

# AREA FORUM (NEW BRIGHTON AND WALLASEY)

Wednesday, 22 October 2008

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	P Hayes (Chair)	
	Councillors	W Duffey A Pritchard L Rennie	S Taylor K Wood
<u>In attendance:</u>	Councillors		
<u>Community representatives</u>		Peter Dickinson	Barry Humphreys (New Brighton Community Partnership)
<u>Business representative</u>		Martin Revans	
<u>Faith representative</u>		Clare Robertson	
<u>Older People's Parliament representative</u>		Joe Fish	
<u>Lead Officer</u>		David Green (Director of Technical Services)	
<u>Area Service Co-ordinator</u>		Andy Brannan	
<u>Merseyside Police</u>		Inspector Julie Fletcher	Inspector Mark Smith
<u>Merseyside Fire &amp; Rescue Service</u>		Tony Mooney	
<u>Primary Care Trust</u>		Shymal Mukherjee	
<u>Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Trust Apologies</u>		Rod Jones	
		Chris Jones (Streetscene Manager)	Inspector Peter Kolokotroni
		Bob Little (Community Safety Team)	

## 1 **WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES**

The Chair, Councillor Paul Hayes, welcomed the forum members and 15 members of the public to the meeting of the Area Forum at Wallasey Sea Cadets, and thanked the Sea Cadets for their hospitality.

A safety briefing was given by a member of the Sea Cadets.

## 2 **AREA CO-ORDINATORS REPORT**

The Area Co-ordinator, Andy Brannan, gave an overview of his report, copies of which were available for members of the public at the meeting. The minutes of the meeting of the Area Forum on 25 June 2008 and matters arising were included on pages 3-13 of the report, and asked if anyone wished to raise any issues on these:

### Issues raised / Matters arising:

Minute 1 – paragraph 2: Councillor Taylor requested that the “Friends of Tower Gardens” be amended to read “Friends of Tower Grounds”

Minute 4 – paragraph 6: Councillor Wood requested that this be amended to mention Church opposite St George’s school and to reflect that it is not the pupils of this school causing the problems.

Matters Arising – paragraph 1: Cynthia Stonehall (Bravo) requested that this be amended to reflect that it was the drinkers on the pavement who were targeting passers by.

The Chair agreed that the minutes will be amended to reflect these points.

Minute 2 – paragraph 2: Dave Hanlon informed the forum that the drainage problem at Wallace Park has gotten worse and asked what the Council plans to do about this.

Councillor Rennie – the Council are still looking into this matter, which is also affecting the surrounding residential properties. Bob Beresford from the Environmental Health department is looking into the problem. Councillor Wood added that United Utilities are also involved in this.

The Chair informed the forum that the issue of the early removal of goal post from playing fields has been resolved as details of fixtures have been passed to the Council. Dave Hanlon added that a copy of the fixtures had been sent to Leisure Services and the last fixture for the junior League is 11<sup>th</sup> June.

Minute 4 – page 7 – paragraph 2: Councillor Wood informed the forum that seven police officers have been allocated to schools and that a detailed report on this will be issued by Merseyside Police. Four officers were allocated to Wirral schools earlier this year, and a further three have been allocated. New recruits have been employed to replace neighbourhood officers that were moved to Croxteth following the Rees Jones murder.

Page 13 – Item 4: The Area Co-ordinator informed the forum that the Wirral HART (Home Assessment and Re-enablement Team) will remain within the Council and will offer an intense 1 – 2 week period of re-enablement. If further daily care service is needed, then independent companies will be brought in to offer this.

The member of the public that raised this issue informed the forum that his concern was to do with employment and not the service to the client. The Area Co-ordinator agreed to respond to this at the next meeting.

Page 13 – Item 5: The Area Co-ordinator informed the forum that four new signs have been placed down the Promenade end of the park, and this will be monitored. Further signs will be added if required.

The Area Co-ordinator informed the forum that the following were available at the meeting:

- Forms for the nomination of roads requiring repair for consideration in the next round of the roads maintenance programme
- Information leaflets on repair work / accessibility by Merseyrail
- Exhibition / information on the Probation Service (Barry Humphreys will be available at the end of the meeting to answer any questions on this service).
- Respect Bus, brought along by Alf Mullin from the Community Safety Team, for visiting at the end of the meeting.

He also informed the forum that funding is still available through the forums and requested that details of any groups that may be able to benefit from this be passed to him as soon as possible as the closing date for applications is 12 noon on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2008.

The Chair thanked the Area Co-ordinator for his report

**Minute Decision:**

**Resolved that:**

- (i) **The Area Co-ordinator be thanked for his report**
- (ii) **The minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2008 and matters arising be amended to reflect the issues raised**
- (iii) **The Area Co-ordinator respond to issue over employment of members of Wirral HART at the next forum meeting**

**3 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME / ARE FORUM PARTNER UPDATES**

The Chair informed the forum that the partners would provide updates, to be followed by any questions from the audience.

Councillor Rennie informed the forum that Governors of the Wirral Hospital Trust were at the meeting and available to answer questions.

**Merseyside Police**

Inspector Julie Fletcher (New Brighton) informed the forum that a report was included on page 23 of the Area Co-ordinators report. Eight warrants were issued in the last week leading to three arrests. Stolen property was recovered from Cash Converters in Liscard, which will lead to further arrests.

Inspector Mark Smith (Wallasey Village) informed the forum that the crime level is down by 21% compared to last year, with the rise of one area (robbery). There have been seven thefts from motor vehicles. Eight youths have been taken back to school under a truancy initiative.

The Chair thanked the Inspector Fletcher and Inspector Smith for their updates and the following questions / issues were raised:

- The Police were commended for their informative newsletter and the professional way the counterfeit operation was handled.
- Inspector Fletcher informed the forum that anyone wishing to regularly receive the newsletter should pass on their details at the end of the meeting. Inspector Smith added that a newsletter for the Wallasey area was also available and anyone wishing to receive this should pass on their details at the end of the meeting.
- Cynthia Stonehall (BRAVO) – how are complaints re: public houses passed to the licensing officer?
- Inspector Fletcher - the licensing team is based upstairs, so we can pass this on directly and they then arrange a visit, usually within a week. Sergeant Pete Bioletty added that this works very well and plans are put into place quickly.
- Dave Hanlon – asked what was planned for schools that do not have an officer attached to them.
- Councillor Wood – the Area Commander has responsibility for this, the officer, Constable Colin Garland, based as Mosslands will cover the schools and Wallasey Village. Inspector Smith – the Area Commander picked 11 schools initially, and this may be rolled out following further re-evaluation.
- What is happening over the security and future of St. Peter and Paul's Church in Atherton Street?
- Chair – there are no updates available at the moment, but I am involved in the campaign to get the church re-opened and used for its former purpose. DAT have asked for the windows to be secured. Councillor Pritchard added that he is working with the conservation officers on the future of this Grade II listed building, and that he would also like to see this being used as a church again, and is hoping to arrange for a petition to keep a church in Liscard. Clare Robertson introduced herself as the new faith representative on the forum; she has always lived in the borough and is part of Wirral Churches Together. Wirral Churches Together is grateful for the support from the Council and Community for this important landmark. A newsletter covering the campaign was available at the meeting. The results of an appeal, to the Shrewsbury Diocese, are being awaited. She asked if the Police had been involved in the issue over security of the building and was informed that they had not.

## **Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service**

Tony Mooney informed the forum that an update was available on page 24 of the Area Co-ordinators Report. The normal integrated plan to reduce nuisance re: fireworks and bonfires has been put in place, and we are trying to add education to the initiative. Fire fighters have been delivering talks at schools and have arranged a poster competition with schools covering the danger of fireworks, this is going well. We are checking out sites, with the Probation Service, concentrating in areas with the most anti-social behaviour to reduce risks. New legislation is in place re: fireworks and information has been passed out to traders of fireworks and checks, with Licensing, are being carried out to ensure that the fireworks are stored correctly.

The Winter Warm Campaign – we are testing electric blankets and will also be running a pilot scheme PAT testing Christmas lights. We will be at Tritton Drive in Leasowe on 29<sup>th</sup> November running these tests. If the checking of Christmas lights proves to be successful the project will be rolled out further.

The Chair thanked the Tony Mooney for his update and the following questions / issues were raised:

- Vale Park Pensioners Lunch Club have a minibus that is used for picking up people for the club. The bus requires an MOT and has been with Wirral Community Transport waiting for this to be carried out. In the meantime a local resident has been picking up the pensioners, but has broken her ankle and can no longer do this. Does the Fire Service have its own mechanics and if so would they be able to help maintain the vehicle?
- Tony Mooney – there are a number of community transport providers on Merseyside that would be more suitable for helping out on this, and will discuss this in more detail at the end of the meeting.

Councillor Pritchard –

1. Who will monitor the storage of fireworks at shops that just open for the sale of these?
2. What sort of action can be taken and how long does it take?
3. Is there a special insurance to cover such businesses?

Tony Mooney

1. There is a licensing regime covering 400+ licences. Fire staff are asked to report any new premises, and members of the public can also report these by calling 0151 296 4607.
2. If a trader is unlicensed; the fireworks are not stored correctly; or too many are out on display (there is a 2kg net explosive content limit) they can be sized immediately. The storage needs to be monitored to ensure that dummy boxes are placed in windows and the fireworks are stored in cabinets. We are working closely with Trading Standards and the Police to ensure that the legislation is followed.
3. Not sure about special insurance, but can find out and report back on this.

Dave Hanlon

1. Who is responsible for setting the dates when fireworks can be sold, as feel that 15th October to 10th November is too long?
2. Are there any local bonfires or firework displays planned for Wallasey this year?
3. Is there to be a community bonfire night this year?
4. The Mayor has been asked to hold a civic reception for Wirral residents that took part in the World Fire Fighters games. Councillor Rennie requested that this be extended to include volunteers.

Tony Mooney

1. This is set nationally and any requests for changes to this would need to be made to Central Government.
2. There will be six in this forum area, including one at Central Park. A full list is available on the RESPECT bus.

Chair

3. Former Councillor Hackett volunteered to look into this at a previous forum, however no information has been fed back for the forum to update the minutes.
4. This would be well-received and the Area Co-ordinator will look into this.

Councillor Wood congratulated the Fire and Police Services for the safety improvements made re: bonfire night and requested that they keep up the good work.

### **Older People's Parliament**

Joe Fish informed the forum that a report was available at the meeting and that:

- A committee has been set up to look at our constitution.
- The Department of Works and Pensions has been contacted to add weight to issues such as level of the basic state pension and cost of fuel.
- We have increased number of members on policy making groups to help influence and improve services for older people.
- We are working with Tracey Smith, from Wirral Council's Community Engagement Team, and Jamie Anderson, from Age Concern Wirral, to set the Parliament's aims for next year.
- More associate members are needed; if anyone is interested in joining the Parliament please see me at the end of the meeting.

The Chair thanked Joe Fish for his update and the following questions / issues were raised:

- Dave Hanlon – congratulated the Parliament on the report and asked how many people had already joined the Parliament, as there were a large number of people in attendance at the recent crime and respect meeting.
- Joe Fish – there are 600 associate members; 44 standing members and 10 executive committee members. The crime and respect meeting was actually an away day organised by the Parliament and we had a good response to this.

### **Primary Care Trust**

Dr Shymal Mukerjee informed the forum that an update was included on page 28 of the Area Co-ordinators report. No questions / issues were raised.

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

Rod Jones informed the forum that an update was included on page 29 of the Area Co-ordinators report. The Trust has been improving its' standards, further information on this was available at the meeting. Our rate under the Annual Health Check for 2007/08 was as follows:

- Quality of services – good
- Use of resources - excellent

The Governors of the Trust added that forms to apply to become a governor were available at the meeting and more information can be obtained from the main reception at Arrowse Park Hospital.

The Chair thanked Rod Jones and the Governors and no questions / issues were raised.

### **General Public Questions:**

- The improvements along the promenade are appreciated, and Street Scene should be thanked for this achievement. However the doors of some of the new black cast bins, by Vale Park, have been broken and seven of the bins have had the doors left open after being emptied.
- Dave Green agreed to feed this back to the Street Scene team and Inspector Fletcher noted the damage.
- Cynthia Radford (BRAVO) – the alleyway at Balmoral Road and Victoria Road has sunk in several places and it is dangerous at night and when taking wheelie bins along. This had been reported several times, could the possibility of it being re-surfaced be reviewed?
- Dave Green – will take more details at the end of the meeting, look into this and report back.
- Martin Revans – who can we approach to find out more about Wirral Waters project and China's involvement?
- Councillor Rennie – Kevin Adderley, Head of Strategic Development (0151 691 8187) will be able to provide more information on this.
- Peter Dickinson (West Wallasey Village) – raised concerns over proposals to develop a closer working relationship with China, given the current financial climate; tourism probably not being high on the average persons list of things to do; and China's track record on human rights issues. He also asked why the Council had placed large deposits within the Icelandic Bank and requested more transparency over such issues.
- The Chair thanked Peter for raising these concerns and confirmed that these will be raised wherever possible. Councillor Rennie added that the human rights issue had been raised by a number of Councillors and that Councillor

Foulkes agreed to raise this with the mayor of Suzhou whilst visiting China. The Director of Finance had been asked about the investment and commented that the Icelandic Bank was rated as a AAA Bank and it was considered to be a wise investment.

- A member of the public added that the Merseyside Pension Fund had also invested funding in this bank and asked how much was the visit to China costing.
- Councillor Rennie – £8,000. Ken Hurst (Wallasey Lions Club) – added that the funding could have been spent locally, on a youth club in Wallasey Village.

#### Ken Hurst

1. Are there going to be Christmas lights in Wallasey Village? Last year Ken Glass, Wirral Warden, helped raise  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the cost required through fundraising?
  2. Rugby Road is in need of repair.
  3. The wagons from NP double glazing firm are causing damage, blockages which could lead to an accident. Can anything be done about this?
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1. Councillor Rennie – Wallasey Village Traders arranged the Christmas lights last year, please write and ask Councillor Foulkes for the latest position on this. Councillor Pritchard added that Wallasey Village will be putting up Christmas lights and we hope to have Christmas lights at New Brighton this year.
  2. Councillor Rennie – requested that this be placed on the roads maintenance form available at the meeting. Dave Green agreed to feed this back.
  3. Councillor Wood – this is an established business so cannot be moved. Councillor Rennie added that the only success the Council has had has been stopping the firm from building frames, through serving an enforcement notice under the Environmental Protection Act. Dave Green agreed to liaise with Council Officers and the Police on this.
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- Stoneacres garage store cars taken for part exchange on the street taking up local residents spaces. They have outgrown their premises, block the thoroughfare and double park.
  - Councillor Duffey – we have tried to resolve this, but the company are not actually trading on the street. Residents from the flats nearby were fined for parking on yellow lines, but the fines were returned as they had no option due to all the spaces being taken by the company. It would take a lot of pressure from local residents to try and resolve this. Angela Eagle is involved in trying to find a solution to this. Councillor Pritchard added that he has also taken up the issue of part-exchange cars being parked on the street and has called in the Enforcement Officers to look into this, but if the cars are taxed nothing can be done about this.
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- Is there anything in the road traffic act re: transporters double parking or parking on the main road?
  - Dave Green – we have tried to resolve this on many occasions, but if a vehicle is taxed and insured they have a legal right to park on the highway. If



a vehicle is causing an obstruction the Police are responsible for dealing with the issue. He agreed to get the premises looked at again.

- The transporter is often double parked, blocking off the road, which is not wide enough to take two rows of parked cars, a transporter and a bus.
- Chair – requested that the Police, Councillors and Council Officers discuss this in more detail at the end of the meeting.
- The parking bays in Seabank Road are being taken up with cars from the car dealership
- Dave Green – fixed penalty notices have been issued to tackle this, and will try and put additional resources to resolve this. Councillor Pritchard added that have tried to get parking bays with limited parking to resolve this and it is still being looked into.

#### Residents of Belvidere Road

1. Stones have been placed at the entrance to Oldershaw Rugby Club and these are being thrown by youths at the Belvidere Centre and into residents' gardens. They have also started to dismantle a wall and are throwing the bricks from this, smashing windows. The problem is now much worse and the youths can't be tackled, as will start to target the houses. Was planning permission given for the path to the field and would it be possible to have the stones removed to prevent future problems?
  2. Cars have been parked so that they block the road to the Belvidere Centre since the brick wall was removed.
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1. Dave Green agreed to take further details at the end of the meeting, check if planning permission was granted, but explained that if it is a private road then the Council has no jurisdiction under planning laws. He agreed to look into this issue and report back on this. Councillor Rennie added that Alan Stennard has been looking at the fencing and should be contacted regarding this.
  2. Dave Green agreed to arrange an appointment with Chris Jones (Street Scene Manager) and the club to try and resolve this. PCSO added that have tried to resolve this with the Council and that the Rugby Club lease the land from the Council.
- Cynthia Stonehall (BRAVO) – cars are parking on the pavement in the Virginia Road area, as the off-street parking provision was full. Tickets were issued, but the motorists had nowhere else to park. The Theatre / Conference Centre will create an even high demand for parking in the area, what plans are there for ensuring that there is sufficient parking provision for this?
  - Councillor Pritchard – petitions and suggestions have been put forward to try and resolve these problems, e.g. removal of the planters, but with no success. The area is targeted on Saturdays by traffic wardens. He requested that Dave Green look into this issue. Dave added that this was a complicated land deal and the Council have had some benefits from this. There is no funding available for structural work but will arrange for the yellow lines to be looked at.

- Councillor Pritchard – could the Victoria Road area be considered for a residents parking scheme?
- Dave Green – 80% of residents must agree to pay for such a scheme to be introduced. The average cost is £100 to set up and £10 a year to maintain. He agreed to discuss this in more detail at the end of the meeting.
- Town Square / Chelsea Plaza – are complexes of 31 flats with 16 parking spaces / 37 flats with 28 parking spaces.
- Chair – Dave Green and the Councillors will take these views on board.

**Minute Decision:**

**Resolved that:**

- (i) **The partners be thanked for their updates**
- (ii) **The Area Co-ordinator to look into possibility of holding a civic reception for Wirral residents taking part and volunteering in the World Fire Fighters Games 2008**
- (iii) **Dave Green to report back on alleyway at Balmoral Road / Victoria Road**
- (iv) **Dave Green to liaise with Council Officers / Police over problems caused by NP Glazing**
- (v) **Dave Green to arrange for issues raised re: Stoneacres Garage to be looked into**
- (vi) **Dave Green to look into situation re: Oldershaw Rugby Club entrance**
- (vii) **Dave Green to set up a meeting with Chris Jones and Oldershaw Rugby Club to discuss issue of removal of brick wall and cars blocking the entrance to the Belvidere Centre**
- (viii) **Dave Green to look into parking issues / yellow lines in the Victoria Road area**
- (ix) **The Area Co-ordinator to look into issues raised by Peter Dickinson on the benefits of working closer with Suzhou; the £8000.00 spent on the trip to China; why the Council had placed large deposits within the Icelandic Bank; and why isn't there more transparency over such issues**

**4 NEW BRIGHTON AND WALLASEY AREA FORUM 'YOU DECIDE' RESULTS**

The Chair informed the forum that the results from the questionnaires completed were considered, following the publicity campaign, and the £20,000 of funding available under You Decide was allocated as follows:

- £5,000 litter bins
- £4,000 youth and sport activities
- £3,000 respect bus
- £3,000 household security locks for vulnerable people
- £2,500 litter pickups

- £2,500 graffiti removal

This will be allocated evenly between the New Brighton and Wallasey wards and will be reported on in more detail at the next meeting.

**Minute Decision: Resolved that the Chair to report back further on the allocation of the You Decide funding at the next meeting.**

## 5 **FUTURE MEETINGS/PRESENTATIONS**

The next meeting will be held on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2009 at venue to be confirmed.

## 6 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no further business and the Chair thanked everyone for attending, and invited them to visit the Probation Service stand and the respect bus. He closed the meeting at 8.40pm.

## 7 **EXHIBITION STANDS FROM THE FOLLOWING:**

- Wirral Anti Social Behaviour Respect Team (Respect Bus)
- Merseyside Probation Service