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CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE - BIRKENHEAD

Wednesday, 14 June 2017

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	G Davies (Chair)	
	Councillors	A Brighouse WJ Davies S Foulkes C Meaden T Norbury J Stapleton P Cleary	B Kenny P Doughty A Davies S Kelly Wood J McManus
<u>Apologies</u>	Councillors	M McLaughlin P Davies	D Realey AR McLachlan

1 APPPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

The Legal Advisor to the Committee invited nominations for the appointment of the Chair.

On a motion by Councillor C Meaden, seconded by Councillor P Doughty, it was –

Resolved – That Councillor George Davies be appointed Chair of the Birkenhead Constituency Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

The Legal Advisor to the Committee then requested nominations for appointment of Vice-Chair.

On a motion by Councillor S Foulkes and seconded by Councillor P Doughty, it was –

Resolved – That Councillor Moira McLaughlin be appointed Vice-Chair of the Birkenhead Constituency Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

2 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT- DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary interests or any other relevant interest in connection with any items on the agenda and if so to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

No such declarations were made.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Davies, A McLachlan, M McLaughlin and D Realey.

4 MINUTES

Resolved – That the minutes of the Birkenhead Constituency Committee held on 30 March, 2017, be approved.

5 WIRRAL YOUTH ZONE, THE HIVE

Stuart Barnes, Chief Executive of the Wirral Youth Zone, The Hive, gave a presentation to Members of the Committee.

He reported that the Hive had opened in April and that it was the eighth similar project in the country. It had been developed by a charity called On Sick Youth Zones who had formed a local charity – Wirral Youth Zone which was an independent charity with a strong private sector involvement.

Mr Barnes advised that a target had been set for twenty similar projects to be open by 2020 and it was believed that the Hive was the best facility for young people in the country. Twenty activities were provided at every session which included sports, boxing, a fitness suite, a climbing wall, arts, a multi media room, a music room, a salon, cooking, a skate park and a football pitch. It was hoped that the Hive would help young people achieve their potential and development in a safe supportive environment and employability and enterprise programmes were available. Members were informed that there was a joining fee of £5 per year with a charge of 50p per visit and that the facility was open on weekends, evenings, school holidays and Bank holidays.

Members heard that the Hive was already having an impact by way of positive experiences and that youths had been provided with confidence and self-esteem and that staff at the premises were polite and engaged with the young people.

Mr Barnes stated that there had been a projected target to gain 3,000 members within the first twelve months, however, this had already been exceeded with a membership of 4,200 from every ward across Wirral. He advised that sixty jobs had been created which was likely to increase and that 150 volunteers were expected by September. Mr Barnes expressed his confidence that there would be a reduction in anti-social behaviour in the area as other zones had seen a reduction of 52-77%. A young leaders project was also being developed to support young people to be fit for work and fit for life. Members were informed that young people had always been at the heart of the project by having had ongoing consultation and input and had influenced the design of the building.

Finally it was reported that there were 22 founder patrons on board by way of local businesses, there was ongoing consultation, collaboration and partnership with young people, local companies and other organisations and there was a common goal which was to support the future of the Borough's young people.

In response to questions from Members, Mr Barnes advised that there had been a lack of support in respect of transport, however extra funding had since been secured and that a mini bus would be travelling to areas where fewer young people were coming from. He advised that there were close working links with Magenta and it was also hoped that connections with Merseytravel would be pursued.

Members expressed their appreciation in respect of the potential reduction in anti-social behaviour in the area. Mr Barnes advised that there had been a reduction in the last three months. He believed that a positive relationship had been maintained with other local youth clubs and advised that there was no intention to compete with other provisions.

The Chair thanked Mr Barnes for his presentation in respect of the fantastic facilities that had been provided and requested that he report back in a year's time.

Resolved – That Mr Barnes be thanked for his presentation.

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WIRRAL SPORTS DEVELOPMENT POSITIVE FUTURES

Two representatives from Birkenhead North Youth Project, Mr D Kevlin and Mr L Copson, gave a presentation to Members of the Committee.

They advised that the aim of Gautby Road Youth Club was to target young people who were causing anti-social behaviour. They informed Members that they had been employed to do outreach work and had started the youth club three nights per week which was funded by Magenta Living, also that they are community support workers as part of the ILM project. They reported that there had been 50 young people in attendance on the first session of opening and that they paid a sub to enter the building and had the option of a hot meal which was free of charge. Dan and Luke advised that there were a range of activities on offer which included sports development – karate, boxing, martial arts, DJ and rapping sessions, a computer room, hair and beauty, table tennis, gaming including FIFA tournaments, a pool table and dance sessions.

Members were informed that the project's principles were to work together to improve the area and the lives of children and to direct them on the right path in life. It was reported that there had been a reduction in anti-social behaviour

in the area. A social supermarket was also provided where food was sourced from Fair Share and free fruit and vegetables was donated by Tesco.

Mr Kevlin and Mr Copson referred to the In Bloom project and advised that they had taken over some land situated next to the premises and had personally worked to clear the land from overgrowth and debris and had installed planters. Children from the nursery and play scheme had also been involved.

The Chair thanked the representatives of the Birkenhead North Youth Project for their presentation.

Members expressed their thanks for the work that had been undertaken and hoped that the funding for this project would continue.

R Portbury, Merseyside Police, addressed the Committee. He thanked Mr Kevlin and Mr Copson for their extremely hard work in tackling the problems of anti-social behaviour in the area. He stated that funding was required for smaller youth clubs such as this.

Councillor McManus reiterated the thanks given to Mr Kevlin and Mr Copson for the dramatic improvement in the reduction of anti-social behaviour in the area and expressed her concern at the lack of funding available.

Colin Hunt, Sports Development Officer addressed the Committee and advised that the concept of a doorstep club was being developed which provided activities on the doorstep of where young people live. He reported that the number of calls received in respect of anti-social behaviour had been reduced to four from twenty four per week and also hoped that there had been a reduction in the number of fires that had been started.

Members discussed the necessity for projects such as the Birkenhead North Youth Project and the Hive to work together and the fact that they would all be seeking funding. Mr Barnes, Chief Executive of the Wirral Youth Zone, The Hive advised that he would work together with the Birkenhead North Youth Project in respect of funding.

Resolved – That Mr Kevlin and Mr Copson be thanked for their presentation.

Members were advised that this matter had been withdrawn prior to the meeting.

ENVIRONMENTAL GROT SPOTS CONTRACT

The Birkenhead Constituency Manager advised that there would be a continuation of the fund from the previous year and requested that should any hotspots on private land be identified, the team be notified by email.

Members discussed the definition of what would be considered as grot spots on private land and the Constituency Manager advised that it must be to the detriment of the environment, pieces of land that have gone downhill such as fly tipping and dumping.

Resolved – That the verbal report be noted.

BIRKENHEAD CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE

The Birkenhead Constituency Committee Manager presented her report that provided an update on progress in relation to agreed schemes of work from the budget devolved to the Constituency Committee to date. The report also provided details of other Birkenhead Constituency Committee neighbourhood projects.

The Constituency Manager provided a verbal summary and update on progress for each item of report that included:

- Skip Fund, Community Partnership days and Clean-ups - 91 skips had been provided for 2016/17 and officer support had been given for over 36 Community Clear Ups and Action Days at the cost of around £11,880 from the skip fund budget. It had been estimated that roughly 108 tonnes of waste had been removed. A number of community partnership days had been planned for March and April and some dates still to be confirmed.
- The ‘Community Pay Back’ Team - A programme of alleyway week clearing and cleansing for Birkenhead had been delivered by the Community Pay Back team. They had completed over 60 jobs for the Birkenhead Constituency Committee.
- Birkenhead in Bloom 2017 - 16 awards had been won at the RHS North West in Bloom competition last year with Oxton winning the cup. There were a number of proposed projects planned and the aim was to submit more applications and build on current projects.
- Food hubs and holiday food projects updates - Updates were provided in respect of St James Centre, Beechwood, Neighbourhood Planning, Volunteering Programme, Community Boxing Club, Rock Ferry Food Hub, Gautby Road Community Centre and Livingstone Street Centre.

A number of projects had been funded for 2017 which would be delivered during school holidays, before or after school.

- Improving Life Chances Community Pilots - The aims of the Improving Life Chances Steering Group were: Improving life chances for children; supporting families to be financially resilient; tackling the immediate impacts of poverty and supporting parents into sustainable employment. Task groups had been set up in Bidston and St James and Seacombe wards to target specific areas experiencing high child poverty. The aims and actions that had been established were set out within the report.
- BID team, Connectors and Assets update – The Business Improvement District Team were continuing their diverse town centre activity to support the retail area in Birkenhead and a programme of events had been set for 2017. The Community Connectors Project's target was to engage with 1,885 individuals across the specified wards and their role was to provide support for individuals to access local community activity to improve their wellbeing and as appropriate, their readiness for employment. The Birkenhead Assets Update referred to The Beechwood Centre which had taken over the Beechwood Community Centre and would be providing an expanded food hub, community café, soft play area, sports hall, community room, play scheme and much more for the local community. The Beaconsfield Centre was being operated by Neo café which had a food hub, youth club, residents association, bingo, advice and guidance, community garden and much more.

Resolved – That the progress and updates set out in the Constituency Manager’s report be noted.

10 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The Chair referred to a number of pre-raised questions that had been received by the Committee and the responses provided as appended to the minutes.

11 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE CHAIR - MERSEYTRAVEL

The Birkenhead Constituency Manager referred to the public feedback which had been sought on proposals for a modern Wirral bus network. She urged people to complete the online survey by 22 June 2017.

The Constituency Manager reported that there would be three drop-in events where members of the public could speak to Merseytravel staff about the proposals which would take place on 16, 19 and 21 June 2017.

Councillor Foulkes advised that Merseytravel was now a Sub-Committee of Liverpool Combined Authority. He referred to the levy which would hopefully be reduced and urged people to consider the proposals and make suggestions.

Members discussed the impact the proposals may have and the opportunity to challenge this and whether factual information would have to be provided.

Resolved – That the deadline of 22 June for completion of the online survey be noted.

12 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS ACCEPTED BY THE CHAIR - TRIBUTE TO LATE COUNCILLOR DENISE ROBERTS

The Chair announced that a plaque would be unveiled and a tree planted at Tam O'Shanter Farm at 12.00pm on 17 June 2017 in memory of late Councillor Denise Roberts.

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Birkenhead Constituency Committee

Pre-raised questions for 14th June 2017.

1 Name: Krista Wielopolska
Date Received: 31st May

Query: Near where I live on Noctorum Lane there is a small area of unused grass on the way to the medical centre on Townfield Lane. Many people walk past this area and I feel it could be put to better use without much effort from the council. If it were planted with wildflower seeds and left to grow into a small meadow, not only would it be less work for the council gardening team (no mowing), but it would attract wildlife and be pleasant to look at.

Response from Birkenhead Constituency Team:

Messages have been left with Krista Wielopolska to discuss exactly which piece of land she is highlighting as there are a number of possibilities within that particular area.

2 Name: Rob Burn
Date Received: 31st May

Query: Would it be possible for the Committee to encourage the Council to ask residents, and particularly business residents, to cut-back and control shrubs and trees that encroach over pavements. Unfortunately, in several areas the growth in shrubbery, such as that surrounding Beechcroft Nursing Home on Kingsmead Road North, means that for tall people it is often more comfortable, but more dangerous, to walk in the road than on the pavement.

Response from Technical Services:

If any locations or areas of concern are raised with Wirral Council, the owners of the property will be written to advising they will have to address the problem.

Beechcroft Nursing Home has been logged on to the councils CRM system which will result in it being passed to a highways inspector to examine if the trees and shrubbery are causing problems on the highway and will be addressed if need be.

3) Name: Margret Wycherley

Date Received: 31st May

Query: What are the plans to stop speeding motorists in the Budworth Road/Beryl Road area? There is going to be a serious accident Can sleeping policemen and lower speed limits be used, as have been recently introduced in other areas of Oxton? I perceive this area to be a greater risk to pedestrians and motorists safety than the streets where traffic calming measures were recently introduced.

Response from Road Safety Department:

That most recent scheme introduced in Oxton was around Birkenhead Sixth Form Academy. This scheme was prioritised because of specific planning conditions made when the Birkenhead Sixth Form Academy School was remodelled. There are also 3 schools in the immediate vicinity who will benefit from the scheme.

When investigating speeding on certain roads it is difficult to look at the road in isolation as any speeding measures introduced on one road has a knock on effect on surrounding roads. Because of this further investigation work would have to be done to look at the issues facing Beryl and Budworth Roads and what that would do to neighbouring roads.

Community Speedwatch

Merseyside Police and Wirral Council urge people concerned over speeding traffic on our roads to join the Community Speedwatch programme.

Community Speedwatch allows residents concerned about speeding in their local area to monitor the speed of motorists using radar guns. The scheme aims to tackle areas where the dangers of careless driving and speeding are a real concern to local people. Speeding motorists are sent warning letters, which also explain the problems their speeding causes for people living in the area.

The presence of Speedwatch volunteers can encourage drivers to slow down, raise their awareness of speed as an issue and make the location safer.

For more information on becoming a Community Speedwatch volunteer, visit the [Merseyside Police website](#).

4 Name: Andrew Shute

Date Received:

Query: Grange Mount remains a prolific area for vehicles exceeding the speed limit, by its shape and the hill that starts in the region of Alfred Road lends itself to excess speeds, as a driver with 40+ years experience who drives in excess of 40,000 a year I recognise speeding and I've seen vehicles passing my house at speeds as high as circa 60mph both down hill and up hill

though it's fair to say most speeders are in the region of 40mph but way too fast & dangerous given the chicane effect between Ravenscroft & Alfred Road. Fact is this road needs permanent speed calming measures before people are injured or killed and the risk of vehicular damage is incurred. Add to this I've reported at least one number plateless scrambler bike on the street to the Police too.

dog mess continues to be an issue in the area and I've personally challenged two individuals who allowed their dogs to defecate and leave it on the pavement close to my house, one stating "I forgot to bring out a bag sorry" the other telling me "fu*# off it's just a pebble" (of excrement). Should there not be a bye-law that ensures dog walkers if challenged by a council enforcement team should be able to produce spare 'poo bags'? I accept that wouldn't make much difference in Grange Mount for I'm certain your enforcement team cannot find Grange Mount on a map!

Response from Wirral Council:

Traffic Calming:

Traffic calming measures are generally very effective in slowing traffic and in the right circumstances improving road safety. Sadly they tend to cost a significant amount of money to implement and recommendations for physical traffic calming measures are predominantly formed arising out of detailed investigations into the history of road crashes within a road or more likely a concise area.

Previous investigation of the road safety history on this road shows that it has a comparatively good road safety record over the last 5 years. There has been one recorded injury crash in this period throughout the length of Grange Mount – this incident occurred in January 2011 and the police have noted that it occurred in frost/icy road conditions when 2 opposing vehicles skidded and collided with a parked vehicle. It is considered unlikely that traffic calming measures would necessarily have prevented this incident.

Residents have previously been encouraged to consider becoming a police volunteer and engaging with the Community Speedwatch initiative to help make drivers more aware of their speed on such roads (without the need for formal prosecutions). We would again encourage residents who are concerned over the speed of traffic to consider this initiative. They can apply to join this, by visiting the police website and selecting volunteering.

Dog Fouling:

Dog Fouling Enforcement Officers regularly patrol that area but are only able to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice for Dog Fouling if they have witnessed the offence take place.

A number of fixed penalties have been issued in the area. If anyone witnesses an offence taking place or their road is of continued concern they should log it

onto the council website. Residents are always encouraged to report all issues onto the website as it allows the council to collate statistics regarding hotspot areas and where resources should be diverted.

The Birkenhead Constituency Team will also pass on the information regarding Grange Mount to the dog fouling enforcement team.

5 Name; Sue Taylor

Date Received: 31st May

Query: In an effort to cut costs, i think the council should stop providing translators. Foreigners who come to live here should make an effort to learn English and not rely on translators to help them. Unless they learn to speak the local language it is near impossible to integrate. When they are put in situations when they need to learn a new language, they will. It's a human reaction to survive in a new environment.

I myself am a child of migrant parents who came to UK newly 50 years ago. I have fully integrated into British society and I love Britain. If I hadn't learnt to speak fluent English, I would not have integrated as well as I have done.

Response from Wirral Council:

Part of our legal obligations through the Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Duty is to make our services as accessible to all members of the Community as far as we possibly can. It important to point out that the translation services that the council provides are not just language based, but also braille and sign based etc.

It is important to note that the contract the council has for translation services carries a 0 retainer cost to the council and structured on a 'as and when sign off service' which keeps the costs as low as possible.

Because of this a lot of what is achieved through translation is at little or no cost to the Council. The Council website also has a language "widget" at the foot of the page, which translates the page in many different languages. We also encourage people to attend language courses run by the WMO to expand their language skills.

6 Name; Stephen Andrews

Date Received: 1st June

Query: I want to ask whether there would be any possibility in increasing the security at Birkenhead Park (particularly the Lower Park) in the evenings, particularly during the summer months.

The reason I ask is that on the last two evenings I have been walking my dog in the park and have been shocked by the large numbers of youngsters and teenagers (between the ages of about 12 – 16) who are drinking alcohol, smoking cannabis, setting fire to the bins and leaving large quantities of broken glass on the pathways.

I called the Community Patrol on each of the evenings (30th & 31st May at around 7:30 – 8:00pm): the first time they responded by sending a van and one ‘officer’ who drove around the perimeter road, but made no attempt to look for the youths. I had reported that they were congregated on the Swiss Bridge.

The second evening when I called, they told me that they had been the previous night and found nothing untoward and that they were too busy to attend again, telling me to phone 101 instead.

Response from Community Patrol:

In response to the query of one Patrol Officer attending to the call from the resident, this is correct as officer patrol as a single ‘crew’ unless we have an operation on.

On the 30th the patrol did go around the ring road but he went through the back way into the Swiss Bridge, and he then reported his findings to the Police as the group was too large for him to deal with. As for the 31st we did send two vehicles and the two officers dealt with the incident, the youths were advised and moved on. We were on the later date very busy and the information passed to the caller was that if it was urgent please ring 101.

We have officers all over the Wirral on afternoons and the Police have targeted the park as a potential “HOT SPOT” so more resources are being deployed to the area. This started on Friday evening both from the Police and ourselves.

The location, especially around the Swiss Bridge area for added attention, and the park security do have CCTV in that area so either ourselves or the Police could view the footage if needed.

Currently the logs within the Control Room and the Park security have not reported any problems from within the park.

7 Name; Ian Swift
Date Received: 3rd June

Query: You very kindly asked a question for me with regard to a street light outside my property 25 Heath Drive - it is still out and nobody has been to inspect the work - as I requested when i phoned the council and spoke to a

young man who informed me - they cannot be expected to check on work done by the councils chosen contractors. So my question would be - is the council getting value for the money they are spending on contract works compared to council workers (if there are any left) and do my rates not contribute to this or should I re lamp the lamp post and cut down the conker tree myself neither of which would be a massive inconvenience.....many thanks

Response from Technical Services:

Column 5 in Heath Drive was inoperative due to a Scottish Power fault, which was repaired on the 1/2/17.

Unfortunately the column subsequently failed after the Scottish Power repair and has now been issued to the council's contractor, BAMN for repair. We are currently waiting for BAMN to attend.

All contractors are required to provide the council with a update of work completed.