reported that Councillors and community representatives from this Area Forum had met last week to look at the results of the survey.

The top priority was cleanliness and litter bins. A decision had been made to devote £5,000 to that priority.

In addition to more litter bins, the group wished to encourage litter picking. The Friends of The Arno and Oxtan Fields are organising another litter picking session on

29 November. The group is keen for individuals as well as other groups to be involved.

Other priorities were sport and youth activities. A decision had been made to allocate £10,000 to employ a part-time community sports officer and £5,000 for environmental works.

Following a technical and financial appraisal of the viability of the proposals, a report will be presented to Cabinet in December outlining how best to use the money that is available.

The results of 'You Decide' will be published for all eleven area forums in February 2009, with a press release and detailed presentations at area forum meetings.

6 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Q The Council's litter picking team do a good job, but as soon as they have gone the roads, especially The Wiend, are full of litter again, and the biggest culprits are from Prenton High School. Someone should go and give them a lecture

A (Street Scene Manager): I will take the details at the end and get someone to come along and see what we can do to educate them.

Q: Are you doing a consultation on Integrated Care?

A (Paul Edwards): There are two issues with regards to emergency and unplanned care. There have been a number of reports which have prompted the PCT to take action. My suggestion is at the next meeting, I bring a full report and address some of the issues.

In terms of Integrated Care at Home Programme. There has been a real drive to get as much care as possible in people's homes. Again it might be worthwhile giving you an update. We have put significant investment in that, about integrated care, community matrons etc.

Q: I was born in Prenton, and I have lived and worked in Prenton for a long time. Woodchurch Road concerns me terribly. I am saddened to see it lacking in TLC, shops with shutters closed down, and the possibility of parking restrictions. I know it is a route for emergency vehicles, as is Prenton Dell Road, but why are we stopped from parking by the shops? The shops are dying. Prenton is losing its place on the Wirral. It is shared by Oxtton and Prenton, on two sides of the road. Odd Bins has left. Prenton and Oxtton needs input. It needs litter bins, bollards, hanging baskets outside the shops.

A (Chair): I walked along Woodchurch Road with Councillor Bridson, both sides, the Prenton side and the Oxtton side, and the concrete planters were planted with plants as a result.

Q You can't park in Curzon Road and Cambridge Road at peak times. You can't park and you can't stop.

Q Why are there parking restrictions on Prenton Hall Road?

Q (Chair): Can I ask you to make a list of all those concerns?

Cllr Holbrook: I will try to address some of the questions. Parking and traffic issues in and around your area have been an issue with one group in one street and getting the balance right in terms of what you do and don't do is difficult. There is some evidence that some of the side roads without parking restrictions are used as a 'park and ride' to commute to Liverpool.

I understand that Woodchurch Road is the second busiest road in the Borough, the other being the A41, and this is an area with shops and I believe having traffic restrictions does encourage short stay rather than long stay, and that is the right way in terms of Woodchurch Road. In the side roads, people complain about access-clogging on their street and there are lots of different conflicting and different pressures in that area.

Perhaps the Council can do more in terms of Woodchurch Road shopping centre but I would like to see the traders do more. We have two really big traders as anchor stores for the whole of the area –Sainsbury and Aldi. Surely companies of this size and stature could take a leading role in supporting the smaller traders in getting the business community to work with us. It is not always the Council that as to fund this kind of thing, but perhaps the Council could take a bigger role in encouraging these shops to do something.

Q Parking has become a problem since Sainsbury put a three-hour limit on their car parking.

Q Residents who leave their cars in front of their own houses will have a fine.

Q I was reliably informed that the site of the former petrol filling station is to be a car park. Sainsbury don't mind if people park on it but people park near the store and the bus stop.

Q Throughout the Prenton area, traffic will not keep its speed down. One of the worst is Prenton Lane, right along. Pine Walks is used as a high speed cut through and Reservoir Road North, but you don't see anyone.

Cllr Kelly: I have listened to the discussion, and it raises three issues –

- 1) The environment, and the congestion in the area from Sainsbury to the Halfway House. That is something we could possibly pick up in the meeting next Tuesday evening to see if we can put in place further environmental improvements for other parts of the area and consider these with the "You Decide" allocation.
- 2) Parking restrictions. My understanding is we are not talking about side roads, but the main road from where the urban clear way finishes to the Halfway House, raising concerns about the type of restrictions in place. What I would like to ask the Forum to do to ask Mark Smith to show a map showing exactly what the restrictions are and whether and why they are necessary on that main road. Look at the restrictions at the next meeting. If he cannot justify to our satisfaction, eg it can impact on the commercial viability of the area, then ask him to go away and consider other options. If he can justify that, we will have to accept that.
- 3) The issue of speeding. Mark Smith had referred to the Accidents Down to Zero initiative. That is currently in place in Oxtton Village, but it is now leaving Oxtton Village and will move around. I cannot promise it will go in the roads you suggest, but I suggest that the roads you have suggested are put forward to see if the scheme, or another campaign of that nature would be effective.

Q Storeton Road is used as a cut through. Motorists try to beat the lights at the top of the Mount Estate. A major issue at Mellor Road, they keep speeding along Mellor Road and there are children playing out. People have been brought up but nothing will be done until someone is killed.

Q Speeding cars on Borough Road, from the junction of Mount Road, Borough Road to Tranmere Rovers.

A (Inspector Bell) We prioritise the places where traffic enforcement is introduced by the number of accidents. Some roads were mentioned two years ago. I said I would go back and I did and carried out some enforcement. I will do the same again.

Chair The Community Speed Watch Initiative is working with the Police and Highways. Anyone may volunteer to be involved in that.

Q I went to ring Upton Police Station and told it is now back in Well Lane. Brian Griffiths was commissioner for the past four years and thank him for all his help and support.

A (Inspector Bell): The Police Station has only moved to Well Lane for part of the Prenton area. Parts are still at Upton Police Station.

Robbie Bell: In the past there was a neighbourhood watch scheme where communities took responsibility for their area. Speed watch is a good way and there should be more things like that where the community takes responsibility for itself. Any other initiatives to help the community help itself is useful, and I think money should be diverted in that direction. There should be major investment in refurbishment. I would suggest that Home and Bargain, local traders, should have some responsibility for keeping the area smart, it should not be the Council's responsibility. At some point or other, people in Prenton have to take the initiative to do things on their own, residents' associations.etc.

Q Prenton do have a Tenants and Residents Association. It is mentioned in the Area Co-ordinator's report.

Robbie Bell You have to start to use Alan Dollery. You can't keep expecting the Council to solve everything. June gets things done on the Mount Estate. Her involvement in the community is recognised.

Q Local community groups play a really important role, but it is not their responsibility to do the Council's job. The environment is one of the Council's responsibilities, and this area is going downhill. You are failing the community in not bringing in new businesses. Sainsburys spends millions on their site and they contribute an enormous amount to WBC in business taxes. It is a joint thing, a partnership.

Chair We could do with a representative of local business on this area forum.

Q Outside Lloyds bank there is an area that could be converted to a short stay car park. You could park six cars at an angle.

A (Cllr. Holbrook): You would have to reverse into Curzon Road, but we will look at that and have an update at the next meeting.

Q Has anything been done about parking at Swan Court?

A (Cllr Holbrook): We have approval for double yellow lines but I don't know when those lines will be painted.

Q There is a problem with people stopping to use the hole in the wall outside Sainsbury. HSBC and HBS, and in some cases driving vehicles on the pavement to use it.

Chair: There is also a problem in Oxton Village with people parking close to the machine and blocking the bus stop, so you cannot get on as bus to Woodchurch Road. Double yellow lines does not deter people.

Minute decision: Resolved that:

- (i) **Request Mark Smith, Technical Services to produce a report showing parking restrictions and reasons for these on Woodchurch Road.**
- (ii) **Inspector Bell to investigate speeding traffic on Mount Road, Borough Road to Tranmere Rovers.**
- (iii) **Area Co-ordinator to liaise with Parking Services regarding parking outside Lloyds Bank.**
- (iv) **Garry Cummings, Streetscene Manager to consider environmental improvements in the Woodchurch Road area.**
- (v) **Garry Cummings to liaise with Prenton High School and offer advice on waste and recycling in school.**
- (vi) **Paul Edwards, Wirral PCT, to provide a full report at the next area forum around Integrated Care.**

7 PARTNER UPDATES

Inspector Bell: There is an increasing level of auto crime at the moment, especially in the Oxton area. Those who are members of associations please take back to your members in relation to security of vehicles and keep things hidden away. People still leave Sat Navs on show. They should be discouraged from doing that, even in locked cards.

Minute decision: Resolved that

- (i) **Inspector Bell be thanked for his update**

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Next meeting Tuesday, 3 February 2009, venue to be confirmed.

In closing, the Chair thanked everyone for coming to an interesting and productive meeting.