

AREA FORUM (GREASBY/FRANKBY/IRBY, UPTON, WOODCHURCH)

Wednesday, 10 February 2010

Present:

Chair	T Smith (Chair)
Councillors	G Gardiner J Quinn
Community Representatives	Jean Robinson (Overchurch Residents Association), , Mark Stevenson (Woodchurch Neighbourhood Board Member) Bert Grunnill (Upton Churches Together)
Lead Officer	David Smith (Deputy Director of Finance)
Area Service Co-ordinator	Andy Brannan
Street Scene Manager	Dave Green (Director of Technical Services)
Community Safety Officer	Jim Thompson
Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	Pat Higgins
NHS Wirral	Glen Coleman
Merseyside Police	Martin Fletcher
Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service	Sarah Patterson
Council Officers	Christina Bebbington, Jo Burrell (Woodchurch Neighbourhood Management Board)
In Attendance	Jayne Elliott (Minute Taker), Tony Garrett (Secretary for Wirral Transport), Simon Finney (Arriva Buses), George Lewis (Avon Buses), Keith Grimshaw (First Buses)

Apologies

Councillor T Anderson
P Reisdorf J George Maureen Cain (Woodchurch Board Member), Ron Green (GOAL Group), John Smith (Greasby

1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

The Chair, Councillor Tony Smith welcomed the Forum members and 19 members of the public to the Greasby, Frankby, Irby & Woodchurch Area Forum meeting held at St Joseph's Primary School, Moreton Road, Upton.

Apologies:

Maureen Cain, John Smith, Councillor Reisdorf, Inspector Brian Griffiths
Councillor John George, Ron Green and Councillor Tom Anderson

The Chair asked the Forum members to keep to the Code of Conduct during the meeting.

2 AREA CO-ORDINATORS REPORT

The Area Co-ordinator gave an overview of the Area Co-ordinators Report which high-lighted the minutes and matters arising from October's Forum.

Andy Brannan, Area Co-ordinator asked if anyone has any questions regarding the report/minutes, they should contact him. Contact details at front of report.

- Q. Tony Garrett corrected item (4.2) to read "there is no service after 6.30pm on Monday to Saturday. A lot of areas on Wirral have no service on a Bank Holiday or on a Sunday.

Andy Brannan explained that the Forward Planning Department are currently consulting with the community on the Core Development Strategy – This strategy indicates where new developments will take place over the next 10 years and if anyone is interested, then take away the information provided this evening and have your say.

The back of the Area Co-ordinators report (page 52) is the You Decide Update – Take the report away and read the decisions.

3 BUS SERVICE PROVIDERS QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

The Bus service providers, Avon, Arriva and First representatives answered the following questions.

- 3.1** Tony Garrett, Wirral Transport Secretary read out a request from the 'Older People's Parliament. Why do Arriva Buses refuse to take concessionary passes after 9.30am if the bus is late? This issue has been raised with Arriva and they have stated it is not the customers fault if the bus is late.

A. Arriva's representative explained that he was disappointed that he hadn't found out about this directly. In his view, the driver should let the person onto the bus. It is up to the individual driver to make any decisions. Any drivers who fail to allow passengers on will receive the relevant training were necessary.

3.2 Tony Garrett asked about concessionary travel for pensioners and disabled persons.

A. Disabled Concessionary Travel can travel at any time. Pensioners can travel after 9.30am only. This is not set by the bus company; it is a local government decision. The rules for concessionary travel vary from each authority.

3.3 Why did Arriva change from not issuing tickets to pass holders, to now issuing tickets?

A. The reason for this is to keep a record on the number of users on the buses. It gives a report on how well the buses are used and it ensures an adequate service and use of resources.

3.4 Are all the buses in the area having the facility to lower the step for easy access?

A. This facility varies on each bus. The newer buses have the facility to lower the step, and it's encouraged that the drivers do this. Approx 95% of Arriva buses can lower their step. It is not a statutory obligation to provide this, but by 2017 it will be obligatory.

3.5 Councillor Quinn expressed that the Bus Route 437 was an excellent service. She questioned that people in Irby have a problem getting a direct bus route home.

A. The Bus providers will try and improve services and will look at the frequency of evening and Sunday services. They are aware of the needs of Irby residents, but if the service is provided and there is no demand, then the service will cease.

A thank you was given to Mersey Travel for their prompt reply from the questions at the last meeting.

3.6 Tony Garrett asked why the main bus operators only travel on the main roads, when for example in Greasby people struggle to get to the main road bus stops from the estates (RAF, Greenacres, Cortsway).

A. It is difficult to divert bus routes as they can't satisfy everyone. There are considerable financial constraints to offer this extra service. They do recognise that some of the routes are old fashioned and they are looking at re-vitalising services.

Some bus providers specialise on smaller routes – the costs of a smaller bus is much the same as a bigger double decker bus to run. The main cost is the driver's wages.

The problem with bigger buses travelling on smaller side roads is that they struggle to pass if cars are parked on both sides of the road, and also in the extreme weather conditions and roads are not gritted, then the buses struggle on the smaller roads.

Councillor Jean Quinn stated that there should be a bus route that runs around the Greasby estates to get to the 437. It would be a good idea to work on accessibility studies as some people have an issue. It could increase business to get more people to the main routes.

First Travel had the same answers as Arriva and Avon, but they only have larger buses and operate in the Birkenhead and Woodchurch area.

4 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Christina Bebbington, Community Engagement Officer introduced herself to the Forum.

4.1 Mark Stevenson (Woodchurch Neighbourhood Board Member) complained that he did not receive his copy of the minutes.

A. Councillor Jean Quinn explained that they were sent out, but were returned undelivered by Royal Mail. A hand delivered copy was given to Mr Stevenson 2 days prior to the meeting.

4.2 Tony Garrett asked the question of what does Equality & Diversity mean?

A. Christina Bebbington explained that Equality means that people are treated in a fair and equal way and Diversity means that it recognises and celebrates and respects the diversity of people in Wirral.

4.3 Mark Stevenson stated that he had been mis-quoted in the previous minutes. He reported that a number of people on the Woodchurch estate feel discriminated against and feel they are mis-interpreted and feel there is segregation.

A. It is recognised that this is a big area. The Neighbourhood Board have had training and have had positive feedback. It was suggested that the training be offered to the residents.

The neighbourhood management team have arranged a number of events and also places of worship, supported victims of racism since 2007.

Mark Stevenson will discuss his grievance with Christina Bebbington after the meeting.

4.4 The question was asked on whether there has been a big take up on the E&D training within council employees?

A. The numbers have increased and have reached Level 3 standard in the targets.

4.5 Is it possible for this course to be offered to the community as well as Council Officers?

A. It would be possible and the team will look at this for the community.

4.6 Mersey Travel have certain local stations that do not have ramp access for disabled people, does the Council encourage Mersey travel to provide this access?

A. Mersey Travel are working to make as many stations accessible for wheelchairs and push chairs as possible. Andy Brannan to write to Mersey Travel regarding this issue.

A representative from the Graduate Women's Forum suggested that people in wheelchairs and parents with prams get together to encourage Mersey Travel to increase the number of stations to have access.

4.7 Mark Stevenson expressed his concern over the number of women who work at the council offices of the Neighbourhood Management Group Board. It is intimidating to men when they need to get their issues addressed. He has been told that some of the women are aggressive towards the men and has made them feel uncomfortable.

A. They are looking at setting up a men's group. Jo Burrell stated that they employ the best people for the job and there is not a gender bias for that. The comments will be taken on board.

5 AREA PLAN UPDATE

Christina Bebbington explained that the local authority is looking to develop area plans that reflect the priorities that are important to local people. They need to find out what the public's views are on things that matter, and to find the best format in reporting back to the public with any progress.

Christina asked if that anyone would like to get involved with the area plans, then to contact her. Contact details in Area Plans Report.

5.1 Tony Garrett pointed out that the latest plans are 2 years old and that some of the figures need to be updated.

A. Christina agreed that they need updating and that is why they are looking to get people involved and work towards a new plan.

5.2 How many people do you need for the workshop?

A. There were only 5 at the last meeting, so a few more would be better.

5.3 If you look at Page 10, Population Statistics, how do they add up to 200% and the figures for England and Wales add up to 199%?

A. Christina could not answer this, but she would have a look at this.

5.4 The question was asked if it would be possible to arrange some of the area forum meetings at an earlier time, to try and accommodate some parents.

A. The Community Engagement Team is constantly looking, making the forums more accessible and organising them for an earlier start is one of the ideas that's being explored. A number of forums have held a separate roadshow as well as the forum. All the ideas that are being piloted will be rolled out across all 11 area forums if they prove successful.

5.5 There are some groups not represented, it may be useful to advertise the meetings in the local 'messenger' which is delivered to households.

5.6 Tony Garrett reported that the Travel Plan 2009 Report has not been seen by everyone and that the plan should include the Irby Area.

6 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

6.1 Since the heavy snow recently, the roads in the area, particularly Irby Road, are in a terrible state of potholes. Please can you do more to fix the roads and pavements?

A. Dave Green explained that after the snow fall, this has caused the deterioration of the roads. There is an additional £250k in the budget to fix the roads and staff are working 7 days per week repairing the roads. From the 1st April 2010, there will be a programme to re-condition whole roads that are in a terrible state of repair. If anyone wants to report any potholes, please ring Street Scene on 606 2004.

He also reported that the new road layout at Thurstaston, when finished will be a good job.

6.2 It was asked if each forum has the pot of money available for the 'You Decide' programme.

A. The results of the 'You Decide' programme are on page 52 of the Area Coordinators report. The Council has confirmed that this money (£18,200) will be available again for the forthcoming year, 2010/11.

6.3 Will the Council be issuing Compost Bins?

A. Dave Green: No, this is not happening as the use of compost bins is a complicated issue.

6.4 It was reported that the planned clean up of Hoole Road has not happened as yet. Why is this?

A. This issue will be checked and will follow up as to why this has not happened.

6.5 It was reported that there had been an accident on Hoole Road, and residents are concerned about the danger of delivery vans. Would it be possible to use the 'You decide' money to have zig zag markings on the road and recommend that the deliveries are at the back of the shops?

A. It was recommended to speak to Andy Brannan regarding this.

6.6 Mark Stevenson stated that no money from the 'You Decide' had been given to the Woodchurch estate.

A. A number of forum members who attended the You decide panel meeting confirmed that money had been allocated to the Woodchurch area. Money was given to the Upton ward on the understanding that it would be distributed evenly across all the areas in the ward.

6.7 It was asked who was responsible for the paved area outside Greasby shops as it was very dangerous in the ice and snow before Christmas.

A. Dave Green: Without checking it could be no-one was certain who was responsible; it will have to be checked from the plans at Street Scene.

6.8 If a person falls on the ice on the pavements if you have cleared the pavement yourself outside your own house. Who is responsible?

A. It will be the responsibility of who owns the land, but unfortunately you can't stop people suing.

6.9 It was reported that there was a streetlight out in an alley-way off Pemberton road.

A. Dave Green: Pass on the information as to the address at the end of the meeting and this will be dealt with.

6.10 It was asked if 'You Decide' budget could be used to arrange alley gating for an area Stephen Hesford has been campaigning for?

A. Jim Thompson, Community Safety is responsible for Alley gating; he has been speaking to Stephen Hesford regarding the problem areas. It would cost approx £30k to complete a large problem area. Not only this but to effective alleygates have to be installed in all the alleyways in an area, not just a number of roads. Jim has written to Mr Hesford with all the details with a view to discussing it at a later date.

6.11 Tony Garrett asked as to why some road signs in the area had stopped

being illuminated?

- A. Dave Green: The signs do not need to be illuminated as they are reflective, so the fuses have been taken out to save on electricity and improve our carbon footprint.

7 AREA FORUM PARTNER UPDATES

Pat Higgins – Wirral Hospital NHS Trust

The maternity unit at Arrowe Park is nearly finished and it will have single rooms for new mothers and partners will be able to stay with them.

The hospital trust is working towards having single sex wards.

This year is the year of Health and Wellbeing – Information on this is on pages 41 -45 in the report pack.

Jim Thompson – Community Safety

He reported that Wirral is a safe area to live, there are a few anti-social behaviour hot-spots, but all in all Wirral is a lovely place to live.

Martin Fletcher – Merseyside Police

He reported that nationally, there has been an increase in burglary, but in this area it has reduced. Figures are available on the Merseyside Police Website.

There has been an awareness initiative called 'Operation Door handle'. This is where police officers were trying door handles, and if there was a problem they would speak to the homeowner about the risks. Doors were not tried after 8pm.

Generally, in this area, crime is down, but during the snow there was an increase in anti-social behaviour. He apologised for the lack of service during this time as they didn't have enough resources to deal with all the incidents.

He informed the forum that action had been taken on the anti-social behaviour problems in Upton and Woodchurch.

There are newsletters available and there are 'Have your say' cards available for you to give your views on what the police should do.

There is also a lot of work involving local community groups and local schools, particularly secondary schools.

Sarah Patterson – Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service

Sarah reported that the Bon Fire Strategy proved to be successful. There were a low number of bonfires and the fire service removed approx 60 tons of bonfire material.

There are new partnerships with the fire service, and the local rangers have been trained in fire safety.

There is a youth group organised called 'Trailblazers Mountain Bike Group' which is proving successful with youths in the area.

Mark Stevenson – Woodchurch Neighbourhood Board Member

Mark reported that a new boxing club has opened. This has proved positive and motivational to the young people on Woodchurch estate. It is run by professional coaches and people from the community. They are now looking for some help from outside agencies, for example, local police.

Bert Grunnill – Upton Churches Together

He reported that there are clubs available virtually every day for handicapped and disabled people. There just isn't enough information about the courses for people to see.

Jo Burrell – Woodchurch Neighbourhood Management Board Co-ordinator

Jo reported on a number of successful events that have taken place in Woodchurch.

The car park on New Hey Road has been completed. It provides 12 new much needed car park spaces in the area.

Residents and neighbourhood management team developed 'Woodchurch in Bloom' 10 projects were developed across the estate and were all awarded at Royal Horticultural Society Awards Ceremony.

The boxing club project funding was agreed at the board last night and the steering group will be delivering 3 nights of boxing training for both juniors and seniors. They will have full use of Woodchurch High School Sports Complex.

Equality and Diversity training has taken place with Woodchurch NM partnership members.

First aid training has taken place in January for 15 residents with St John's Ambulance. One of the residents who is the registrar for Boxing will continue on an advanced first aid course, which is recognised by the Amateur Boxing Association.

Over the Christmas period, residents and the NM Team delivered the Christmas lights switch on. Community groups had stalls, Angel's café provided refreshments, 7 waves and local residents provided entertainment.

A Cascade Christmas event took place at Pemberton café with a winter wonderland, featuring wrapping presents, making cards and decorations.

The Methodist Church opened its doors on Christmas Day for its annual Christmas meal for those persons who live alone. It was well attended and enjoyed by many residents. Dougie Wood and his family organised a special meal for all those alone or homeless on Boxing Day. Hot food and Christmas goodies were supplied in abundance and enjoyed by those attended.

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

8.1 As there are lots activities for young people, including the Boxing Club, which is quite a physical sport. Do girls join in on these activities?

- A. Mark Stevenson: The Boxing Club has a female coach and on Wirral Ladies football is extremely popular.

8.2 Tony Garrett asked who is responsible for the land between Pickerill Road and Circular Drive in Greasby. Is it to be changed into a playing field or allotments?

- A. Jean Quinn stated that it was not the Council's responsibility as it belonged to Wirral Partnership Homes. The land has recently had the grass cut after a long time. If it were to become allotments then planning permission would be required. There are no plans as to what to do with this land, and residents will be consulted when required.

The Chair thanked everyone for their conduct during the meeting

9 **FUTURE MEETINGS/PRESENTATIONS**

Thursday 10th June 2010

Venue: Irby Methodist Church Hall