

AREA FORUM (BIDSTON AND CLAUGHTON)

Wednesday, 2 February 2011

Present:

Councillor	D Roberts (Chair)
Councillors	J Crabtree G Davies S Foulkes AR McLachlan H Smith
Area Service Co-ordinator	Michelle Gray
Lead Officer	Mark Smith (Head of Service)
Community Representatives	Jean McIntosh
Merseyside Fire and Rescue	Dave Watson
Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	Alistair Bardsley, Joyce Jackson (Public Governor)
Older People's Parliament	Ken McDermott
Council Officers	Lucy Beed

1 **WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & APOLOGIES:**

Apologies were received from Dr Abhi Mantgani & Merseyside Police. The Chair, Councillor Denise Roberts, welcomed forum members and 19 members of the public to the Bidston and Claughton Area Forum being held at St James Centre.

2 **MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF LAST MEETING:**

Michelle Gray updated the area forum re: dog control orders in public places such as shopping areas. Michelle explained that she had done some research and is gathering this information, Michelle had also been advised by Environmental Health that there would have to be a full consultation for any order to be considered. Informed the area forum that this was on-going and will keep everyone updated.

An issue was raised from the previous area forum that it was difficult for people to hear. Michelle raised this with her department, the marketing team are currently looking at purchasing a portable PA system and one that will be suitable for public meetings and is easily transferable, hopefully we will have a PA system for the next round of area forums.

The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

Q: What powers do the patient representatives have?

A: Michelle Gray this is for Abhi Mantgani to answer, this will be forwarded to him after this meeting.

Q: Funding has been set aside for this year to fund additional grit bins but it is not on the agenda!

A: Michelle Gray there are suggestion cards available for all residents to suggest grit bin locations.

Q: Pigeons on Grange Road West? Has anything been done?

A: George Davies, there is a huge amount of work involved to address the on-going problems with pigeons.

Q: Found cat like paws prints & hairs, and no cat in my garden! I think it could be foxes. I can't hang my washing out because of the pigeons either.

A: Steve Foulkes as the former Chair of the Environmental Health, I advise people not to feed them. People think they are doing good but they are just encouraging them to come back. If nuisance levels increase we will have to take drastic action. Pigeons breed about eight times a year.

Comments:

- Jean McIntosh they only have to be fed twice then they will go back to that area. People also need to use bins correctly as well and secure any rubbish/food etc.
- Over the weekend there are chips, rice, curry over the floor that people have dropped.

Action:

- Cllr Steve Foulkes can we have an officer from Environmental Health to attend next meeting in June.

3 WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN YOUR LOCAL AREA:

Census:

Lucy Beed explained that 27th March 2011 was census day. It has extreme importance as it determines how much funding the Council will receive. If the census is not returned households could be looking at a fine of £1,000.

Cllr George Davies the census form can be under exaggerated. For example if only 290,000 people send the census form back out of 312,000 people then that is all the government funding we will receive for all services, based on actual returns.

Key Points:

- Personal information will not be shared with any other government department, third party or anyone.
- Protected by law for 100 years
- Compulsory – if you don't take part, you could be fined up to £1,000
- Posted out in early March to each household
- Return via royal mail using pre-paid envelope or
- Complete on-line www.census.gov.uk

Information:

- Helpline 0300 0201 101/Text Relay 18001 0300 0201 160
- Individual Appointment – contact Helpline
- Local Charities, Support and Information Services
- Local Drop-in sessions
- Translation services available

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service:

Dave Watson full report from page nine. Highlighted the fact that Birkenhead Fire Station is being refurbished and there will be a Youth Service Hub opening for Fire Cadets aimed at 14/18 year olds. Also highlighted the fact that the 'bonfire strategy' was a great success and over 250 tonnes of material was removed before bonfires were started. There has also been a reduction in secondary fires i.e. wheelie bin rubbish.

Q: Cllr Harry Smith how long has the Cadet scheme been running?

A: Dave Watson it has been running for about 3 years in Liverpool and crime/ASB has been reduced.

Q: Are the cadets able to facilitate children with special needs?

A: Dave Watson, yes can't see this being a problem.

Comment:

- Jim Thompson stated that most wheelie bin fires start because alley-gates have been left open. If anyone spots this or you have lost their key etc then they contact Jim on 0151 606 5443.

Q: Gates have been took off on Brow Road, why?

A: Jim Thompson they were not Council alley-gates and were not safe or suitable.

Q: Was the bonfire project a multi agency project?

A: Jim Thompson - Fire, Community Safety, Probation Service, Technical Services, Wardens and PCSO's were all involved.

Q: From an Environmental point of view it was good but sadly we will be losing our Wirral Wardens. Where do we go to protest? This will have a big impact on the community?

A: Cllr Steve Foulkes 100's jobs have gone from Wirral Council because of cut backs – all councils do it, it is a dilemma for elective members. We don't know what is next and what the service will look like. We are as much in the dark. It is difficult for us to answer this question. Many people will not go until June 2011. There are a number of issues emerging and if the picture unfolds we will do our best to let you know.

Comments:

- I would also like to thank the Fire Service and Wirral Partnership Homes who put money forward, Police, Residents Association and Ridgeway High School allowed us to use their grounds up for bonfire night. There were no incidents on the Nocturnum and 650 people got together and it was a fantastic night. I would just like to thank everyone who had an involvement from children to elderly.

- Cllr Harry Smith if we clear a piece of land and restore it as allotments and put a bid in it is unlikely that the Live Wirral Wardens will be around.
- Some allotment holders are in talks with Probation to get Community Service people to come and do work on allotments.
- Jim Thompson Wardens are not always Council employees. We do not know what the shape of the future is.
- Cllr George Davies the growth pot which incorporates everything is £1.4 million in the pot. Last year was £8.6 million in the pot. It is not housing anymore, it is house planning and roads. We have a successful bid to do Milner Street and Carrington Street. We need £4.6 million for the North End and when the private sector moves in it will create £22 million.

Community Safety:

Jim Thompson highlighted report which was contained in the papers and also pointed out that crime has reduced by 63% in 5 years. The biggest issue being anti social behaviour which has also reduced. Jim Thompson stressed to the public that when they comment that they ring the Police and nothing happens, all calls are recorded and there will be something done but it just may take some time but calls are always dealt with.

Q: I was fired at by a staple gun in my eye in my own back garden and the Police told me they could not take any further action!

A: Jim Thompson it was an undetectable crime which means it could not be solved due to insufficient evidence unfortunately. It does not mean they did not try.

Comment:

- Reporting anti social behaviour does work. My daughter rang the Police with regards to ASB and now Community Officers are out on their bikes every night and there is no more crime in the area.

Q: Are we going to lose Community Officers?

A: That is a matter for the Police Authority. They are suffering cuts and having to make a lot of hard decisions

NHS Hospital Trust:

Alistair Bardsley went over extensive report in the papers across pages 18-20. Thanked the community for coping well with the restrictions around visiting lately with swine flu and norovirus.

Q: my granddaughter was in hospital last week. She found it very embarrassing that a 12 year old boy was in the same ward as her. I got asked to leave because I was not the mother. The Nurse said I could stay but when I went for a coffee they would not let me back in.

A: Staff were just sticking to the new restrictions that were in place at the time.

Q: my granddaughter was so upset they had to allow her home.

A: I appreciate your distress but restrictions were put in place for good reasons.

Q: What is the upper age limit as a 15 year was in a ward with children and could not get any sleep with crying?

A: 15 years, 11 months and so many days. They do try to separate.

Q: Wirral Live is closing and we have no funding. We have people who come who have had strokes they come to use the service and exercise. We need funding quickly and want to keep the classes going?

A: The hospital promotes healthy eating we do not give out funding, this would be HNS Wirral. Ann – Marilyn Maddox from the Health Action Area is your contact.

Older Peoples Parliament:

Ken McDermott, went over extensive report across pages 11 – 14 in the papers.

Comments:

- Ken McDermott raised issues and concerns around the future of the care services.
- Cllr Denise Roberts Older Peoples Parliament has gone from strength to strength.
- Lance Ellis has been unwell from the Older Peoples Parliament, is he OK? Cllr Steve Foulkes said he is OK as they had seen him at a previous meeting.

4 **PARKS & COUNTRYSIDE SERVICE PROCUREMENT EXERCISE:**

Mark Smith updated the forum on the developments for this service. Costs the council around 13.5 million and covers areas such as parks & country services, cemetery services, rangers, beach/life guards, etc.

The council is currently reviewing this service and Cabinet resolved procurement on service delivery. This service will be delivered by an external contractor and will deliver the same or a better service that is already in place.

Key Points:

- Contract to go out to an external organisation
- Tenders to be in by Mid April 2011
- Decisions made by June 2011
- Award to a single contractor by early September 2011
- New contractor in place by Christmas 2011
- Series of workshops with members and staff and those who are interested in the following subject areas:
 - sports/clubs
 - golfing
 - bereavement services
 - parks & countryside
 - One large contract worth around 8 million, awarded to the best tender

All to be held at Wallasey Town Hall:

- | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| • 3rd March 2011 | Committee Room 1 | Parks and Open Spaces |
| • 8th March 2011 | Committee Room 3 | Bereavement |
| • 5th March 2011 | Committee Room 3 | Golf |
| • 23rd March 2011 | Committee Room 1 | Sport and Recreation |

Comment:

- Cllr Steve Foulkes - *privatisation of parks* - I believe the current workforce have done a good job and should be allowed to bid for the work as opposed to straight forward privatisation which may be risky"

Q: Are there going to be island refuges on Worcester Road and Tollemache Road for pedestrians to access Tam O'Shanter farm?

A: Cllr Harry Smith the road is too narrow.

Q: Need pedestrian crossing at Boundary Road. It is a blind corner. Children and elderly cross there.

A: Mark Smith will look into this but a certain criteria has to be followed.

Q: With regards to parks, will staff be kept on? Private companies hire agencies with no horticultural experience. Will they promise to hire someone with experience as we do not want Birkenhead park ruined?

A: Mark Smith all people working in the service have employment rights and a pension. They would be on a TUPE transfer. With regards to the company that comes in, they would have to be specific about everything.

5 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME:

Q: Have you got to Flaybrick Cemetery and cleaned up the trash?

A: Mark Smith it has been logged for action.

Developments:

- Our Parks team have advised that this area was cleared and coincidentally when I contacted them this morning (Thursday 3rd February) they are actually out there at present clearing the latest flytipping you mentioned last night. This is obviously a frequent occurrence and we are looking into whether we can take enforcement action to discourage this from happening in future. I'll keep you updated of any developments. Mark Smith/Interim Head of Technical Services 0151 606 2103 marksmith@wirral.gov.uk

Q: Seen 3 people throw 10 bags over the wall, the headstones are smashed as well it is a sacred place.

A: Mark Smith the vehicle registration is enough for us to take enforcement action.

Comment:

- Cllr Steve Foulkes we have put extra patrols on at Flaybrick, this has been funded through this area forum from the "you decide" programme.

Q: Area called the "rods" (off Brow Road) people take dogs and people take rubbish there and dump it, it awful. Dumping of rubbish happens of a night.

A: Mark Smith I will look into it.

Q: Hurrel Road (missing/stolen) Grit Bin! I have brought the lid with me today to show you. The problem is the bracket. It is too flexible, it should be a metal bracket. This has been reported to Streetscene. 20+ stolen/missing/moved. Need to make them heavier/put a band around the bin to tie them up. It went missing when people needed to start using it. Can this bin be replaced.

A: Michelle Gray it is being taken seriously and is being dealt with.

Comment:

- Jean McIntosh, taxi driver told me he seen a Colas driver picked up a grit bin with its grabber (Hurrell Road).

- Mark Smith – will look in to it. We were getting them secured down so it might have been for that.

6 NEXT AREA FORUM MEETING:

The Chair Denise Roberts thanked all who attended and closed the meeting and announced the next area forum would take place on:

Wednesday 8th June 2011, to be hosted within the Claughton Ward.