

# AREA FORUM (BIDSTON AND CLAUGHTON)

Thursday, 8 October 2009

## Present:

Councillor	D Roberts (Chair)
Councillors	G Davies S Foulkes, AR McLachlan H Smith
Community Representatives	Pat Landsborough
Lead Officer	Chris Batman, Deputy Director of Adult Social Services
Council Officers	Jan Johnson, Adult Social Services (Minute Taker), Steve Preston - Community Safety
Area Service Co-ordinator	Michelle Gray
Streetscene Manager	Garry Cummings
Merseyside Police	Inspector Roy McGregor
Merseyside Fire and Rescue	Ritchie Clark
Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	Joyce Magennis, Joyce Jackson (Public Governor)
NHS Wirral	Marie Armitage, Joint Director of Public Health, Abhi Mantgani
<u>Apologies</u>	Councillor J Crabtree, Jean McIntosh – Community Representative, John Webb, Director of Adult Social Services

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

The Chair, Councillor Denise Roberts, welcomed forum members and 16 members of the public to the Bidston & Claughton Area Forum meeting being held at Birkenhead Sixth Form College, Claughton, Birkenhead. A loop system was installed for anyone with a hearing impairment.

Apologies noted from John Webb, Director of Adult Social Services and Jean McIntosh, Community Representative and Councillor Jim Crabtree

## 2 **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS FORUM - JUNE 2009**

The minutes of the Area Forum meeting of 12 February 2009 were agreed a true record.

Under Item 2 Results of the Funds for You bid should be known in November.

Under Item 4 – it was noted that the petition had resulted in action to reduce speed limit and more road signs had been put in. Councillor Harry Smith had done a lot of work around that. Councillor Smith report that further measures would be progressed and that residents would be informed of them in the near future.

Councillor Foulkes queried whether a bid had been made to the Funds for You funding pot (formally Community Initiatives Funding) from the Allotments? Michelle Gray said she would look into this and discuss with Don Charlton at the end of the meeting.

A member of the public raised the issue of the overgrown allotments in Thistleton Avenue/Sumner Road and asked whether anything could be done to address this. General feeling was that there was a shortage of allotments but this would not appear to be the case. Councillor George Davies referred to Friends of the Park who had put bid in for 26 allotment plots on Ashville Road site. There had been no take up again and we need to pursue that.

### **Minute Decision**

**Resolved that: Minutes of the Forum held on 12 February 2009 be agreed.**

## **3 AGE CONCERN**

Pat Lloyd, Information Officer from Age Concern, attended to provide an update on the services offered by their organisation. They provided services on Wirral for people age 50 and over. They were also dealing with people in their 90's and the fastest growing age group in Wirral is the over 80's age group. Services have grown rapidly in the last few years.

The Information and Advice Service provided information and advice to older people and helped to maximize people's income. They worked closely with health professionals and received referrals from GPs, community nurses etc. One of latest projects was Bereavement Support funded by NHS Wirral. There were numerous care services run from Devonshire Centre, Park Road North, including a Dementia Centre. Wirral was one of the worst areas for Early Onset Dementia. The Centre is very much activity based and provided support and respite to carers. Other services were luncheon clubs and day care for people who are socially isolated and a Befriending Services was recently launched. This included both visiting and phone-line befriending services.

There were currently 80 paid staff and 350 volunteers. HQ was based in Market Street, with offices also in the Lauries Centre, Pensall House, Harvest Court and outreach surgeries throughout the Borough including GP practices and One Stop Shops. Age Concern also run a busy home visiting service

Income generation was through insurance/charity shops and many fund raising activities. This enabled them to run other free services such as positive ageing activities like Tai Chi, Dance classes, art etc.

Questions/Comments from the Forum:

Councillor Harry Smith asked whether Age Concern were putting pressure on the Government to get Attendance Allowance to also include mobility.

Pat confirmed they had, however the proposals in the new Green Paper were to abandon Attendance Allowance.

Councillor McLachlan took the opportunity to thank Age Concern for the range of services they provided. As a ward councillor she had signposted people who come to surgeries, who had feedback that they had been able to access whatever service they had been trying to get. Also Elder Abuse campaign has been a very good campaign. Age Concern provided an excellent service in Wirral.

A member of the public asked about the national increase in early onset dementia. He felt the biggest way of improving it was by socializing, which Age Concern were helping people to do. Was there any data as to why Wirral was a hotspot. Work was being done on this. It could be that we have better services to detect and identify people with dementia. Wirral does have a slightly higher percentage of older population.

The Chair asked where Age Concern got all their volunteers from and Pat confirmed it was largely word of mouth.

A member of the audience asked whether they had a problem reaching some groups such as ethnic minorities? Pat confirmed they have worked with Wirral Change and BME leaders. They were being reached, however it was harder.

### **Minute Decision**

**Resolved: To thank the Pat Lloyd from Age Concern for her update.**

## **4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT "WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN YOUR AREA"**

### **NHS Wirral – Marie Armitage, Director of Public Health and Dr Abhi Mantgani, Medical Director**

Dr Mantgani updated the Forum on St Catherine's Health Centre which was now going for final approval to the Strategic Health Authority, the project should start end of this year. There was a new walk in centre at Eastham Clinic to deal with minor injuries so people don't have to go to travel to Arrowe Park Hospital or Victoria Central Health Centre. Also started a scheme in Birkenhead for a Drop-In Centre, which would be nurse-led with support by doctors and would be open Mon-Thurs until 8am and Friday until 6.30pm Health check leaflets were available for people in the 40-74 age group to receive their health check to identify people who are at high risk of cardio vascular disease/diabetes, etc. We would also send health trainers to go to hard to reach population to do these checks. The Health Centre on Laird Street now has a new builder and building expected to be opened in February.

Marie Armitage encouraged anybody who normally had the seasonal flu jab to go along this year. She then briefed on the expected rise in swine flue over the winter. Certain people would be entitled to have a swine flu injection including the over 65's with other health conditions. Marie encouraged use of the vaccine as the risk of spreading was significant.

Confirmation was given that work on Townfield Lane Surgery would restart and it should be ready in 12-14 months.

A member of the audience asked about whether it might be possible for humans to get Cat flu. Marie would some research on that.

The Chair thanked Maria and Abhi on behalf of the Forum.

### **Wirral University Teaching Hospital – Joyce Magennis**

Joyce updated on the major issue of controlling infection and reducing incidence of MRSA and Clostridium Difficile which was still a priority for the Trust and gave an update of the improving stats.

Updates on standards, including being named for the third year running one of the country's Top 40 performing hospitals by an independent benchmarking company, were given.

Details of provision of new services were highlighted, including a major capital investment for Women and Children at Arrowe Park Hospital, this being due for completion in Spring 2011.

Joyce also briefed on the new easy-to-use website and encouraged everyone to use this facility.

Full details of Joyce's update can be found on pages 12-13 of the forum papers.

A member of the audience referred to some discussion at Planning committee about the possibility of moving the bus stop nearer the hospital. Joyce could take back to the Estates Office. They are looking at changing the direction of the traffic and when that happens could move the stop.

Councillor George Davies referred to the comprehensive wrap-around for the Wirral News this week, which covers all this information. The Forum noted that 40% of Arrowe Park Hospital, within 2 or 3 years, would have single rooms with ensuite facilities.

### **Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service – Ritchie Clark**

The update report for Merseyside Fire and Rescue Services could be found on page 7 of the forum papers. Ritchie highlighted ongoing initiatives.

There was reduction in the number of deliberate fires on Wirral. Undertaking partnership work with Wirral Roadsafe Team and holding a number of events where trained firefighters and Roadsafe Team have been in public venues and invited

people to come along and have their child car seats checked to see if they have been correctly fitted. 2 further events were planned for 14 November in Heswall Aldi and Morrison's in West Kirby, with a view to continue through 2010.

Winter Warm Campaign leaflets were available this evening. Would be offering Electric Blanket testing and free replacements blankets if found unsafe. Also offering to exchange chip pans for deep fat fryers and provide free energy efficient light bulbs. Events were running at Birkenhead and Wallasey Fire Stations.

Also at Birkenhead Fire Station, free health checks for over 40's. There are gym facilities there which are already used by NHS Wirral. Need to call and book an appointment.

Pat Landsborough asked whether MF&RS provided a call and collect service for blanket testing? Ritchie responded that it would be difficult to do that because of the logistics.

A member of the audience queried why her smoke alarm was making a noise for no apparent reason. Ritchie thought it may be defective and suggested calling the free-phone number and it could be replaced.

A member of the audience asked about whether they undertook carbon monoxide tests. These alarms look similar to smoke alarm. No checks were carried out on them, however if you noticed the colour had changed you would need to get your appliance checked.

A member of the audience asked what was being done to address arson on places like Bidston Hill, especially in the build up to Bonfire night?

Ritchie confirmed that, together with Wirral Council Community Safety, they were looking at what areas where getting anti social behaviour fires were occurring. They would target problem areas to stop vehicles being able to get into those areas.

### **Merseyside Police – Inspector Roy McGregor**

In the Mischief Night lead up, Police were visiting shops in relation to sale of alcohol. There was also a Wirral wide operation using staff from other areas to go on foot in anti social behaviour areas. The Police wanted to provide some reassurances to the public and wanted to ask for help from communities. If anyone heard about illegal fireworks, stockpiles of wood etc. they could make arrangements to get removed.

Police wanted to gain public confidence and satisfaction in their service. Crime was falling but feel public perception is that people don't believe that. There was a drive to engage with the community in more visible policing. The Forum was invited to take "Your Voice Counts" leaflets. Roy briefed on a campaign running with Tesco in producing a computer/mobile phone database which increased the opportunity to get stole phones back to you.

Councillor Smith thanked the Police for the reduction in anti social behaviour in the Tapestry Gardens new development area. He also asked if they could look at speeding vehicles on Bidston Rise.

Inspector McGregor agreed that Police would target areas. They use community volunteers, trained to use speed guns, in association with Community Support Officers. Councillor Smith asked whether he would contact Jean McIntosh directly. Agreed.

A member of the audience raised concerns from local residents regarding youths in the area managing to get alcohol despite controls in place. He asked what was being done regarding visible policing?

Inspector McGregor referred to different types of policing and different response times to 999 calls. CSOs were patrolling the majority of time on foot. The Police need communities to tell them of problems, so they know where to send officers.

Pat Landsborough referred to the great service provided by the Police locally, however they would like continuity. Inspector McGregor is committed to working hard for the local area for as long as he is in this position.

Donny referred to dialogue with Police around problems at the last Bidston Moss Steering Group meeting. He invited Inspector McGregor to the next meeting on 1 December. Inspector would check his diary and get back, however he thought it might be better to meet before that date.

### **Chris Batman, Deputy Director of Adult Social Services**

Chris, as Lead Officer for this meeting, briefed that the Council was obliged by law to consult on its governance arrangements. He drew attention to a consultation period until end of November. All councils have to consider elected mayoral system and were inviting views from the public regarding the decision they would make in December. The 2 options were:

- 1 – Continue with the present sort of arrangements with one difference - currently Council takes a leader over 12 months. Under the new arrangements the leader would be elected for 4 years and choose members of the Cabinet.
- 2 – Wirral to consider going for an elected mayor system.

More information was available on the Council website. Papers were available tonight to pick up, with details of the consultation process and people encouraged to send views in.

## **5 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Residents in Thistleton Avenue were raising concern with regard to this being the only side road through to Claughton Village. Lorries with heavy loads were coming through this narrow street and a car had already been damaged. Was there any way the traffic flow could be reversed?

Following a discussion it was agreed the Forum would feed through this request via Technical Services.

A member of the audience handed in a petition, with 160 signatures asking for road safety measures in Boundary Road and a further petition on behalf of residents in Hoylake Road for similar measures. He was submitting this to Bidston ward councillors.

Query around Solway street demolition raising concerns has nothing been done to sort out the community safety concerns. Councillor Davies confirmed he had been contacted on numerous occasions by residents in the area. A meeting was coming up with Wirral Partnership Homes.

Councillor Smith said that traffic calming measures would not be introduced if some of houses going to be demolished.

Councillor Foulkes referred to traffic near schools parking indiscriminately on people's driveways. The next traffic management plan would help to address that. We were engaging with schools for a management plan strategy to deal with traffic restrictions. Councillors Foulkes, Davies and Roberts would be working with community and police and Technical Services. Gary Cummings from Streetscene confirmed that a manager from Technical Services had met with neighbours around safer routes to school. They would try and approach this problem from all angles.

Point raised about decision to change brown bin day in Thistle Avenue which meant 2 bins to put out now on a Friday. Confirmed this would have been a joint decision made by Technical Services and Biffa. Anyone struggling to put out their bins could apply to go on the Assisted List. A suggestion of labelling such bins was made and Gary Cummings would take this back.

## **6 DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The Chair thanked people for attending and Sixth Form College for the use of the venue. People were invited to look around the display stands and take away any literature they would like.

The next Area Forum would take place on Tuesday 2 February 2010.