

AREA FORUM (GREASBY/FRANKBY/IRBY, UPTON, WOODCHURCH)

Monday, 8 June 2009

Present:

Chair	T Smith (Chair)
Councillors	T Anderson G Gardiner J Quinn, P Reisdorf J George
Community Representatives	Ron Green (Greasby Community Association), Bert Grunnill (Upton Churches Together), Jean Robinson (Overchurch Residents' Association), Mark Stevenson (Woodchurch Neighbourhood Board Member)
Lead Officer	David Smith (Deputy Director of Finance)
Area Service Co-ordinator	Andy Brannan
Street Scene Manager	Mark Traynor
Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Trust	Pat Higgins
NHS Wirral	Glen Coleman
Merseyside Police	Inspector Brian Griffiths
Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service	Sarah Patterson
Council Officers	Jo Burrell (Woodchurch Neighbourhood Management Board Co-ordinator), Mark Camborne (Health, Safety and Resilience Operations Manager) – Items 1-4
<u>Apologies</u>	Maureen Cain, John Smith

1 **WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES**

The Chair, Councillor Tony Smith, opened the meeting and welcomed forum members and 30 members of the public to the Area Forum meeting in Woodchurch. Apologies for absence were received from Maureen Cain and John Smith. The Chair invited Forum members to introduce themselves.

2 **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS FORUM**

The minutes of the Area Forum meeting of 11 February 2009 were incorporated into the Area Service Co-ordinator's report.

Matters arising.

The Area Forum Co-ordinator's report contained updates under the headings –

- Traffic management schemes that can be funded through the Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport Black allocation.
- Measures to alleviate traffic problems in Sunny bank Close and Houghton Road
- Asbestos at the St Benedict's site
- Traffic counts on Greasby Road.

Jo Burrell read out a progress report from the Director of Technical Services on the demolition of the former St Benedict's High School. All asbestos materials have been safely removed from the site and site clearance is scheduled for completion by 10 July

Members of the public reported that residents had seen lorries arriving and dumping rubbish on the site, that little work appeared to be taking place during the week, but there is increased activity at weekends, including bank holidays.

Councillor George replied that the contractor had located a crushing machine on the site and was using the equipment to break down rubble brought from another site in Wallasey. The agreement was that work would stop at the end of May

A member of the public reported that notices have been posted in Sunny Bank about double yellow lines, but he was concerned about the 5-metre gap for a vehicle crossing. There is a possibility that someone will park in the gap and create an access problem for the occupiers of No. 1 Sunny Bank. He was also concerned about traffic flow into and out of the road and safety issues. Mark Traynor undertook to follow up the suggestion that a post is erected to avoid parking in the gap.

Minute decision: Resolved: That the minutes of the Area Forum meeting of 11 February 2009 be received.

Minute Decision:

(i)-Mark Traynor undertook to follow up the suggestion that a post is erected to avoid parking in the gap in Sunnybank Road.

(ii)- Members of the public reported that residents had seen lorries arriving and dumping rubbish on the site, that little work appeared to be taking place during the week, but there is increased activity at weekends, including bank holidays.

3 AREA CO-ORDINATOR'S UPDATE

The Area Co-ordinator's report contained Local Updates on Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, Community Safety Team, Wirral University Hospital Trust, Equality and Diversity, Wirral Youth Service, Travel, National Carers' Week, NHS Wirral, and Wirral's Older People's Parliament.

The Area Co-ordinator tabled additional information on the responses to the You Decide questionnaire for 2008/09, giving information on proposed sites for additional litter bins and additional litter pickups, funded from the grant of £20,000 received in 2008.

A further sum of £20,000 is available for additional Council services in this forum area in 2009, plus £18,200 devolved funding for Council highway and road safety schemes. Members of the public are being encouraged to tell the Council how the money should be spent by completing the You Decide Survey for 2009.

In response to a query from a member of the public, Councillor Gardner explained that new-style bins are being trialled in certain locations in Wirral. The plan is to use the pilot scheme to decide whether the bins are suitable and then roll out new bins across Wirral. The trial has been very successful so far, especially in Heswall.

Councillor Quinn responded to a query about the accumulation of rubbish in the area behind the shops in Greasby and in Upton. The land in Greasby is private land and is a major problem, which the Council has been trying to resolve for some time.

Minute decision: Resolved: To thank the Area Forum Co-ordinator for his report.

4 LOCAL RESILIENCE ARRANGEMENTS [EMERGENCY PLANNING]

Mark Camborne, Health, Safety and Resilience Operations Manager, explained that his role with the Council is to ensure that adequate arrangements are in place to deal with foreseeable emergencies. He had attended this evening in response to a request from Councillor Quinn following the electricity blackout in Greasby and Upton, to give information on the arrangements in place to deal with emergencies, and to answer questions.

The Council has plans for all foreseeable emergencies and these are listed in a Community List register. The list is sent to all the agencies who work in partnership

with the Council, including Health, Police, public utilities and people involved with the public and private sector who expect to be called out in an emergency.

The presentation included an overview of emergency planning responses to the current key threat assessment and clarified the roles and responsibilities of the Police, the Fire and Rescue Service, the Ambulance/Health Protection Agency, the Environment Agency, HM Coroner, the Local Authority and the voluntary sector.

Mark Cambourne commented in general terms on the involvement of the utility companies in emergency planning and their response to local incidents, including the electricity failure in Greasby and Upton.

A member of the public compared the arrangements to the Civil Defence plans in place during and following World War 11. He enquired whether practices are organised to test the plans.

Mark Cambourne replied that a three-year programme of exercises and tests is devised, working in conjunction with partnership agencies. Recent exercises included a test in the Mersey Tunnel and a decontamination exercise at a hospital. It is difficult to advertise for volunteers to take part in tests, and the tendency is to use existing resources. He would be interested in hearing from people who are willing to become volunteers to take part in exercises.

A member of the public enquired whether the Council has block insurance to cover people who are affected by major emergencies, such as flooding, who may not be able to obtain insurance for certain risks, or are unable to afford, insurance cover.

Mark Cambourne replied that property owners are responsible for taking out their own insurance, but he agreed that the issue is something that needs to be looked into nationally.

The Chair thanked Mark Cambourne for the presentation.

5 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Questions received in advance of the meeting.

Q From Mr J Durrant about pruning of overhanging trees along Irby Road.

A [Mark Traynor]. A safety assessment has been made of all trees along roads in Wirral. Major pruning work has been carried out on major bus routes from the town centre to West Kirby and Wallasey. There are no plans to undertake pruning work on trees on Irby Road, but the problem will be looked at.

Q Anti-social behaviour, including young people drinking alcohol and general misdemeanours in the wooded area in Cheverton Close.

Members of the public gave examples of the types of behaviour witnessed by young people who congregate in the sheltered area on the left hand side of the close. The residents accept that the Police are busy and they do not report incidents.

- A [Inspector Griffiths] Problems in this area have not been brought to the attention of the Police. He emphasised the need to report all incidents so they can be logged.
- He had talked to members of the public before the meeting about the issue of young people drinking cider, particularly on Friday and Saturday nights. Successful prosecutions have been brought against off-licences who supply alcohol to under-age people, and adults who purchase alcohol for children and young people. The Police work closely with the Licensing Team and test purchases are made by young people. An off-licence in Greasby has had its licence taken away for seven days after failing three test purchases. The staff in many off-licences report to the Police where they suspect adults are purchasing alcohol for young people. The problem is not confined to Woodchurch; it is Wirral-wide and nation-wide.
- A member of the public commended the Police on their fast response to a recent incident in which the culprit had been apprehended.

Questions raised at the meeting

- Q Children are using the bus stop in Ganneys Meadow for drinking purposes, and they have set fire to paper.**
- Q There are many problems in the Hoole Road area, and the measures put in place to address these are not working. People report things but nothing is happening. Perhaps a different strategy needs to be used in Hoole Road.**
- A [Police]. The Police respond to the information they receive from the public. If they are not told, the Police cannot do anything.
- [Mr Stevenson]: The Woodchurch Estate is one of the biggest estates in the country, but it does not have a community shop. A community shop would provide more community cohesion and would help resolve most of the problems concerned with anti-social behaviour in Hoole Road and other areas.
- Q I understand there are problems regarding alcohol-free zones and the actual signage used. Is it still going ahead for the whole of Wirral? I would like to know how many tickets have been issued in the Woodchurch area - I suspect that the Woodchurch has the least number of people who have been reprimanded or fined.**
- A [Police] It is proposed that the whole of Wirral will become an alcohol-free area, which means that it will be an offence for anyone to drink in the street. However, there has to be some discretion. There is a difference between someone who drinks the odd can in the street and does not cause any problems and someone who is a drunken idiot full of white lightning. Anyone under the age of 18 who is drinking alcohol would be arrested and referred to the appropriate support service, ie Wirral Alcohol Service or the Youth Service.
- Q What is the planning and organisation for filling in holes in the roads, especially in Irby? Is there a contractor going round, or is there no money to do the repairs?**
- A [Mark Traynor]: There is money available and a new contractor has taken over road maintenance for the next eight years. There have been one or two teething problems but all the potholes marked with white paint will be repaired.

[Cllr. Quinn]: An independent organisation undertakes an annual assessment of the state of every road in Wirral. Where the Council is made aware of a dangerous pothole there is a protocol that says it has to be fixed within 24/48 hours.

Q Has the Council any control of the bus services on the Woodchurch? Prior to taking buses off during evenings and weekends, the operator increased the fares substantially for daily fares and day tickets. Another company now provides the services that were removed, but will not accept day tickets for the return journey.

Q Next year, who will be accountable and who will take over the assets? What will the money be spent on? That money was brought in to enhance the Woodchurch and we were led to believe it was for the residents of the Woodchurch and it would be a shame if people cannot access that. There is a lot of money being held and it should be set up as a legacy for us. The money is meant to be spent on enhancing the estate. There is concern that we will lose that in March.

A [Cllr George]: I chair the management board, and the board has asked for a report for the next meeting on who funds the assets and who has control. I will look into the issue.

Q [Ron Green]: I have been approached with the following questions, which should be referred to the Primary Care Trust, and expect replies. The new dental practice in Greasby. The practice has organised access to the practice from the car park in Coronation Park. This will enable people to drive their car into the park and enter by the rear entrance to the practice. That means that during dark evenings in the winter, residents will be going into the car park and as there is no lighting that will be a definite hazard. The suggestion is that some form of lighting is provided in the car park.

People who have allotments have complained that the car park becomes congested and they cannot drive their vehicles in with trailers.

The issues need to be addressed by the PCT and answers provided.

A [Glen Coleman]: I don't have an answer to the dental issue.

Q What is happening at the Warrens, and the idea of a polyclinic etc on the site?

A [Glen Coleman]: A great deal of work has been going on between colleagues in the PCT and the Council following the rejection of the original planning application. An alternative site has been identified alongside the old nursery building and Wirral Council has entered into an agreement with the PCT to lease the land for a Health Centre facility. It is hoped that planning approval will be given in the very near future for work to start in September.

There will not be a polyclinic on the Warrens site, but there will be a large practice catering for about 14,000 patients, with about eleven GPs. There is additional space on the site to develop other services, such as Counselling Services, a dual-purpose leg ulcer suite, in addition to the normal community clinics. The plan is to relocate the District Nursing Team from Heswall to the site. There are no plans to duplicate the clinics and services that are available at Arrowe Park Hospital.

Q There has been a lot of talk about giving power back to the people etc and the use of buildings by the community when the libraries close. I have a report here, which is a progress report, and that states power will be devolved back to the people and the community using the library buildings

- A [Cllr. Anderson]: What we have said is we will devolve power to the people and the community. The Ombudsman's public inquiry into the libraries starts tomorrow. Please go along and ask your questions, and see what local councillors are doing in your name.
- Q **How can people in Woodchurch get to the Floral Pavilion? There is no transport from this estate. Things going on this estate will be discussed, but we can't get there because there is no transport.**
- Q **I need an answer to these questions this evening. Jill Harvey, a Woodchurch resident became involved in the Save the Library Fund. The report says you are looking to an Adult Reading Scheme being set up. I want to know whether the Beechwood and Woodchurch Library buildings have been saved.**
- A [Chair]: We cannot proceed in any way until the inquiry ends and we have the results. I have not seen the report you refer to. I am not sure that this is the place to deal with the library issue. We are investing £20 million in libraries but we cannot proceed until the inquiry is concluded. Perhaps you could come back at the next meeting with that issue.
- Q **Can I ask the community representative for Greasby if you have set up a Management Committee for the Greasby Community Centre, and have you tried to get information from Wirral Council? I was told that Heswall Hall cannot get any information from Wirral Council.**
- A [Ron Green]: A number of meetings have been held with Wirral Council staff, two in Bromborough. Plans were outlined and as a result of those meetings Greasby Community Centre, Westbourne Hall and Hoylake have put a committee together with a proposal that all three work in conjunction with each other and use of the resources of all three. They are waiting a response from the Council on this proposal. Over and above that, the community centre in Greasby is used on two evenings by the Youth Club, and the initial proposal was that could merge with Woodchurch, and youths from Greasby could go to Woodchurch, and vice versa. John Smith, the Chair of the Joint Management Committee for Greasby Community Centre, had made it clear that was not his proposal. The point was noted. .
- Q **The last area forum ran out of time before my question to the PCT could be addressed. Over the last three weeks, Andy Brannan has been trying to help me make contact with someone in the PCT who can give me answers.**
- The questions are concerned with the fluoridisation of drinking water in Wirral. and whether there are plans to enforce fluoridisation, but I cannot get a reply from the PCT
- Can I ask the PCT representative here tonight to give me contact details of the person I should speak to, and to give a commitment that the question will be answered at the next meeting?
- A [Glen Coleman]: I apologise publicly that we have not delivered that for you. I am more than happy to give you my contact details this evening and on hearing from you I will make sure that your query is passed on.

Resolved that:

- (i)-Anti-social behaviour, including young people drinking alcohol and general misdemeanours in the wooded area in Cheverton Close.**
- (ii)-Children are using the bus stop in Ganneys Meadow for drinking purposes, and they have set fire to paper.**

(iii)-There are many problems in the Hoole Road area, and the measures put in place to address these are not working. People report things but nothing is happening. Perhaps a different strategy needs to be used in Hoole Road.

(iv)-I understand there are problems regarding alcohol-free zones and the actual signage used. Is it still going ahead for the whole of Wirral? I would like to know how many tickets have been issued in the Woodchurch area - I suspect that the Woodchurch has the least number of people who have been reprimanded or fined

(v)-Has the Council any control of the bus services on the Woodchurch? Prior to taking buses off during evenings and weekends, the operator increased the fares substantially for daily fares and day tickets. Another company now provides the services that were removed, but will not accept day tickets for the return journey

(vi)-Next year, who will be accountable and who will take over the assets? What will the money be spent on? That money was brought in to enhance the Woodchurch and we were led to believe it was for the residents of the Woodchurch and it would be a shame if people cannot access that. There is a lot of money being held and it should be set up as a legacy for us. The money is meant to be spent on enhancing the estate. There is concern that we will lose that in March

(vii)-I have been approached with the following questions, which should be referred to the Primary Care Trust, and expect replies.

The new dental practice in Greasby. The practice has organised access to the practice from the car park in Coronation Park. This will enable people to drive their car into the park and enter by the rear entrance to the practice. That means that during dark evenings in the winter, residents will be going into the car park and as there is no lighting that will be a definite hazard. The suggestion is that some form of lighting is provided in the car park.

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6 PARTNER UPDATE

Partner Updates

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service.

Sarah Patterson drew attention to the comprehensive report on pages 13-15 of the Area Co-ordinator's report. She highlighted the availability of free Home Fire Safety

checks and a commitment to risk assess every home on Merseyside. [FREEphone 0900 731 5958 for Free Home Fire Safety Check, with free smoke alarm installation if required].

Wallasey Community Fire Station are holding an Open Day on 20 June from noon to 4 pm. Any voluntary donations received on the day will be given to Claire House. Everyone will be welcome.

Sarah responded to comments about the community facilities at Upton Fire Station as follows:

- The gym facilities are not to the standard available at other fire station due to space restrictions at Upton Fire Station.
- Comments or complaints about the Wirral Heartbeat equipment should be referred to the Heartbeat Manager.
- The facilities, including the community room and the community garden, are available for use by the community at any time.

Community Safety Team

A report on the activities of the Community Safety Team was given on pages 15/20 of the Area Co-ordinator's report.

Jim Thompson gave a statistical analysis of crime in Wirral, emphasising that Wirral is a very safe place to live, and is becoming safer. The emphasis for the next twelve months will be on addressing antisocial behaviour, dealing with violent crime, particularly domestic violence, hate crime, political offenders and crime hot spots including Birkenhead Town Centre, whilst at the same time ensuring value for money.

Mark Stevenson noted that the areas where the Youth Respect Team has operated excluded Woodchurch. Inspector Griffiths replied that the resources had been placed in the areas where most incidents of anti-social behaviour had been reported. It could be that residents of Woodchurch had not reported incidents.

Wirral University Hospital Trust

Pat Higgins highlighted the section of the report dealing with Controlling Infection. Reducing the incidents of MRSA and Clostridium difficile is a very high priority for the Trust and figures released in April show a 60% reduction in case of Clostridium difficile in the last quarter of 2008 compared to the same period in 2007. NHS Wirral has invested £1.6 million in a hyper-acute stroke centre. The maternity unit was judged to be one of the 'best performing' in the country in the Health Commission's review and 'best in the region' in a national survey of new mothers and mothers-to-be. Work has just started on a £11 million scheme that will radically change the face of the maternity services building and create a centre of excellence bringing together under one roof all acute hospital services for women and children.

A member of the public stated that during a recent hospital visit, she had noticed that visitors could not access the hand sanitizer because a laundry trolley had been parked in front of it.

Equality and Diversity

Mark Stevenson commented that a representative from the Equality and Diversity Team was not present to answer questions.

The Chair gave a commitment to ensuring that a representative is present at the next area forum meeting.

Youth Service

A comprehensive Overview of Wirral Youth Services' activities were included on pages 24/26 of the Area Co-ordinator's report. No questions were raised.

Travel

Following a successful pilot in Childwall, Liverpool, a Personal Travel Planning project to reduce car use is due to be implemented in Heswall, Pensby and Irby in 2009/10.

A suggestion was made that it would be useful to invite a representative from Merseytravel to a future meeting of the area forum.

Jo Burrell undertook to find out if there is a link person between Merseytravel and the Council with a view to inviting a representative from Merseytravel to the next meeting.

NHS Wirral

Glen Coleman gave a verbal update on Swine Flu. He explained that he has regular meetings with Mark Cambourne to talk about preparations for any potential pandemic. He drew attention to the advice given on page 29 of the report about hygiene messages. The UK is one of the most prepared nations and is in the best possible position to put plans into action.

A member of the public suggested that it would be more cost effective to vaccinate everyone in the country than to distribute leaflets and pay for advertisements. Glen Coleman confirmed that plans are in place to ensure that antivirals are made available to the public very rapidly in the event of swine influenza being confirmed in the UK.

Police

Copies of the monthly neighbourhood newsletter for June were available at the meeting. The newsletter can be accessed at www.merseyside.police.uk - follow the links to Upton, Prenton and Greasby. If preferred contact details can be given at Upton Police Station, and a paper copy will be delivered to the home address each month.

Reports from Community Representatives.

Ron Green reported that all residents in Greasby should have received a copy of the Summer 2009 edition of 'Greasby Messenger'. A Stop Press at the bottom of page 3

reinforces the message given by Inspector Griffiths this evening, that any apparent or actual criminal acts are reported immediately to Merseyside Police. It is important to report every incident, every time it happens. The Police have CCTV cameras that can be brought into an area for surveillance.

This month's edition provides an opportunity for everyone to have their say about future developments in Greasby and Frankby, through the GOAL questionnaire. Everyone is invited to respond to the invitation and state what they would like to be done for young people and for the general community in Greasby.

Mark Stevenson quoted extracts from a newsletter sent to every household in Woodchurch, giving details of activities in the area.

Mark Stevenson stated that he had only received the Area Co-ordinator's report on Friday last. He would appreciate it if it could be distributed more in advance of meetings in future.

Minute decision: Resolved: That partners, their representatives and community representatives be thanked for their written and verbal reports.

Resolved that:

(i)- A suggestion was made that it would be useful to invite a representative from Merseytravel to a future meeting of the area forum.

Jo Burrell undertook to find out if there is a link person between Merseytravel and the Council with a view to inviting a representative from Merseytravel to the next meeting.

7 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Minute decision: Resolved: That the next meeting of the Area Forum be held on 19 October 2009 at a venue to be confirmed.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 9.10 pm.