

# AREA FORUM (LISCARD AND SEACOMBE)

Thursday, 17 February 2011

## Present:

Councillor Chair	AER Jones
Councillors	D Dodd K Hayes J Keeley D Knowles
Lead Officer	Mark Smith (Head of Service)
Area Service Co-ordinator	Michelle Gray
Community Representatives	Ken Harrison, Dianne Ledder, Joseph Lee, Carole Thomas
Faith Representative	Father Leon Ostaszewski
Community Safety	Jim Thompson, Steve Preston
Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	Jo Goodfellow
Merseyside Police	Andy Bragg, Mike Barrett
Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service	Tony Mooney
In attendance	David Ball (Head of Strategic Development & regeneration), Ema Boddison (Minute Taker), Peter Cummings (United Utilities), Tony Kenwright (Census Co-ordinator)

## 1 **WELCOME, INTRODUCTION & APOLOGIES:**

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

Apologies were made for the change of room. The Chair, Councillor Adrian Jones, welcomed forum members and 16 members of the public. He then went on to introduce Tony Kenwright and Peter Cummings and David Ball who will be giving presentations. Apologies were received from Cllr John Salter, NHS and Richard Hoare from Arriva who could not attend due to personal reasons however Michelle Gray announced that if anybody had any questions for Richard Hoare they could direct them to her at the end of the meeting or e-mail him on [hoarer@arrivanw.co.uk](mailto:hoarer@arrivanw.co.uk)

## MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF LAST MEETING - INCLUDING AREA CO-ORDINATORS REPORT:

- **Amendments**

On page 3 of the report should read John Drew.

- **Play Builder**

The allocated Play Builder amount for Central Park is £50,000 for play area improvements. The development of the year 2 Playbuilder has been put on hold. The Play Builder grant has been de-ring fenced, and a final decision as to how much grant Wirral will be allocated to complete the year 2 programme has yet to be announced by the government.

We now have £16,000 from Playbuilder to spend on improvements at Central Park. The original allocation of funding for Playbuilder was reduced as part of the Government's Spending Review and we have looked to use that money to do some work on all of the play areas included in the programme rather than reduce the number of sites. Although I commented on the bandstand issue I have no "ownership" of this and do not know who it belongs to at the present time. More particularly I commented on the fact that it was not a functioning bandstand but a shelter that looked like a bandstand!

**Q:** David Hanlon, Central Park, we had Roger Calvert here last time, since then, the football dressing rooms are in a state.

**A:** Cllr Adrian Jones, Money is available for Football Pitches, this will be raised with Roger Calvert. (response received 7<sup>th</sup> April 2011):

- The money that is available for football pitches is for improving the pitches particularly the drainage. The Council has however made funding available over the next two years for pavilions and park buildings and currently a condition survey is being undertaken to help decide what work is required. All Park buildings are now the responsibility of Asset Management in the Department of Law, HR and Asset Management who will be doing the work. Dave Hanlon may however have been referring to the cleanliness of the pavilion which I will bring to the attention of our staff who do the cleaning if there is a problem.

**Q:** Diane Ledder I was astonished to read in the paper that the Council had found £50k to do the shops up. We were wondering if it was the same £50k put aside ring fenced for the park. I have raised this at every meeting. It best not be the play fund money as it was specifically ring fenced to deal with the park.

**Q:** Cllr Adrian Jones, Liscard Hall is no longer with us but when it was there were many meetings about this and £50k was set aside and they want to know if that is the same money.

**Q:** Diane Ledder they said they could not find it for the park and now they have!

**A:** David Ball it is different money, it comes from a grant from central funds.

**Comment:** Carole Thomas needs to be clarified as it is confusing.

(response received from Roger Calvert 7<sup>th</sup> April 2011):

- The money for the shops will not be from this funding as the money for Playbuilder is from Central Government. Wirral are spending the full reduced allocation on the play areas originally identified as part of the initiative;

however this has led to a reduction to the individual schemes – this accounts for the reduction at Central Park from £50 to £16K.

**Q:** Could you explain Wirral's Community budget policy via strategic procedures, who they are and how it works?

**A:** Cllr Adrian Jones, a Chief Officer will have to research and report on it.

**A:** Mark Smith I will certainly take that back with me and report back to you.

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

### 3 **EMPTY SHOPS FUNDING:**

David Ball – explained that the Council had received a government grant of just over £52k and that Cabinet had agreed that this funding should be targeted to three areas - Bromborough District Centre, New Ferry District Centre and Brighton Street/King Street in Egremont.. The money which is split equally in three ways and totals £17,500 for Egremont can be spent to tackle the issues of empty shops which are a major issue in the Egremont area. However, it needs to be noted that the money, though welcome, will not tackle all of the empty shop issues that the area faces.

Cabinet met in early 2011 and wants to work with Area Forums to develop proposals for the funding which will then be reported by to Cabinet for final approval.

Neil Mitchell from the Regeneration Team is the Project Officer and he will work with Members, traders and the Community to develop the proposals for the funding.

**Q:** Cllr Darren Dodd asked why was it decided that none of the money would be spent in Liscard Town Centre the money could be better spent there?

**A:** David Ball said that a report was put to Cabinet which identifies it is a difficult process to allocate funding. The basis used was the current list of vacancy rates which identified areas with the greatest need and Brighton Street and King Street have very high vacancy rates. It should be noted that the Council is working actively with Liscard Traders to address the challenges they face..

**Comment:** Carole Thomas you have been working heavily over the past 2 years with Liscard Traders and have a good working relationship.

**Q:** Father Leon Ostaszewski – Can the money be spent on existing shops?

**A:** David Ball – the money needs to be used to bring empty properties back into some form of productive use.

### 4 **PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE SERVICE PROCUREMENT EXERCISE (PACSPE):**

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

**Q:** Cllr D Knowles been down this route a number of times when delegated the bins to Biffa, Streetscene, Colas, Wirral Partnership Homes and a lot of our workforce works for them now. Can you see one provider looking after parks and gardens as I can think of companies who will look after football pitches and maintain them? Am I jumping ahead?

**A:** Mark Smith at the moment with have existing Council work force protected by TUPE transfer. We ask big providers what the feeling of sub contractor would be and most firms have said they would carry out the work themselves.

**Q:** Father Leon Ostaszewski next year there are no park keepers – is that correct in Central Park?

**A:** Mark Smith we do have Rangers.

**Q:** Cllr Darren Dodd I am not happy with this, we will have to bring in a non local firm as there isn't a local firm big enough.

**A:** Mark Smith it will attract a National Firm with big presence who will set up local office. The Council have various local labour policies to make sure local people employed.

**Q:** Diane Ledder re: allotments at the moment I am a tenant of the Council am I going to cease being a WBC tenant?

**A:** Mark Smith will be kept outside the scope and I can confirm the allotments will be managed the same way.

**Q:** Diane Ledder I am the Chair of Central Park Partnership and since the ranger retired in December I have had a lot of texts, e-mails etc. The Wall Garden is popular and there is no one to make arrangements with for photos, school visits etc. The gardens are not open at weekends and am not happy with this.

**Comment:** Cllr Adrian Jones people in Liscard and Seacombe are aggrieved.

**A:** Mark Smith I will take it away with me.

**Q:** The consultation process was flawed. You said there were four consultations, are these consultations open to the public or are we having to people chosen specifically for this? People are not seeing consultation as meaningful.

**A:** Cllr Adrian Jones I think officers are in a difficult position if they are asked to answer political questions..

**A:** Mark Smith our approach to consultation has a large number of outside stakeholders and user groups. There are extensive meetings with friends and user groups. There is robust equality working with the likes of the Older Peoples Parliament, youth forum and people like that.

**Q:** David Hanlon re: football pitches Central Park and Ryecroft Road are currently very good but in Liscard they are being taken over. Will there be assurances that they will be looked after?

**A:** Mark Smith ongoing process at the moment we want people to come along to the sports workshop and tell us, we had one before Christmas.

**Comment:** Ken Harrison I was at that meeting and it was swamped by bowlers, 80-90 of the people there were bowlers and 4 footballers were there. It is unfair and biased.

**A:** Mark Smith the point here is if there are views and groups of people that we don't know about, then please let us know – we certainly invited more than four! If we were light on footballers then I will take that back with me.

## 5 **WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN YOUR LOCAL AREA:**

**Q:** With regards to the motorbikes along the promenade at weekends, ones with 3 wheels use the beach and I reported them a child had no helmet on. What is happening?

**A:** Andy Bragg it is public land so they need insurance and they certainly should not be on the beach, we are aware of them. We do stop them and they do generally have insurance and once they have been stopped they rarely come back. If they haven't got a helmet on then we would be reluctant to chase them as if they get injured we are responsible.

**A:** Jim Thompson we are doing other things as well. There are a lot of cameras around Wirral which will produce a photo of evidential value and Community Patrol are also on the beach on a regular basis.

**Q:** I have seen quads with no helmets!

**A:** They don't need a helmet as it is 3/4 wheels it is the drivers' choice.

**Q:** Stan Thompson the camera at Magazine Lane, is it working?

**A:** Steve Preston, yes.

**Q:** There is a spate of burglaries at the moment, travelling type have took residence!

**A:** Andy Bragg we are suffering at the moment. As we speak staff are out issuing 2 warrants. There have been a number of arrests. Leaflets highlight to close doors properly and phone numbers are on the news letter. Please be careful, lately people have been kicking footballs over the back walls and when the residents go and get it they get money robbed.

**Comment:** Father Leon Ostaszewski Wirral Partnership Homes hosted a meeting and I would like to thank the Community Safety Team and Police for their input, nice lunch as well.

**Merseyside Fire and Rescue:**

Tony Mooney explained that there was a full report in the papers. (pages 9 – 10)

**Q:** Stan Thompson how is the youth project going?

**A:** Tony Mooney going very well. Duke of Edinburgh and Fire Cadets soon which offers youth club, qualifications and a youth hub. We will also be running obesity and lifestyle classes. Schools will be actively involved and are on board and want us. The Police will be our joint agency so this will give us a good chance of catching them before the anti social behaviour begins.

**Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust:**

Jo Goodfellow Ice and snow in December had our staff walking into work then we had to deal with swine flu and now norovirus which is very difficult to contain. The public have been very good and I would just like to thank the public for bearing with us and staff for their hard work. Announced that the Duchess of Wessex is coming on 2nd March to open the new Women and Children's hospital. There is an extensive report contained in the papers. (Pages 19 – 21)

**Older Peoples Parliament:**

Full report in papers (pages 11 – 15)

**Q:** Stan Thompson – Would like to thank Councillors for the Island at Mariners Park between Lonsdale Centre and Manor Road, there is a dreadful bend there. Most hideous blind bend there but can't seem to get someone to look at it, needs yellow lines.

**A:** Cllr Adrian Jones – Mark will take it back with him

**Q:** Cllr J Keeley – Could the speed activated sign be moved to before the bend?

**A:** Mark Smith – I am quite confident we can move it; I will take it back with me.

**6 GENERAL PUBLIC QUESTION TIME:**

**Q:** What are you doing about dog muck? I believe wardens have been laid off.

**A:** Cllr Adrian Jones there are people who would not qualify for a shot-gun certificate, far less a firearms certificate, but can easily acquire "killer" dogs. Responsible dog owners deserve respect. In my view a new licensing system should be introduced for ownership of large dogs.

**A:** Mark Smith Page 19 of the report details the steps we are taking in tackling dog fouling. Let us know as we do have Enforcement Officers.

**A:** Steve Preston we have funding and we are taking on another 6 and they are going out on their quads tomorrow.

**Comments:**

- Cllr Adrian Jones Streetscene for dog foul number is 666 5256
- Jim Thompson we have given out 1000s of bags to people in parks.
- Pavements in Wallasey Road, Liscard are a disgrace.
- Cllr James Keeney – camera in that road has collapsed in front of Barclays.
- Carole Thomas – by St Peter and Paul's Church grit bins on Atherton Road, that was gritted but the other side was not gritted at all. Gorse hill was not gritted either. People who live there were cut off and it is a main access to schools.

**Q:** Father Leon Ostaszewski – Belvedere Road condition is worse and it is not due to the bad weather.

**A:** Mark Smith – surfacing on the Belvedere Road will commence in next years programme, I have an e-mail here off Chris Jones.

**Q:** Cllr Karen Hayes – behind Iceland in Liciscard, the grid is lose and banging all day can you take that back please Mark?

**Comments:**

- Carole Thomas – bus stop behind McDonalds, I have seen cars parked and then they drive away on their phones.
- Cllr James Keeley – I have witnessed Police issue fixed penalties on a number of occasions.
- Andy Bragg – This area is policed.

**History Day:**

Father Leon Ostaszewski – announced that on Saturday 5th March at Birkenhead Town Hall, 10am – 4pm is a History Day, there will be 40 stands and it is free.

The Chair Cllr Adrian Jones thanked all who attended and closed the meeting and announced the next area forum would take place on Tuesday 21st June 2011 venue to be confirmed.

**AOB:**

- **Information was available at the forum meeting on the following topics:**

**United Utilities:** Information cards were available detailing the programme of works for the area. Website also gives up to date information, as is updated daily. Peter said there will be full consultation with residents, including letters, leaflets drops, adverts in paper etc.

**Census 2011**

The census is a snapshot of the whole population and gathers data on how many people live here, how we live our lives, how many children we have, if we have a car etc, it also collects data about what services we need in our area, like schools, hospitals, houses, roads & transport to name just a few. Census Day is scheduled for 27<sup>th</sup> March 2011. Wirral's Census 10 years ago, had a really good return however it was recorded that about 6% did not return forms and this cost around £13 million in funding for Wirral.

**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](http://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

**Merseytravel:**

- David Hanlan handed Michelle Gray a Merseytravel Passenger Reporting Form this will be available at all future meetings for residents to raise transport issues