

# Wirral's Area Forums



## Oxton and Prenton Area Forum

**Papers for the forum meeting**

**Tuesday 16 June 2009**

**St Saviour's Parish Centre  
Bidston Road, Oxton  
CH43 2JZ  
7.00pm – 9.00pm**

**(drop in session 6.30pm - 7pm)**

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Community Engagement Team, Corporate Services, Town Hall, Brighton Street,  
Wallasey, Wirral CH44 8ED

Oxton and Prenton Area Forum

St Saviours Parish Centre  
Bidston Road  
Birkenhead  
CH43 2JZ  
Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2009  
AGENDA

(Drop in session 6.30pm – 7pm)

**Agenda**

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Minutes and matters arising from February 09
3. Area co-ordinator's report/You Decide
4. Local government structure (Steve Maddox)
5. Seven Waves Community Radio
6. Public Question Time
7. Future meetings: Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October venue to be confirmed

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## **Code of Conduct for Area Forums**

- Indicate to the Chairperson when you would like to speak
  - Let invited speakers finish what they have to say
  - Respect others right to be heard
  - Do not use abusive or offensive language
  - Do not make any discriminatory remarks
  - Do not have private conversations while meeting is in progress
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## Introduction: Membership of the area forum

Area Forums involve local ward councillors, Merseyside Police, Wirral Primary Care Trust, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service representatives, along with nominated local community representatives and officers from various departments of the Council, who regularly attend to support the work of the forum.

### Oxton and Prenton Councillors all belong to the Liberal Democrat Party

**Councillor Simon Holbrook**

(Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group)  
Prenton Ward  
0151 513 5656  
simonholbrook@wirral.gov.uk

**Councillor Ann Bridson**

Prenton Ward  
0151 201 7310  
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**Councillor Frank Doyle**

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**Councillor S.E. Kelly**

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**Councillor Paula Southwood**

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**Councillor Mrs Patricia Williams (Chair)**

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**Louise Harland-Davies**

**Area Co-ordinator**  
Tel 0151 691 8695  
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**Alan Stennard**

**Chief Officer** Director of Regeneration,  
responsible for housing, regeneration,  
regulation and cultural services in the  
borough. **0151 691 8395**

**Rob Beresford**

**Lead Officer** - Robert Beresford is Head of  
Regulation and has responsibility for  
Licensing, Environmental Health, Trading  
Standards and Community Safety in the  
borough. **0151 691 8208**

**Patrick Toosey**

**Community Representative, Oxton**  
Oxton Society

**Sarah Goulding**

**Community Representative, Oxton**  
Friends of the Arno and Oxton Fields

**Robbie Bell**

**Community Representative, Prenton**  
Devonshire Park Resident's Association

**Alan Dollery**

**Community Representative, Prenton**  
Chair of Prenton Tenants & Residents  
Association, Chair of the Prenton  
Partnership, Member of Wirral Federation of  
Tenants & Residents Association

**Inspector Paul Harrison (Oxton)**

**0151 709 6010**

**Inspector Brian Griffiths (Prenton)**

**0151 709 6010**

**Merseyside Fire and Rescue**

**Birkenhead Fire Station**  
**0151 296 5325**

**All Ward Councillors can be contacted by post or via their email. They represent all residents regardless of political persuasion. You can write to your local councillor at Wallasey Town Hall, Brighton Street, Wallasey, Wirral, CH44 8ED**

# Section One

## Minutes

**Tuesday, 3 February 2009**

Present:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Councillor   | P Williams (Chair)  |
| Councillors  | A Bridson, F Doyle, S Kelly , P Southwood   |
| Community Representatives                                | Robbie Bell (Devonshire Park Residents' Association), Alan Dollery (Prenton Tenants' and Residents' Association), Sarah Goulding (Friends of The Arno and Oxtan Fields) |
| Lead Officer   | Rob Beresford, Head of Regeneration   |
| Area Service Co-ordinator                                | Louise Harland-Davies   |
| Wirral Primary Care Trust                                | Martin McEwan   |
| Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust | John Foster   |
| Merseyside Police  | Inspector Brian Griffiths, Inspector Paul Harrison  |
| Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service                       | Ben Ryder   |
| Council Officers   | John Entwistle, Corporate Services, Eddie Fleming, Corporate Services, John Kenny, Community Safety, Beldev Singh, Technical Services, Joey Smith, Technical Services   |
| Apologies  | Councillor S Holbrook, Jack Cuffe, Gary Doherty, Patrick Toosey   |

## **1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

The Chair, Councillor Williams, welcomed area forum members and 16 members of the public to the meeting in Prenton.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S Holbrook, Patrick Toosey, Gary Doherty and Jack Cuffe.

On behalf of the Area Forum, the Chair extended congratulations to Patrick Toosey on receiving the Wirral Award for services to the Oxton Society and other charities, and best wishes to Jack Cuffe, who is in hospital.

## **Minutes and Matters Arising from October 2008 Forum**

### **Matters arising:**

The Area Co-ordinator's report contained updates on issues raised at the last meeting under the headings –

- Environmental Improvements on Woodchurch Road
- Litter in the area of Prenton High School
- Anti-social behaviour in Slatey Road.
- Speeding traffic on Mount Road/Storeton Road

Inspector Griffiths commented the Slatey Road area had been flagged up at the last area forum meeting as a 'hot spot' for anti-social behaviour and the Police had been asked to do a case study on the area. There were only two reported incidents of anti-social behaviour in Slatey Road during the period under review.

Enforcement in the Mount Road/Storeton Road area January 2009 had resulted in the issue of 60 fixed penalty notices, the seizure of one vehicle for no insurance, and a prosecution for being in possession of a radar jammer.

Inspector Griffiths responded to a comment by Paul Heywood that uniformed police officers defeated the object of the exercise and that more speeding motorists would be caught if the operation was more covert.

The report on Wirral PCT Integrated Care is still being compiled and will be presented at the area forum meeting in June.

Mr Dowling, Oxton, commented that there was no reference in the minutes of 'the storm waiting to erupt' in terms of the proposal to close many public buildings.

The Chair replied that the proposals arising from the Council's Asset Review had been announced after the date of the area forum meeting; therefore the issue had not been discussed at the last meeting.

## **2. Area Co-ordinator's Report**

The Area Co-ordinator drew attention to reports on Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team, Community Safety and Equality and Diversity. Colleagues from the Traffic Management Division were present and they would give a presentation on Integrated Transport Funding to Area Forums reported on pages 23/24 of the report.

## **3. Integrated Transport Block**

In the 2007/08 financial year, two of the eleven Area Forums had opted to have a share of the Integrated Transport Block at their disposal to fund local schemes. The improvements for Heswall/Pensby/Thingwall included the construction of a pedestrian refuge, and for Bromborough/Eastham, a contribution to a traffic calming scheme, direction signing and a lowered kerb crossing.

The Council's Cabinet had received very positive feedback on the success of the pilot in the two areas and is now inviting each area forum to consider whether it wishes to receive de-centralised funding in 2009/10. The money can be used to provide lowered kerb crossings, modest local signposting and road lining schemes. Officer input will be available to all area forums to guide them in the decision-making process. The total budget for the Integrated Transport block is £180,000 which, apportioned across the eleven Area Forums, would equate to around £16,300 per Area Forum. The alternative would be to administer the funding centrally.

**The report contained a recommendation that –**

**This Area Forum has been requested to:-**

- i note the type of traffic management schemes which can be funded through the Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport Block allocation.**
- ii provide views as to whether or not it wishes to receive a decentralised one-eleventh share of the Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport Block Allocation equating to approximately £16,300 per Area Forum to carry out scheme(s) of a traffic management/road safety nature in the local area.**

Andrew Taylor commented that whilst it would be a good idea to devolve money to local area forums, he had serious reservations about the undemocratic nature of area forums and about representatives who are not elected to the area forum being allowed to spend Council money. As a member of an area forum in the past, he had refused to be responsible for any decisions that involved spending public money.

Councillor Kelly agreed that Andrew Taylor had raised some challenging questions. He explained that area forums already have jurisdiction over two pots of money – one is community initiatives funding and the other is 'You Decide' funding. The area forum makes recommendations to Cabinet on how they wish to spend the money, and the Cabinet has the powers to override any recommendations if it was felt they were inappropriate or not feasible.

The Chair commented that the issue of non-elected area forums is also challenging, and is something that area forums throughout Wirral will want to look at when the constitution of area forums is reviewed.

Considerable discussion developed on democracy, constitutional issues, community representation and voting rights by members of the area forum.

The Chair confirmed that all the comments have been noted but the issue of community representation is a Wirral-wide issue, not something that can be resolved by this area forum in isolation. Vacancies for community representatives are advertised in the local Press, and anyone interested in become a community representative can complete an application form and submit it to the Council.

Paula Southwood commented that the agenda item under discussion – the integrated transport block – had become obscured by the discussion on issues that clearly this area forum does not have the power to address. She suggested that democracy and constitutional issues are considered as a specific agenda item at another

meeting, and that attention is focussed at this meeting on whether or not this area forum wishes to receive decentralised funding.

Andrew Taylor stated that he agreed in principle that the money should be devolved, but he would like to see a more democratic approach.

The Chair stated that it would not be appropriate for everyone present to vote on the issue. She invited Elected Members on the area forum to vote whether they are in favour of the recommendation on page 26 of the report on the Allocation of Integrated Transport Funding to Area Forums.

The Elected Members on the Area Forum all voted in favour of the Chair's proposal to accept the recommendations outlined on page 26 of the report.

The Chair thanked the Council officers for the presentation.

#### **4. Local Development Framework**

John Entwistle, Corporate Services Department, gave a presentation on the Local Development Framework. The new style Development Plan is a single document that replaces the Unitary Development Plan for Wirral dated February 2000, and will operate alongside the Regional Spatial Strategy. The framework provides guidance for assessing planning applications and allocating land for new developments for the next 15-20 years.

The consultation on the core strategy has just begun and Wirral Council will be pleased to receive comments on the various parts of the document.

The next stage will be to translate the objectives into spatial policy options and identify the preferred options. The draft core strategy will be compiled and submitted to the Secretary of State for approval. The proposals will be subject to public examination by an independent inspector. The intention is to adopt the Core Strategy in 2011.

Members of the public can become involved in the consultation by asking for a copy of the Plan, by adding their names to the contact database, or by submitting comments by letter, email or fax. The deadline for comments is 5 pm, on 27 March 2009. The contact details are: Strategic Development, Corporate Services, Town Hall, Wallasey. CH44 8ED. Email [hazeledwards@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:hazeledwards@wirral.gov.uk), phone: 691 8225 or fax 691 8188.

In response to a comment by Paul Heywood, John Entwistle acknowledged that the letter sent to people on the database did not include a link to the website. He hoped that people would be able to access the documents directly through an on-line consultation system in future stages of the consultation, but it was not possible to provide that facility at present.

Robbie Bell stated that residents' associations are directly involved with planning issues and it was important for all residents' groups as well as individuals to contribute to the consultation process.

Councillor Bridson asked for information on the number of people on the database. She stated that it would be interesting to know at the end of the process how many people have shown an interest in the plan.



John Entwistle replied that a report will be presented to Cabinet that summaries all the comments received and will explain how those comments have been taken into account for the next stage. There no restrictions or limitations whatsoever in terms of the people who want to become involved and put forward suggestions. At the end of the process, the document will go to full Council for final approval and adoption.

The Chair advised that the consultation has been placed on the Council's website, and the expectation is that the local Press will pick up the issue and publicise it.

Sarah Goulding asked if account had been taken of the fact that priorities have shifted due to the downturn in the economy. Whilst the planning system plays an important role in protecting the environment, it is equally important to facilitate and take advantage of economic regeneration when opportunities come forward.

The Chair thanked John Entwistle for the presentation.

## **5. Public question time**

The Area Co-ordinator read out an email submitted by Mr David Bird about Osmaston Road, and the reply received from Technical Services Department on the issues raised.

The Area Co-ordinator would be speaking to Mr Bird in person.

A member of the public agreed with everything in the email. The problem is also about the condition of the road and the pavements. The pavements are particularly dangerous for elderly and infirm people. Three requests have been made for an inspector to come out and look at the area.

Councillor Doyle commented that people cause blockages by using the road for all-day parking. Both he and Councillor Holbrook would support a proposal for parking to be restricted in some way.

Local residents who were present stated that they do not want a parking scheme to be introduced in the area.

The Chair suggested the need for a meeting with the Ward Councillors to find a way forward.

The Chair continued that she is receiving an increasing number of complaints from residents about the hazards caused by parking. People who live in West Knowe have great difficulty in egressing their properties due to cars parked near and outside St Saviour's Church, and from residents in Storeton Road leading up to the Maitland Church and beyond. She has brought the attention of Streetscene to the problems on a number of occasions and the Police and CSOs have taken action to deal with the situation.

Inspector Harrison replied that he is aware of the parking issues and two colleagues spend a lot of time trying to resolve them. There has been a suggestion that some of the congregation of St Saviour's Church park their cars outside West Knowe, but most people park in nearby side streets, or in and near the Carnarvon Castle car park, rather than in front of West Knowe. Stretches of Bidston Road near the Catholic Church and the Birkenhead School, are affected by parking.

During a general discussion on parking, Ben Ryder explained the problems faced by emergency vehicles in gaining access to properties and to responding to road traffic accidents, particularly when there is a concentration of parked cars on narrow roads.

The Chair raised the issue of the school patrol crossing in Holm Lane and that she had been unaware of the issue until after the decision was made. She had made representations to the Council that there needs to be a full risk assessment before a crossing is removed from any school. The Council had agreed and full risk assessments will take place.

Councillor Bridson reported on a very positive meeting with Biffa contractors last week. Due to their size, bin lorries can easily skid in bad weather and cause damage to parked cars. The company is working with the gritters in terms of trying to avoid accidents and has taken steps to ensure a safer collection of the bins.

Ian Patterson stated that he is a resident of St George's Avenue, and last week his home was burgled for the third time in as many years. He had enquired about alley gates and had been told that funding is no longer available.

John Kenny, Community Safety, confirmed that funding for alley gates has now ended. Residents in an area have the option of raising their own funding for alley gates, which cost in the region of £1,500 each, but every resident has to agree. An entry system in the area referred to would require two double and two single gates and cost in the region of £11/£12,000; it is highly unlikely that every resident would agree to contribute. When a planning application was agreed for the disused bakery at the rear of the properties, the Planning Officers did suggest that the provision of alley gates would allow greater security for nearby residents. Alternatively, funding may be available from 'You Decide'.

Councillor Bridson explained that the first planning application was refused because of the nature of the building. The Council has stipulated alley gates, but alley gates have not been included in the second planning application. The main reason for stipulating alley gates was because the nature of the entry system in that area tends to encourage thieves to go into the area, and many Police resources are used trying to catch them. Councillor Bridson offered to continue the discussion with Ian Patterson after the meeting.

Alan Dollery raised the issue of the proposed closure of the Prenton Dell Library. As Chair of the Prenton Tenants' and Residents' Association he had witnessed the demise of the Prenton Dell area in general. Prenton Dell had a youth club and a library but the Council had decided to sell the youth club to build private housing. Pathways had provided funding for 23 computers which were located in the Library. In December, residents had received a newsletter from the Liberal Democrats stating that the Prenton Library will close early in the New Year. There is also the threat of two landfill sites in the Prenton area.

There was no prior consultation and no Councillor had approached the Residents' Association. The six week consultation period was inadequate and had been done at the wrong time.

The association had taken the landfill problem 'by the horns' and had invited Frank Field to a meeting. In addition, more than 1,800 households had signed a petition. Residents had protested about the closure of the library and between 600/700 names had been collected on a petition. Letters has also been sent to local Councillors, but clearly none of those responses had been taken into account. The library forms a vital part of the local community. It is used by elderly people and by schools for early learning, as well as for other educational and recreational classes.

Allan Dollery quoted from the performance indicators for the Prenton Library. The library had 63,000 visitors last year, an increase in footfall of 51%. Ignoring staff

costs, the running cost for all other services was £20,000, and achieving this modest saving will deprive people across all the age ranges of books and computer use. The building is in the ownership of Wirral Partnership Homes on a 100-year lease at a peppercorn rental of £5 per year. To travel by public transport to Upton Library from Prenton would cost an adult and two children approximately £8.50.

In conclusion, Allan Dollery asked the Area Forum, and the Councillors here tonight to think hard before they make a decision at the Council meeting next Monday, to consider the impact on the local community and vote to keep a facility that is badly needed in the area. If the library goes, Prenton will have nothing left.

Mike Cooke, Secretary of the Friends of Prenton Library, introduced himself. He asked Elected Members on the Area Forum if they agreed that the proposal to close Prenton Library is disgraceful, adding that anyone who votes to support the closure should be ashamed of themselves.

The library has been refurbished at a cost of £30,000. Clearly, if it closes this is a waste of public money. The friends of Prenton Library also provided £1,000 for equipment. The refurbishment has been a success and the number of books issued [36,235] represents a 19.2% increase over the previous year. The number of people using the library [63,001] in 2007/08, increased by 51.1%. Prenton Library is the kind of asset that Wirral needs and there should be more investment in the facilities, not closures. The closure of the library will affect the financial viability of the local shops because fewer people will come into the area. Wirral Council react to circumstances for which it has no policies and no control. The decision to close a valuable asset is brought about by crisis management.

Allan Dollery urged Councillors here tonight to support the retention of Prenton Library and to encourage their Council colleagues to do the same.

Finally, he thanked the library staff for their dedication and hard work that has made the local library such a success for local people.

Shelia Kelly, Prenton, asked the direct questions: 'Why are local councillors not backing our fight to keep the library open? Why would the local Council want a library to close?'

Steve Gregson, Richard Neale, and other members of the public commended the previous speakers on their presentations and endorsed the comments made about the qualities of the staff and the facilities they provide for local people.

The Chair asked Councillor Kelly, as a Cabinet member, to address the Area Forum.

In a lengthy submission, Councillor Kelly, stated that it is right and proper that people here tonight should make their views known, but it is equally important to understand the rationale for the Cabinet going forward with the proposals.

Elected members have a responsibility towards the people who live in the wards they represent, but they also have a responsibility for the residents of Wirral as a whole, and the budget that is available to Wirral. When making decisions, Cabinet members have to take a council wide view rather than considering just the impact the decisions may have on the people they represent.

The background is that effectively Wirral has been living 'hand to mouth' in terms of its budget and trying to balance its books at a time of world-wide recession and at the same time respond to local pressures. For example, at Budget setting later this

month the Council will be asked to respond to issues raised at Haringey and the Baby 'P' case by making a significant investment in Children's Social Care to address fostering arrangements and to recruit more social workers.

As a member of the Cabinet, Councillor Kelly has a duty to everyone in the Borough, but specifically to people who cannot attend these meetings and need expensive care packages, and to protect children and young people who are the victims of abuse etc. The Local Authority cannot raise funding by raising the Council tax any longer. Council tax can only rise by a maximum of 5% to avoid a clawback.

The asset review was undertaken by professional officers and resulted in a set of recommendations which the Cabinet considered and a consultation was launched in November. More than 2,000 people attended a public meeting, comments had been received by email, and feedback is still being received. All the feedback had been reported to Cabinet and the Cabinet had made a number of recommendations. The decision to close Woodchurch Leisure Centre was rescinded, and Pensby and Upton libraries will remain open, but others will close. Government standards require local authorities to provide libraries within a two-mile radius of people's homes. 99% of the population of Wirral live within two miles of a library.

At a local level, Councillor Kelly stated that along with other local Councillors, partnership organisations and community representatives, he wished to preserve local amenities, and there will be opportunities for local schools to replicate the provision that the libraries make. There is already some duplication in the facilities available in Prenton Library and in Children's Centres, and he would be happy to work to ensure that the services carry on through the Children's Centres. In addition, there will be massive capital investment in the Shaftsbury Centre that will cater for young people of all ages.

It is important for Councillors and the Council to balance all the pressures and the way to do this is to take the proposals forward. Whilst closures will take place, he would be happy to work with communities to re-provide as many of the services that currently exist, including a home book system for the elderly.

Members of the public challenged some of the statements that Councillor Kelly had made. Wirral is proposing to look what other authorities in the North West are doing and how they are making savings. Other authorities are not closing libraries, they are making savings by removing some of the tiers of management. It costs about £82,000 to run Prenton Library. That is almost half the salary of one of the Directors. There are other ways of saving money and managing budgets more effectively.

A member of the public asked if the Area Forum is aware of the area the library is situated in. If the library goes, all Prenton will be left with is a bookies, a chippy and a pub. Any savings made will need to be reinvested to address an increase in anti-social behaviour that will inevitably arise due to the lack of facilities.

Milly Hancock asked what has happened to the investments the Council has made in Icelandic banks.

Councillor Kelly replied that it is a 'red herring' that the council has two million pounds invested in banks. The investment is in bonds, which are very secure. The budgetary crisis has not been caused by the loss of money invested in Icelandic banks.

Overall, the Council has a budget of half a billion pounds, from various sources. Last year, astute investment in various banks by Treasury Management attracted £0.5

million to the savings strategy. Other Councils have lost money in investments in foreign securities; Wirral has not.

A member of the public raised the issue of home care for the elderly, given that most care homes have been privatised. The Council has opened one-stop shops and libraries to provide information, and now it is closing libraries. There is a need to look at the public buildings staff work in and stop putting money into those buildings, stop wasting money on old buildings and leave the libraries for the children and the community to enjoy.

The Leader of the Council had to go to the public auditor to find out how much had been spent on Cheshire Lines. It was £2 million.

Councillor Kelly stated that there will be a separate review of administrative buildings, and if a decision is ultimately made to close Cheshire Lines it would still be necessary to accommodate the staff and the call centre. Sometimes it is more economical to lease a building than it is to own and maintain it.

Members of the public commented:

- the concept of keeping schools open for longer. It would be more expensive because of overtime and heating costs.
- elderly people go to the post office to collect their pension, and they go to the library to socialise and meet people. They don't want a home delivery service for books, they want someone to talk to. There are many elderly people who live on their own and they are lonely.
- the Council had employed consultants to undertake the Strategic Assets review. when there have been pleas of poverty. It is poverty which its own officials create and people are paying the price in terms of libraries and youth clubs in this area.
- you have told us significant capital investment will be made available for the Shaftesbury Centre to extend its activities. There has been no consultation with young people through the Young People's Parliament.

Councillor Kelly stated that from a Wirral Council point of view it is necessary to make certain difficult decisions; from a local Councillor point of view he wishes to continue working with the local community to re-provide as much as possible in the community.

Councillor Bridson stated that she had been asked which way she would be voting on Monday, adding that she was upset at the thought of closing Prenton Library.

Members of the public interrupted and challenged some of the statements made by Councillor Bridson in a lengthy submission. They asked the direct question: 'Are you going to support keeping the library?'

Councillor Bridson replied that she would be voting in support of the budget, which means that the library will close to which opposition was met by members of the public

Councillor Doyle stated that his position was the same as that of Councillor Kelly.

A member of the public had enquired if it was correct that Councillors receive £12,000 expenses, even though they have full time jobs.

Another member of the public commented: 'Councillors are talking about balancing the books. It is ironic when talking about libraries. We must invest in the children

and in the future. How many children will lose out if they cannot go to the library? I suggest the best way to save money is to get rid of some of the councillors’.

In drawing the discussion to a close, the Chair stated that she supports the Strategy Asset review, although she has significant concerns about the way the matter has been dealt with and she has made her views known on this. If the matter had been handled differently the Council would not be in the position it is in now.

Several members of the public directed their anger towards local Councillors. They expressed their opposition to the proposed closures in no uncertain terms and expressed their extreme dissatisfaction with the stance being taken by their elected representatives.

## **6. Partner Organisation Update**

The Chair stated that it was necessary to curtail the agenda due to time constraints. Reports from various agencies and partners are available to read outside the meeting. If anyone has an issue they wish to raise they should speak to one of the representatives present, or contact the area co-ordinator.

## **7. Date of next meeting**

**TUESDAY, 16 June in the Oxton Ward.** Venue to be confirmed.

## **8. Other Business**

A member of the public stated that the Cabinet has approved a plan to close Rock Ferry High School and Park High School and to create an academy. A total of ten potential sites for the academy are being looked at - one is Ingleborough fields.

Councillor Doyle replied that he would raise the issue when he meets with the Director of Children’s Services on 11 February, and a response would be passed on.

A member of the public thanked the Chair for chairing a stormy meeting.

The Chair thanked everyone and closed the meeting at 9.15 pm.

# Section Two

## Local Updates

### Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service



The Fire Service on Wirral is delivered through 6 community fire stations located at Birkenhead, Bromborough, Heswall, Upton, West Kirby and Wallasey.

We are committed to innovative and imaginative change in order to help make our communities safer and stronger. We are also committed to integrated working with other authorities, agencies and the voluntary sector to improve public safety and well being.

We have an **Integrated Risk Management Plan** which is a local strategic plan that outlines the measures intended to be taken to continue the modernisation and improvement of services to the people of Merseyside. Past and current I.R.M.P can be viewed online at [www.merseyfire.gov.uk](http://www.merseyfire.gov.uk) or copies of the latest plan are available at local community fire stations across the district, public libraries and One-Stop shops.

Community engagement remains the cornerstone of our proactive activities, in particular the delivery of the **Home Fire Safety Checks** and the provision of free smoke detectors where necessary. Our HFSC campaign has been in existence for over ten years and despite all our efforts and undertaking nearly 6000 Home Fire Safety checks since the last area forums, there still remain areas within the borough which have proven difficult to access and have never received a HFSC.

We have made a commitment to risk assess every home in Merseyside and now are proactively targeting those homes that are still outstanding an initial assessment. We are utilising a variety of intelligence methods to identify these homes. It is the intention of the Authority to ensure that every home on Merseyside has had a Home Fire Risk Assessment/ Vulnerable Property Assessment by the end of the current fiscal year.

In addition we are running a series of specific targeted campaigns in our highest risk areas, in order to make our community safer.

The Service has set challenging performance targets and we are pleased to report that Wirral stations regularly achieve and exceed these targets.

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service has set a goal to become an environmentally

regenerative service. We will carry out investigations to reduce our carbon footprint with the ultimate aim of becoming carbon positive. The aim of which is to leave the climate in better shape at the end of each year. This goal will take a sustained effort over a number of years and will require radical change in how we operate as a business, whilst we maintain our high levels of service, intervention and response to the people of Merseyside.

The Fire Service are committed to working in partnership to achieve strategic objectives within the Local Area Agreement, examples of this are

The Fire Service have been working with partners to develop facilities at Wallasey Fire station as part of an integrated healthier lifestyle project. Work has now been completed on a new **Lifestyle Centre** which incorporates a Wirral HeartBeat gym and new community meeting and welfare facilities. The gym facilities are now being used by the Wirral Heartbeat members and the community meeting facilities are now available.

A number of forums recently funded a **Beacon Programme** which was run out of Birkenhead Fire Station. This was run 1 day a week for 12 weeks and was designed for children aged 11-16yrs, although there were younger children who attended. The course participants were given a learning experience outside the school environment to build their confidence and self-esteem.

The course combines practical drill ground and scenario based training with classroom centred activities and workshops-including community fire safety. The group of youngsters successfully passed out from the course in July at the Fire Service Training & Development Academy and were presented with their certificates by the Mayor of Wirral in front of family, friends and representatives from the Local Area Forums.

In conjunction with **Wirral Road Safety Partnership** we are continuing to work towards reducing road traffic accidents across the district through the development of an educational training package, which is to be delivered to students by FS personnel.

Fire Support Network volunteers will also be utilised in the overall strategy to assist in reducing speeding and other contributory factors of road traffic collisions.

The Service continues to maintain a high level of operational preparedness and has carried out an number of realistic training exercises with some of our major industry partners on the Wirral.

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service will soon be hosting thirteen Fire Officers from the Kuwait. These delegates will be undertaking a 2 year course through the National Fire Service College following which they will return to Kuwait to take on the role of managers. During their 4 weeks in Merseyside they will be spending time on Wirral stations to enhance their knowledge in terms of practical fire-fighting

With summer approaching fast, and hopefully the nice weather with it, there is an increased risk of grass fires. In order to tackle this MFRS have organised a number of campaigns which include -

**SPARC campaign** – this is aimed at parks and recreational spaces and will be run in conjunction with the Fire Support Network, directly engaging with park users to highlight the risks associated with dry weather conditions within these areas. Further details of these campaigns will be published in the local press nearer to the time.



Wirral has a number of areas of natural heath land which are recognised to be Sites of Special Scientific interest. These areas attract large numbers of visitors and this increases the risk from accidental fires which can severely affect the flora and fauna. MFRS are working in partnership with Wirral Ranger Service, Natural England, local Police and other interested groups to proactively engage and educate the public in the risks that exist. We would ask all members of the community to be vigilant during the season and to report any suspicious activities.

**Fire Support Network** is a non-profitable registered charity which works in partnership with the Fire Service on Merseyside to promote fire safety to the local communities through volunteers and partner organisations. Volunteer roles vary from working directly with the fire-fighters, leafleting and replacing batteries in smoke detectors to providing an after fire care service and fund raising. Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer can register online at [www.firesupportnet.org.uk](http://www.firesupportnet.org.uk) or contact via telephone on 0151 296 4600.

We are currently working closely with Wirral PCT on the **Smoke Free Homes Campaign**, the aim of which is to encourage smokers to make a pledge not to expose their family and friends to second hand smoke in their homes and cars, this will also assist in the reduction of accidental fires in properties and vehicles due to smoking related material. This scheme is currently being rolled out across the district, half of which is now included with the other station areas to follow shortly.

### **Community Fire Stations**

- **Birkenhead:** Exmouth Street. Birkenhead.CH41 4AX. 0151 296 5325
- **Bromborough:** Dock Road South. Bebington.CH62 4SQ 0151 296 5925
- **Heswall:** Telegraph Road, Heswall, CH60 OAF. 0151 296 5805
- **Upton:** Arrowe Park Road. Upton.CH49 OUF. 0151 296 5895
- **West Kirby:** The Concourse. West Kirby. CH48 4HX. 0151 296 5955
- **Wallasey:** Mill Lane. Wallasey. CH44 5UE. 0151 296 6180

**For a FREE Home Fire Safety Check, including FREE smoke alarm installation if required please contact Fire Service Direct on**

FREEphone 0800 731 5958

## **Community Safety Team**

**Legal action against the perpetrators of anti-social behaviour has included:**

**Reported January 2009:**

- 34-year old male from Fairbrook Drive, Birkenhead, issued with an interim Anti-Social Behaviour Injunction following alleged verbal abuse and threatening behaviour to refuse collectors employed by Biffa;
- 28-year old male of no fixed abode was issued with a 2-year Anti-Social Behaviour Order after allegedly holding a knife against the throat of a member of the public attending Rock Ferry One Stop Shop;

- 48-year old female from Rundle Street, Birkenhead, issued with an eviction order due to criminal behaviour by her children, postponed on condition that she complies with the terms of her tenancy agreement;
- 38-year old female from Price Street, Birkenhead, gave a 12-month legal Undertaking following alleged threatening behaviour. The female was also served with two months' notice to leave her tenancy with Wirral Partnership Homes;
- 35-year old male from Neston Gardens, Birkenhead, issued with a 12-month Anti-Social Behaviour Order following threats of violence to his ex-partner.
- 19-year old female of Royden Road, Overchurch, issued with an eviction order to leave her home within 14 days due to anti-social behaviour;
- 42-year old female of Inman Road, Overchurch, gave a legal Undertaking following complaints of anti-social behaviour. She was also ordered to leave her tenancy with Wirral Partnership Homes;
- 42-year old female from Rosalind Avenue, Bebington, gave a legal Undertaking following criminal offences committed by her sons;
- 21-year old male from Thorsway, Rock Ferry, issued with an eviction order due to anti-social behaviour and a criminal conviction for possession of an offensive weapon;
- 79-year old female from Home Farm Close, Woodchurch, issued with a further eviction order following a long history of anti-social behaviour involving her adult son.

#### **Reported February 2009:**

- 31-year old female from Laird Street, Birkenhead, issued with a further 2-year Anti-Social Behaviour Injunction due to abusive and threatening behaviour. She was subsequently sentenced to 28 days' imprisonment, suspended until January 29th, 2010, for breach of an earlier Anti-Social Behaviour Injunction;
- 40-year old female from Devon Gardens, Rock Ferry, gave a 12-month legal Undertaking due to alleged threatening behaviour;
- 15-year old male from Stanley Road, Birkenhead, issued with an interim Anti-Social Behaviour Order due to alleged repeated incidents of anti-social behaviour, primarily in the Beechwood area;
- 19-year old Wallasey man of no fixed abode was issued with a 5-year Anti-Social Behaviour Order following a long history of anti-social and criminal behaviour;
- 21-year old female from Hillburn Drive, Birkenhead, was issued with a stern warning by the courts that she faced a prison sentence if she committed a further breach of a legal Undertaking;
- 39-year old female from Avon Street, Birkenhead, was issued with an immediate eviction order due to repeated anti-social and criminal behaviour at her home;

#### **Reported March 2009:**

- 34-year old male from Fairbrook Drive, Birkenhead, issued with a 12-month Anti-Social Behaviour Injunction following verbal abuse and threatening behaviour to refuse collectors employed by Biffa (see January 2009);
- 17-year old male from Millersdale Close, Eastham, issued with a 4-year Anti-Social Behaviour Order;

#### **Reported April 2009:**

- 35-year old female from Needham Crescent, Noctorum, ordered to leave her home due to anti-social behaviour by her and her 18-year old son;
- Joint operation between the Anti-Social Behaviour Team and Merseyside Police saw the man responsible for thousands of pounds worth of criminal damage to alleyways identified and successfully prosecuted. The 46-year old from Palmwood

Close, Prenton, conditionally discharged for two years and ordered to pay compensation to Wirral Council;

- 32-year old male from Neston Gardens, Birkenhead, issued with an eviction order to leave his home and pay costs, following complaints of anti-social behaviour including loud music;
- 40-year old female from Devon Gardens, Rock Ferry, issued with a 12-month Anti-Social Behaviour Injunction due to alleged threatening behaviour and verbal abuse (see February 2009). The female was also served two months' notice to leave her property;
- 35-year old male from Neston Gardens, Birkenhead, sentenced to three months' imprisonment suspended until December 2009 for repeatedly breaching an Anti-Social Behaviour Injunction (see January 2009);

#### **Reported May 2009:**

- 43-year old female from Walby Close, Woodchurch, and 24-year old male from Houghton Road, Woodchurch (mother and son), issued with interim Anti-Social Behaviour Injunctions following alleged threatening behaviour.

#### **Additional activity has included:**

- Youth Respect Team

The Anti-Social Behaviour Team's youth outreach team has operated in Seacombe, Poulton, Liscard, Bromborough, Beechwood, North Birkenhead, Central Birkenhead, Rock Ferry and Tranmere.

- Respect Watch Scheme implemented in Bidston Rise, Birkenhead (January 2009)

Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team, in partnership with Merseyside Police and landlord Wirral Partnership Homes, designated the Bidston Rise area as a Respect Watch Scheme Area. The Scheme is designed to provide further protection to residents who have suffered anti-social behaviour so serious that it has warranted legal action by the Anti-Social Behaviour Team.

The Scheme includes a local lettings agreement with residents and a commitment from Wirral Partnership Homes that steps will be taken to ensure that applicants for housing within that area or members of their household, guilty of previous unacceptable behaviour, will not be re-housed within the area. The Scheme has supplemented activity around the deployment of the Community Mobile Police Station in the north Birkenhead area.

- Mobile CCTV camera relocated (February 2009)

The Anti-Social Behaviour Team's mobile 3G CCTV camera was relocated to Sherlock Lane, Poulton.

- Team raises £700 for Comic Relief (March 2009)

Officers from Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team were out in force in Liscard Town Centre with its Respect Bus raising awareness about anti-social behaviour whilst supporting a good cause. The activity saw the Team's Senior Youth Worker, Alf Mullin, and Enforcement Officer, Andy O'Rourke, sat in a bath of red custard. A colleague and analyst from the Joint Community Safety Team, Sai Maing, joined in the activity having been sponsored to work all day in his pyjamas. In total the activity raised £718.25 for Comic Relief.

- Opportunities knock for Wallasey teenagers (May 2009)

A group of young people came together to celebrate a successful application to the Youth Opportunities Fund that saw them pay a visit to the country's seat of power. The group of ten young people, aged between thirteen and eighteen, from the Seacombe and Liscard areas gave a presentation to their local ward councillors about their trip to the Houses of Parliament and the Home Office, which was funded by the Youth Opportunities Fund.

The young people were brought together by the Youth Respect Team which was working in the area to address complaints of anti-social behaviour. At the celebration at Wallasey Town Hall, the young people outlined the positives they had got out of the trip; this included increased confidence, experience of teamworking and many new skills, including leadership.

During the event the (annual) Sheila Jordan Respect Champion Trophies were presented (Sheila was a local resident who was instrumental in developing activities for local young people and who died at Christmas 2007). The Junior Shield was presented to one of the young people (15 years old) from the trip as he had been the driving force behind the trip, taking a strong leadership role and now wishes to volunteer with the Youth Respect Team.

The Senior Shield was presented to an 18-year old who had originally participated in football sessions in the area organised by the Youth Respect Team and progressed to volunteering with Wirral's Positive Futures led programme on Friday and Saturday evenings in Seacombe, co-ordinated by Wirral's Community Sports Development Unit.

□ Pupils earn respect from range of agencies (May 2009)  
Representatives from a range of local organisations joined together with primary school pupils to celebrate the completion of another year of Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team's awareness programme designed to steer youngsters away from anti-social behaviour. The Respect Programme for Primary Schools is a seven-week modular interactive programme which makes pupils aware of what anti-social behaviour is and the possible consequences if they were to get involved in it.

The programme includes a number of classroom sessions and two location-based activities, including a trip to the Old Courthouse in Wallasey – a decommissioned courtroom - where the pupils take part in a mock courtroom session.

During this academic year the Anti-Social Behaviour Team worked with more than 500 pupils from Year 5 or Year 6 from primary schools including Liscard, Our Lady of Lourdes, Egremont, Woodchurch Road, Black Horse Hill Juniors, Holy Cross, Woodslee, Woodlands, Bidston Village, Raeburn and Bidston Avenue. The programme is lead by an Education Social Worker and Police Officer seconded to the Anti-Social Behaviour Team and key elements are delivered by other agencies and Council departments, including Arriva, Merseyrail, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, HM Courts Service, Tranmere Rovers FC and the Dog Wardens;

Wirral stands as the second best achieving Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership in Community Safety out of the 36 Metropolitan Districts, showing significant reductions in crime as a result of effective working with partners to achieve such results. We want to maintain and even improve upon such good results. Here are some of the initiatives in which we as a Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) are doing -

Burglaries - There have been an ongoing number of Roadshows from Merseyside Police raising the profile of burglary and consequent reduction, highlighting the need

for people to be aware such as ensuring windows are not left open when out of the house. In conjunction with the police initiatives, we have supplied SmartWater property marking kits to properties in what are 'hot-spot' areas to reduce the opportunities for burglars.

Community Safety have linked in with RSL's such as the Roadshow put on by Wirral Partnership Homes to allocate SmartWater in their properties, again in the most needy areas. Similarly Regenda / Maritime and Riverside have similar projects ongoing with Community Safety to raise public and housing warden awareness.

Actions on the Burglary Day of Action 7 April -

Pier Project - Persistent Priority Offenders (PPO's) Team

- Ensure 'premium service' for all PPO's arrested for Burglary
- Proactive targetting of those PPO's in the community
- Monitor engagement and compliance with partner agencies

CID

- 'Arrest Day' targeting named offenders
- Burglary cars actively targeting offences
- Prison visits
- Executing Warrants

Neighbourhood Policing Teams

- Marketing in 'Hot Spot' locations in Hi-Viz
- Police Customer Focus - contacting victims of burglary and provided with updates / feedback

CDRP- other partner updates

- Neighbourhood Watch leaders updated through the 'Ringmaster' system (automated email / telephone)
- Community Patrol involved with N'hood Policing Teams
- Trading Standards linking in with CDRP partners to target second-hand dealers / car bootsales / 'No Cold Calling Zones' awareness

Operation 'ROGUE TRADER' on 20 May is a partnership with Trading Standards and is aimed at tackling doorstep crime. Rogue Trading, concerns incidents where consumers have been 'cold called'. It refers to the practice of deliberately overcharging for unsatisfactory services and/or goods. This includes charging for unnecessary work, damaging property deliberately in order to obtain money, leaving work unfinished and intimidating behaviour in order to extort money.

It is known that the offenders travel large distances to commit crime, and some of the teams exchange information with distraction burglars. It is well evidenced that there are considerable links between certain rogue traders (who look for business on the doorstep) and distraction burglars.

Although the above were particular 'Days of Action', yet the actions are ongoing but was more concentrated on those days

Car Crime

Continuing with working with the NCP Parking Wardens to identify vehicles where property has been left on display. The last registered keeper of the vehicle is sent a letter which states that their vehicle was seen recently with items on display (but not

when or where) enclosing a crime reduction booklet in the hope that they will be more careful next time to avoid being a victim of crime.

Operation Pantha where covert police vehicles are left unattended in car crime areas. The vehicles are equipped with CCTV and Smartwater spray in order to identify the offenders.

3G CCTV - working in conjunction with Neighbourhood Management areas, there has been a roll-out of cameras in certain hot spot locations. They are allocated through the Neighbourhood Action Groups and consultation with community groups.

#### Hate Crime MARAC

Following on from three consultations with agencies and members of the community, the process gave consent to create a Hate Crime MARAC which includes all six strands of diversity i.e., Age, Disability, Gender, Race, Faith / Religion and Sexuality. The process is ongoing as Community Safety, working in partnership with many agencies and community representatives, develop that important aspect of community cohesion.

Marketing - the Police Volunteers who work within the Community Safety Team and manage Neighbourhood Watch regularly attend roadshows and distribute crime reduction literature and crime reduction products. We work with the Council and Police Press / PR teams to produce items which raise the profile of Community Safety and crime reduction messages.

## Wirral University Hospital Trust

Wirral University Teaching Hospital 

NHS Foundation Trust

The Trust is pleased to be able to participate in the Local Area Forums and welcomes the opportunity to brief Wirral residents and our partner organisations on topical issues. Representing the Trust will be an Executive Director or Senior Manager and the elected Public Governor for the host constituency.

- **Controlling Infection.....**

- Our Elective Surgical Unit at Clatterbridge remains MRSA bloodstream infection free – this Unit can undertake most planned surgical procedures including joint replacements.
- Our Women's Services Unit at Arrowe Park is also MRSA bloodstream infection free
- Reducing the incidence of MRSA and Clostridium difficile is a very high priority for the Trust and figures released by the Health Protection Agency in April show that between October and December 2008 there was a significant decrease – 60% - in cases of C.diff. compared to the same period in 2007.
- 'Working Together to Keep It Clean' – an on-going campaign that aims to raise the Infection Control profile even higher at the Trust and to increase awareness amongst staff, patients and visitors of how important it is to 'Keep it Clean'

- **Improving Our Standards.....**

- The Trust has been awarded the title of ‘Best Large Hospital\*’ in the Dr Foster Good Hospital Guide 2008 which compares services and treatment outcomes at all hospitals across the country.
- We are proud to have been named, for the third year running, as one of the country’s Top 40 performing hospitals by an independent benchmarking company that compares our performance in 20 key areas – including infection rates, mortality rates and waiting times – against other, similar hospitals.
- Our Stroke Services have been rated as among the best in the country by the Royal College of Physicians following a recent audit and we will be improving services even further when we become a hyper-acute stroke centre thanks to an investment of £1.6million from NHS Wirral
- In the most recent (2007/08) Healthcare Commission Annual Health Check we scored ‘excellent’ for our use of resources and ‘good’ for the quality of our services
- Our Maternity Unit was judged to be one of the ‘**best performing**’ in the country according to the 2008 Healthcare Commission’s Maternity Services Review and was named ‘**best in the region**’ in a national survey of new mothers and mothers-to-be.
- **An external assessment of our standards by the Patient Environment Action Team resulted in the following scores being awarded to the Trust for 2008 -**

|                      | <i>Environment</i> | <i>Food</i> | <i>Privacy &amp; Dignity</i> |
|----------------------|--------------------|-------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Arrowe Park</i>   | <b>Excellent</b>   | <b>Good</b> | <b>Good</b>                  |
| <i>Clatterbridge</i> | <b>Excellent</b>   | <b>Good</b> | <b>Excellent</b>             |

- **Providing New Services.....**

- The Trust has announced a major capital investment in services for **Women and Children** at Arrowe Park Hospital. The £11million scheme, due for completion in spring 2011, will radically change the face of the current Maternity services building and will create a ‘centre of excellence’ by bringing together under one roof, all acute hospital services for women and children. The development will include:
  - A major refurbishment of the **maternity wards**, providing all patients with single rooms and en-suite facilities
  - A brand new **maternity delivery suite** featuring five new delivery rooms, including two with birth pools and additional facilities to allow partners to stay overnight
  - Creation of an attractive single **front entrance and reception area** to welcome patients and visitors.
- On 1<sup>st</sup> June our brand new **Children’s Outpatients Department** will open at Arrowe Park Hospital. Re-located from the main hospital building, this is the first phase in our plan to bring all children’s services together.
- Work has just started on building a new **accommodation facility for parents** of children being treated at Arrowe Park Hospital. Funded by Ronald McDonald House Charity, this is the granting of the Jellybean Kid’s Appeal third wish and is due to open in the autumn.
- Over the course of the next two years we will be **upgrading wards** in the main hospital block at Arrowe Park on a rolling programme to provide more single rooms and better sanitary facilities.
- A second **MRI scanner** is currently being installed at Arrowe Park.
- We are investing nearly £1million in adapting our wards to comply with Department of Health guidance on **eliminating mixed sex accommodation** for patients.
- **The Trust is a designated Urology Cancer Centre for Wirral, Chester and Northern Cheshire patients requiring major cancer surgery**

- **We were the first NHS organisation in Merseyside and Cheshire to offer a new laser technique – the *greenlight laser* – that is transforming the treatment of prostate conditions for men**
- **A brand new, multi-million £ Dialysis Unit has opened at Clatterbridge Hospital to treat patients with renal (kidney) conditions.**
- **Easy to Use Website.....**
  - Our new-look, easy access website can provide lots of useful information for patients, the public, staff and GPs about the Trust and its services go to [www.whnt.nhs.uk](http://www.whnt.nhs.uk)
  - The website is speech enabled for browsers with sight related problems
  - The new, easy click, 'email a patient' facility continues to be a popular feature
- **Come and Join Us!**
  - As a Foundation Trust we want to involve our Public Members in helping us to shape future services – we currently have 8,000 Public Members and are keen to recruit more. Public Members can get involved as much or as little as they like – from just receiving 'Public Membership News', our regular newsletter, to participating in surveys or standing for election as a Public Governor. To join on-line go to [www.whnt.nhs.uk](http://www.whnt.nhs.uk)

## Equality and Diversity

### **Equality Standard for Local Government**

Wirral Council was assessed for level 3 of the Equality Standard on the 20 and 21 May but unfortunately did not meet the full criteria. However, the Council was commended for the progress it has made regarding equality and diversity over the last 12-18 months, and has been given until September 2009 to submit further evidence in order to be awarded level 3.

A peer challenge team from the Improvement and Development Agency were on site for 2 days at Wallasey Town Hall.

Over the 2 day period Councillors, Chief Officers, staff, representatives from partner organisations, members of the equality watch scheme, local strategic partnership members and community representatives took part in focus groups and interviews.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank EVERYONE who has played a major part in the whole process both behind the scenes, leading up to the assessment and over the 2 day challenge itself.

### **Diversity Day to be held at Wallasey Town Hall!**

**Diversity Day – Wednesday 4 November 2009, 2pm – 9pm, more details will be made available in the next area forum report.**

We are delighted to announce that our second diversity day will take place on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> November at Wallasey Town Hall.

This year the event will run from 2pm – 9pm and will be open to members of the public. We want to see you there!



There will be lots of activities taking place and a few surprises along the way.

If you would like to get involved with the event or offer support to help on the day, please contact Maxine Joynson on 691 8266 or email [maxinejoynson@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:maxinejoynson@wirral.gov.uk)

Look out for more details in the next report!

## **Equality Watch Scheme**

The Equality Watch Scheme is the Council's equality and diversity action plan for the period April 2009 to March 2012, covering all six equality strands, also taking into consideration multi-forms of discrimination

- Gender (including transgender)
- Disability
- Race
- Sexual Orientation
- Age
- Religion or Belief

The Equality Watch Scheme details the actions that will be taken across the whole Council to eliminate any discriminatory practices and to promote equality and recognise diversity within employment and service delivery. The scheme will also provide the framework for the Council achieving the different levels of the Equality Standard for Local Government.

The three year action plan is split into four sections and will be reviewed on an annual basis.

The Equality Watch Scheme replaces the Council's Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes. However, this proposed scheme does take into account the Council's statutory equality duties under the Race Relations Act 1976, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. The Equality Watch Scheme also gives appropriate regard to the forthcoming Single Equality Act relating to sexual orientation, age, religion or belief.

Most comments received from the two consultation events held in January along with comments received via email and telephone, have been incorporated into the final draft.

The updated document will be presented to Cabinet on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2009 for final endorsement, following this it will be published on the Local Strategic Partnership and Council's websites.

## **All Together Now distribution bin**

The Council have distributed this free magazine through our one stop shops and libraries since it was launched several years ago. They have now presented a distribution box, which is located in the Wallasey Town Hall foyer and branded with our Equality Watch logo.

The award-winning All Together Now! magazine is aimed at EVERYONE — but especially anyone whose lives are affected by disability, long-term health conditions, or, age - plus health professionals.

With the help of NHS Trusts, local authorities and community groups, 73,000 FREE copies are distributed across Merseyside, Cheshire and North Wales. The full colour tabloid magazine promotes full social inclusion in all aspects of life.

There are strong regional/national news sections, plus sections on employment, education and training, housing, welfare benefits, holidays, transport, motoring, aids and equipment, the arts, leisure and recreation, gardening, and sport.

The All Together NOW! charity plan to publish the magazine every two months. So get your free copy of All Together Now! when you next visit the Town Hall.

### **Do you want to become a member of Equality Watch?**

**This will entitle you to receive copies of equality watch newsletters, regular updates on national and local equality and diversity headlines and the opportunity to be involved in the council's equality watch initiatives.**

**If you are interested in becoming a member of equality watch and would like to register please email: [equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk)**

**We are waiting to hear from you!**

## **Wirral Youth Service**

### **General Wirral Overview**

Wirral Youth Service provides opportunities, which are open to all Wirral young people. Youth work helps young people learn about themselves, others and society, through informal educational activities which combine fun, challenge and learning. The Service works with young people aged 13-19 years, and specifically targeted young people aged 20 until their 25th birthday who have additional needs and need support with transition into adult life/services.

The Youth Service in Wirral works with many young people in a variety of different settings, these include:

- Youth clubs
- Street work projects
- "Kontakt abuses"
- "Wirral Youth Theatre" and Youth Arts
- "Response" – Advice, support, advocacy and information service and

Substance Misuse Service

- International exchanges
- Duke of Edinburgh's Award
- Outdoor activities
- Projects in schools

The Service is flexible and able to respond to the needs of young people and offers opportunities that are both universal and targeted. Youth work on Wirral is delivered through joint working between the Local Authority, voluntary organisations and other agencies.

Youth workers work with young people in many different localities in Wirral. Having a variety of youth clubs and street work projects allows youth workers to work with young people in their neighbourhoods, meet their specific needs and respond to issues that are important to them.

Much of the work of the Youth Service takes place in one of fourteen open access youth clubs located across the Borough. Street work teams of youth workers make contact with young people who do not access the service elsewhere, build relationships with them and in negotiation with the young people, develop programmes which address their specific needs. This work is delivered on the streets, through project work and on mobile Kontaktabuses.

### **Response**

Response is a Borough wide Youth Service provision, providing counselling, support, advocacy and information for young people. Many of these young people have complex needs requiring intensive support from the service including homelessness, abuse, poor health and poverty.

The agency also has a team of specialist workers providing support to young people who have drug and alcohol problems. The team work with those individuals in a variety of settings including outreach street work and one to one work in their homes or wherever young people feel safe. The team also deliver educational programmes within schools and other youth settings on the risk, consequence and health implications of substance misuse. Partnership work plays an important role in targeting vulnerable, hard to reach groups of young people. Service level agreements and regular joint working ensures the needs of young people are met.

International Work

Each year the Youth Service runs a comprehensive programme of International Youth Exchanges. Young people from Wirral take part in a number of international opportunities including, Hong Kong and the Azores. They have recently hosted a group from Germany; this is done in partnership with Upton Hall School

### **Duke of Edinburgh's Award**

The Youth Service is the Licensed Operating Authority for the whole of Wirral. Awards can be gained through a variety of approved operating units and access organisations made up of a combination of youth centres, schools, an open award centre and a selection of voluntary groups. Young people in Wirral consistently gain over 450 awards per year at bronze, silver and gold levels.

The DofE is available to all young people aged between 14 and 25 with the emphasis being the development of young people's leisure time. By taking part in the DofE, participants are able to increase their own self confidence and self esteem, make new relationships and develop fresh skills.

Duke of Edinburgh's Award staff continue to work with a group of Looked After Children who after successfully achieving their Bronze Award are now working towards their Gold. This group recently successfully bid for Youth Opportunity Funding to enable them to visit the Czech Republic. This visit, which involved studying social and foster care in a former communist state, satisfied the requirements of their DofE Gold Residential

A newly formed Bronze group is hoping to complete their expedition at the Oaklands centre in the forthcoming expedition season.

In our drive to make the DofE available to everyone and to diversify its delivery we are now helping several new units to run the Award. This includes Meadowside Special School and the Observatory School where we will adapt the Award for pupils with learning difficulties.

## **Wirral Youth Theatre/Youth Arts**

Wirral Youth Theatre operates across the Borough to enable young people to access a wide range of performing arts related activities. Art forms such as drama, dance, music, technical theatre and new media are used to help young people to develop personally and socially as well as developing theatre and media related skills. A peer education company within the Wirral Youth Theatre have performed in parks and youth clubs a play about risk taking behaviour this is now going into schools

### **Oxton and Prenton.**

**Noctorum Young People's Project** works with young people in public places that include the Noctorum Estate, the Townfield Lane vicinity and the Arno. Where appropriate, some of this work is undertaken with the support of Response substance misuse workers and on occasion, with Community Support Officers. The youth workers deliver a programme that addresses the needs of the young people both in terms of life skills and physical activity. Ridgeway School Sports Hall continues to be used on a Monday night by several groups of young men.

**Shaftsbury Youth Club.** The current regular programme includes Tae Kwon-do, Football training/coaching/fitness, Badminton, Volleyball, Basketball, Table tennis, I.T. Art, Residential work, Group work/Issue based discussions and outings. The Club is open from Monday to Thursdays. (6.00 – 9.00) During the daytime a very successful project has now become established, a number of schools have commissioned Shaftsbury to deliver a range of personal development courses for student who for a range of reasons are need extra support. Over 50 young people are currently signed up and have a high expectation of gaining a recognized award. Recent Club activities have included projects on knife crime, gorge walking in North Wales and visit to the Albert dock. Two young people recently represented the Club at the "Clubs for Young People " conference in Kettering.

## **Travel**

### **Personal Travel Planning Report – Heswall – Pensby - Irby**

#### **Aim of Project**

A Personal Travel Planning project is proposed for Wirral in 2009 which will contact 10,000 households in order to reduce car use.

#### **Background**

In 2008 the Merseyside Transport Partnership (MTP) commenced a three year Personal Travel Planning (PTP) project as part of the partnership's TravelWise programme to help people make smarter travel choices. JMP Consultants were contracted to support management and delivery of the project. Transport and Travel Research (TTR) provide research and evaluation services in support of the TravelWise Merseyside programme and were contracted to provide independent evaluation of the PTP project.

The PTP project has the following aims:-

- a) Reduce private motor vehicle kms among participants particularly for morning peak trips into Liverpool city centre and Birkenhead town centre;
- b) Reduce travel and establish sustainable travel patterns among participants; and
- c) Reduce carbon emissions from travel.

An area encompassing 3500 households in Childwall, Liverpool was selected for a pilot programme for delivery in summer 2008. Evaluation of the Merseyside pilot revealed similar levels of behaviour change to those seen in comparable projects elsewhere.

Comparing the interviewer led travel diary data of all those who participated in the project with those who did not recall being asked to participate, reveals a 9.9% increase in trips made by sustainable modes and a 10.2% reduction in car use.

## **Wirral Project**

### Area Selection

In preparing for the 2009/10 project it was recognised that a larger scale residential programme should be conducted and that this be designed in such a way as to contribute to the congestion corridor management programme. Heswall, Irby and Pensby were selected as providing the most potential for reducing car use and meeting the programme aims.

The following characteristics contribute to the potential of the area to meet the programme aims.

- a) Heswall has high level of car ownership (83%) and very high car usage for local work trips providing an opportunity to address local travel as well as travel to the city centre.
- b) High potential for people to use public transport as bus services originate in Heswall. Comparable car and bus journey times – bus quicker along corridor during 8am-9am peak.
- c) Suitable catchment area with larger numbers of people travelling to work by car along congestion corridor.
- d) Distinct local community.
- e) Capacity on 472 / 71 / 72 services (in project area).
- f) Potential to also impact other local trips (e.g. shopping, leisure, health and education).
- g) 10 primary schools and 2 high schools in area all working with TravelWise on travel plans.
- h) Amalgamation and relocation of GP surgeries in project area.

### Wirral Objectives

These specific objectives have been set for the Wirral programme

- a) Reduce car use from the project area for peak hour trips to Birkenhead / Liverpool in order to contribute to reduced car trips on the designated congestion corridor.
- b) Reduce car use between the project area and Arrowe Park hospital in order to reduce traffic / parking problems at the hospital.
- c) Reduce car use for other trips to and from the project area in order to reduce traffic growth and encourage sustainable travel behaviour.
- d) Improve efficiency of trips made by car in order to reduce CO<sub>2</sub>.

- e) Improve perception of sustainable modes of travel
- f) Improve awareness of information sources for sustainable modes of travel
- g) Increase understanding and awareness of TravelWise

#### Planned Activity – the project

A team of advisors will be recruited and trained via JMP. A project office above Heswall post office, has been identified from which the programme will run. The project will be delivered in waves moving across the area – a sequence can be provided for this nearer the time. Initial contact leaflets, bearing the Wirral logo will be delivered to the first wave area mid May. Following training, residents will begin to be contacted in person from May 20th. All advisors will carry id and will wear red TravelWise t-shirts. It is proposed that media are informed about the project prior to the first information reaching households and that a launch event be held in the project office during w/c May 25th.

Throughout the project opportunities for media coverage will be sought, utilising project participants etc and elected member participation will be sought for all such opportunities. Similarly the [www.LetsTravelWise.org](http://www.LetsTravelWise.org) website will be utilised to encourage communication of participants' achievements and project progress.

#### Engagement Outline

- a) A before survey will be conducted end of April to set a baseline
- b) A leaflet will be sent to homes in the project area outlining the project and inviting participation from mid May (not more than 2 weeks before doorstep contact attempted).
- c) Three attempts to contact people at home will be made (i.e. weekday, weekday evening, Saturday) and if willing to participate a 10-15 minute conversation will be held to identify information and incentives that would help meet an individual's travel needs and encourage sustainable travel behaviour.
- d) An information pack will be delivered containing the incentives and information relevant to their needs within 5 days – eg cycle maps, discount bus tickets etc.
- e) JMP will make use of existing Merseytravel / Wirral / Merseyside resources and any relevant national campaigns (e.g. Change4Life, etc.)
- f) Additional resources and incentives will be developed for the project, including an Area Guide, Buses from Your Stop, Personal Journey Plans and a TravelWise Challenge.
- g) Challenge participants will be emailed and/or texted to encourage greater participation and to present further offers
- h) A Customer Aftercare service will be carried out by the Travel Advisors. This will be done using telephone and email follow-ups.
- i) An independent evaluation of the project will be conducted by TTR using a telephone after survey in October
- j) The target for Year Two is 5000 participants.

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### **"No progress" yet on Wrexham- Bidston electrification**

There has been no recent progress on the plan to electrify the Wrexham-Bidston railway, the Welsh Assembly's transport minister Leuan Wyn Jones told the House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee on March 24. Jones who is also the Welsh Assembly's deputy first minister, said: "We are looking at other ways of taking that forward. There should be an options appraisal to see if there are other things that we can do short of electrification that will actually improve that service." The options,

apart from third rail electrification include 25kV overhead electrification and the use of dual-voltage stock, plus the extension of Arriva Trains Wales' diesel service through Birkenhead North.

Shadow Welsh Secretary David Jones said he was disappointed there were no firm plans coming together and little prospect of a breakthrough. He stressed that electrifying the Wrexham to Bidston line was badly needed, and important to the economy of North Wales as a whole. Electrifying the route would link it to the Merseyrail electric network, and is strongly supported by Merseytravel, the local integrated Transport Authority and local Welsh councils.

Speaking to *RAIL*, Merseytravel Director General Neil Scales said: "We have asked Network Rail to review their estimate costs for third rail electrification, and Merseytravel is also investigating the feasibility of overhead electrification of the line. There are 14,000 potential jobs on Deeside, and the people of Merseyside need access to them.

## National Carers Week



**This year CARERS WEEK is 8th-14th June '09 The theme this year is**

*Carers... the UK's secret service*

Six million people provide unpaid care to someone they know.

The UK's carers are, quite literally, indispensable. By providing unpaid care for someone they know who is ill, frail or disabled, they save the economy an incredible £87 billion.

3 in 5 people will be carers at some point in their lives - carers often face a lack of recognition in all areas of their lives.

This year to identify 'hidden' carers on the Wirral and sign post them to help and support that they maybe entitled to we are having a competition which will also be promoted in the Wirral Globe. To win a Health Farm Day donated by Roz Tranfield - Beauty Centre for Women and Men in Wallasey with a days paid care donated by Crossroads Caring for Carers, all you have to do is send to us in no more than 10 words what 'looking after someone means to you'.

Send your entry to WIRED Carers Team, Cavendish Enterprise Centre, Brassey Street, Birkenhead, CH41 8BY or email [carers.support@wired.me.uk](mailto:carers.support@wired.me.uk) along with your contact details. Closing date for entries by 4pm Friday 12<sup>th</sup> June. All entries will be judged by carers. The lucky winner along with the winning entry will be announced during Carers Week. Good Luck!!!!

**Carers Helpline 0151 670 0777**



- **Launch of What? alcohol misuse campaign**

NHS Wirral has invested heavily in alcohol misuse treatment, prevention and care with spending rising from 845K to 2.2M by the end of 09/10. Part of this investment includes the development of the What? campaign aimed at providing information about sensible drinking and signposting to services. Look out for the campaign logo over the next few weeks. Try the website for more information.  
<http://www.wirralalcohol.co.uk>

- **All Day Health Centre**

In March 2009 a new facility opened on the Arrowe Park site. The 'All Day Health Centre' includes services from GPs and nurses 8am – 10pm, 365 days of the year. This additional service is designed to complement and support existing GP services currently available across Wirral. Since March, people have been able to book an appointment to see a GP at the new centre, up to a fortnight in advance. Patients can call the booking phone number 0151 201 4188 or 'drop-in' and see a nurse at any time between 8am and 10pm. Patients are not required to register but are able to do so if they wish.

- **Carers week 8th-14th June '09**

Six million people provide unpaid care to someone they know. 3 in 5 people will be carers at some point in their lives. Carers Week will highlight and celebrate the incredible contribution that carers make, sharing the positive experiences as well as the more difficult. For more information about the national campaign go to:  
<http://www.carersweek.org>

Locally NHS Wirral is working closely with Adult Social Services and Wired who are a local organisation involved in supporting the needs of unpaid carers. If you are caring for someone, your GP would like to know so they can ensure that you are provided with the support you need in this role.

A full programme of events are planned including information and displays in all Wirral Libraries. For more information call the helpline below.  
If you wish to receive further information and support for you in your caring role then please contact the following helpline number:

Wired on 0151 670 0777 or go online <http://www.wirralcarers.com>

- **Swine Flu update**

Work is well underway across Wirral to ensure that our pandemic flu plans are in place. NHS Wirral receives up to date information on a daily basis from our Wirral partners, and works with colleagues across Merseyside and the North West to co-ordinate intelligence and activity. There has only been one confirmed case of swine flu in Wirral to date. The patient who had returned from Mexico has fully recovered. It is important that the public pay particular attention to hygiene messages:

1. Covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, using a tissue when possible.



2. Disposing of dirty tissues promptly and carefully.
3. Maintaining good basic hygiene, for example washing hands frequently with soap and water to reduce the spread of the virus.
4. Cleaning hard surfaces (e.g. door handles) frequently using a normal cleaning product.
5. Making sure children follow this advice.

Most importantly, advice to the public remains that anyone returning from Mexico or one of the affected countries who develops flu-like symptoms within a week or so of their return should stay at home and call their GP or NHS Direct on 0845 4647.

There is also a health information line which is updated regularly: Tel: 0800 1 513 513 or visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk).

### **Is the NHS prepared for a possible pandemic?**

The UK has been preparing for a flu pandemic for the last five years. We have established a stockpile of enough antivirals to treat more than 33 million people. All NHS organisations have pandemic flu plans in place and the Department of Health is now working closely with the NHS to ensure that these plans can be put into action so that antivirals can be made available to the public very rapidly should we reach that stage.

### **How will we keep the public up-to-date**

We already have well advanced plans for providing information to the public in the event of a pandemic, in particular about what people can do to help themselves in the event of swine influenza being confirmed in the UK.

How are we making sure that GPs and other staff are up-to-date?

We keep our plans under regular review. The Department of Health has published a range of guides that support health and social care services to develop pandemic action plans including acute trusts, (secondary or hospital care trusts) primary care trusts, ambulance trusts and social care trusts. They offer practical advice and suggestions for actions needed by GP practices now and in the event of a pandemic

We recommend that you check the relevant web sites for the most recent information:

Latest health advice from the Health Protection Agency:

[http://www.hpa.org.uk/webw/HPAweb&HPAwebStandard/HPAweb\\_C/1240732817824?p=1240732817665](http://www.hpa.org.uk/webw/HPAweb&HPAwebStandard/HPAweb_C/1240732817824?p=1240732817665)

Patient advice from NHS Direct:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Pandemic-flu/Pages/QA.aspx>

Latest information from the Department of Health:

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/index.htm>

## **Wirral's Older Peoples Parliament**

We have continued to work towards improving the environment and services for the older population of Wirral. Our full parliamentary meetings, on the first Friday morning of March, June, September and December are held in the Town Hall, and provide a summary of our work, most of which takes place through monthly executive

meetings and a great number of smaller groups. Our membership currently consists of 44 volunteers, 4 from each of the 11 Area Forums of the Wirral, plus several hundred associate members. We are preparing for formal elections in the year 2010. We are asking who is interested in becoming one of the 4 elected members from each Area Forum patch, and elections will be conducted by post amongst the associates from each area. Hopefully, by that time, we will have many more associates. It costs nothing to become part of this powerful voice for the over 50s.

Please join if you are old enough. The bigger our electorate, the more influence we will have.

Our activities include:-

Regular liaison with police and magistrates. There will be a full day of presentations and discussion with a panel of experts on August 14<sup>th</sup> on aspects of safety for the older person.

Liaison with Adult Social Services. We want the best possible domiciliary and residential care for those of us who need it. We support the moves to personalise this, and are watching developments closely. We have members sitting on many policy and development groups in this area of the Council.

Liaison with NHS Wirral (our PCT) where again we are invited onto many committees and interview panels for senior posts which will be crucial in delivery of health care to the elderly. We are constantly supportive of moves for health and social care to work in tandem, and we also remind them all the time of the valuable role which voluntary bodies play in this area. More and more public funding is now going to voluntary groups to provide quality and flexible services.

Our Hospital Discharge survey has started a huge movement to improve and streamline discharge. We are keeping a close watch on this, and would welcome any reports, good or bad, from those who leave hospital.

We organised a very successful day conference entitled "Keeping warm next winter" The presentations focussed on home improvements, fuel costs, healthy eating, grants available and generally keeping fit when it is cold. We are very grateful for generous financial support from NHS Wirral, Riverside Housing, Oakhouse Foods and others.

We are in regular contact with providers of life long learning opportunities. We are also trying to encourage older people to get involved in local schools. This is very rewarding for both the volunteer and the children. We can arrange the necessary police check.

A very active subgroup is that of grandparents who have the permanent care of grandchildren, for whatever reason. They are working, both locally and nationally to highlight the huge gaps in provision and information.

We have members working at a national level with a variety of organisations which are trying to improve the financial and human rights status of older people. We have a member working hard on aspects of public transport, and he needs more support with this.

Housing developments for older people (extra care housing, a possible retirement village, and mapping the existing provision) are high on our agenda.

Whatever your interest, please contact us with ideas, problems enquiries and requests to join as an associate or stand for election.

Dates of Interest for your Diary

Parliament Meeting held at Wallasey Town Hall

Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2009 11am

Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2009 11am

Special Events

Crime & Respect (Information and Advice) for the over 50's  
St Werburghs Parish Centre, Birkenhead.

Friday 14<sup>th</sup> August 2009

10am to 3pm Refreshments and lunch provided.

Committee Meetings please phone for Venue's and dates.

Phone Brian Christian on 666 2220 or email [parliament@ageconcernwirral.org](mailto:parliament@ageconcernwirral.org)