

AREA FORUM (LEASOWE, MORETON AND SAUGHALL MASSIE)

Thursday, 8 October 2009

Present:

Councillor	S Mountney (Chair)
Councillors	C Blakeley, IO Coates, I Lewis
Community Representatives	Bruce Martin (Faith Representative), Jane McLearn, Bob Seddon
Lead Officer / Area Service Co-ordinator	Tracey Smith
Streetscene Manager	Chris Jones
Merseyside Police	Inspector Peter Kolokotroni
Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service	Sarah Patterson
Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	Pat Higgins
NHS Wirral	Cathy Gritzner
Council Officers	Jim Thompson, Community Safety
<u>Apologies</u>	Councillor RL Abbey

1 SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Suzanne Moseley, a Ward Councillor, and member of the Area Forum, passed away recently in sudden and tragic circumstances

Members of the Area Forum and members of the public stood and observed a minute's silence in her memory

2 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

The Chair, Councillor S Mountney, welcomed Forum members and 20 members of the public to the meeting of the Leasowe, Moreton and Saughall Massie Area Forum in Leasowe.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor RL Abbey.

The Chair invited Forum members to introduce themselves.

The Chair drew attention to two documents, Coastal Area Forums, relating to a Review of the North West and North Wales Shoreline Management Plan, and a consultation document on Governance of the Council. He urged members of the public to take away copies and read at their leisure.

3 **AREA CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT**

The Area Co-ordinator presented her report. The minutes of the Area Forum meeting on 9 June 2009 had been incorporated into Section 1 of the report.

Section 2 contained local updates on Equalities and Diversity, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, Streetscene, Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, NHS Wirral, Wirral Youth Service and Community Safety.

The contact details for the Area Co-ordinator were given on the first page of the report.

Minute decision:

Resolved: To confirm the minutes of the Area Forum meeting of 9 June 2009 as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

4 **YOU DECIDE RESULTS**

At the last meeting, members of the public had been asked for suggestions and ideas on how they wished to spend this Area Forum's funding allocation for 2009 under the 'You Decide' initiative. A panel had been set up and the money had been allocated based on the suggestions and guidance received from members of the public.

The Chair reported that although the details have not yet been made public, the panel had allocated £3,000 per Ward to fund the Community Sports Community Co-ordinator; agreed to fund 45 weekly Sports nights, split between the two wards. £2000 had been allocated for Positive Outdoor Activity Days. £2,000 had been allocated for community safety, for mobile diversionary sports activity. £1,000 has been allocated for a bench in memory of Cllr Suzanne Moseley. £1,000 has been allocated for Adult Learning in the both wards with classes being held at both Moreton and Leasowe Community Centres. £8,000 has been allocated for highway improvements, including 'slow' markings and other initiatives to make Twickenham Drive safer. Vehicle activated road signs will be installed in the Saughall Massie area of Moreton. Local Councillors will contribute towards a plaque on the bench in memory of Susanne Moseley

This is the second year of activity under the You Decide initiative. Progress in the first year had been slow but it is hoped that the process will be speeded up this year and make a real difference in local communities.

5 AREA PLANS

The Chair reported that although regular Area Forums meetings are held in each area, in many respects each area forum operates independently of the others. An over-arching Committee meets to look at what the Forums are doing, but there is no structure or area plan that brings Area Forums together. Consideration has been given to a methodology for devising an Area Plan that will involve neighbouring or Wirral wide area forums.

One suggestion for achieving this is to organise an extended Area Forum evening where members of the public can put forward their ideas for improving the area forum process.

Members of the public were invited to advise the Area Co-ordinator if they favoured using the next date for a meeting as a drop-in area forum to progress an area plan, or would prefer an alternative approach. Anyone with specific ideas was invited to share those ideas with the Area Co-ordinator, who would capture those ideas in the form of a written report.

6 COMMUNITY SPORTS DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Chair introduced Julie, Community Sports Development Officer. He explained that due to a misunderstanding, Julie had been appointed to the post without financial support. The issue has now been addressed. He invited Julie to explain her involvement in sporting activities in the three months she has been in post.

Julie gave a verbal report on a programme of activities in Leasowe Recreation Centre designed to encourage young people and their families to engage in sporting activities. A successful fun day was organised in Moreton, supported by the Anti-Social Behaviour Team, alongside community days. Arising from that, a request has been received to support a fun day in Seacombe, and the intention is to spread the idea across different areas in Wirral. Consideration is being given to organising a fun day in Leasowe in the spring. Working alongside Sport England has brought in funding from SPA. Amongst the five identified to work in the area is a football coach, and a young person, Rachel, who will work alongside the Development Officer on a voluntary basis. Anyone who wishes to do so can bid for money to develop their own life skills and to obtain sporting qualifications. Efforts are being made to start a youth group in Moreton.

Councillor Blakeley commented that all the activities described revolved around the Leasowe community; there had been no mention of Moreton West and Saughall Massie.

Julie replied that funding has just been received from Sports Unlimited. Funding will be available in April to run a ten-week programme of activities. So far, it has been difficult to identify and make contact with youth groups in Moreton West and Saughall Massie, to support the activities.

Councillor Blakeley suggested that it may be possible to tap into the facilities available at Foxfield School, and there is an outreach team in the Moreton Centre.

Councillor Lewis asked for information on a Kick-boxing club in Twickenham Drive.

Minute decision:

Resolved: To thank Julie for the report and congratulate her on the considerable progress made from a 'standing start' three months ago.

7 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Members of the public raised the following issues relating to the environs and perimeters of buildings in the community complex in Twickenham Drive, Leasowe –

- Poor levels of lighting
- Poor vehicle access and damage to vehicles caused by unsuitable road humps
- Personal safety issues, and the need for CCTV cameras to be installed.

The Area Streetscene Manager, Chris Jones, explained that Wirral Council is not responsible for street lighting, road surfaces and traffic calming on unadopted roads in the Borough. Nevertheless, he would raise the issue with the relevant Management Committees in this area and enquire what their intentions are. He anticipated that the response would be that the organisations involved do not have the resources available to improve the facilities.

Chris Jones explained that traffic calming measures are carried out to specification and traffic humps should not damage people's cars if cars are driven at the correct speed. There could be a public liability issue if there is a defect in the specification and as a result damage is being caused to vehicles that are being driven slowly.

A member of the public advised that a petition is being organised that will be presented to the Council.

A member of the public pointed out that the Recreation Centre is a Council building, and asked why the Council is not responsible for the roads leading to the Centre, as well as for the Centre itself.

Councillor Lewis replied that he had written to the Head of the Department responsible for the Recreation Centre and in reply the Head of Department had stated that he did not believe there was a problem with the speed bumps.

Councillor Lewis would appreciate an opportunity to discuss the specification with Chris Jones. Meanwhile, he offered to present the petition to the Council on behalf of local residents when he attends a meeting on Monday, 12 October.

Chris Jones reaffirmed his intention to bring the issues raised to the attention of the relevant Management Committees in writing.

A member of the public referred to an article in this week's Wirral News about Merseyside and Wirral Ambulance Service. In the recent past, two vehicles have responded to incidents, a paramedic and ambulance personnel. It appears that the arrangement has now changed.

Cathy Gritzner explained that a pilot approach had operated in Wirral whereby a paramedic and an ambulance responded to assess whether it would be possible to triage people and treat them at home, or whether they needed to attend hospital or somewhere else. The pilot had been successful and a pathway had been

determined to take a patient to hospital or to access another service, without the need for back up by an ambulance.

The member of the public raised further questions concerning the arrangements for people who collapse in the street, whether resources are being used effectively, and whether a sufficient number of personnel are available to run the service.

Cathy Gritzner replied that she would raise the issues with the appropriate managers in NHS Wirral. She asked for contact details to enable her to forward the response direct to the member of the public.

A member of the public reported that the bus shelter near the railway station in Pasture Road is being used from early morning as a drinking shelter by alcoholics, many of whom can be intimidating. The practice had started with a small group, but it is growing, and the fear is that it will not be long before drug-taking is involved as well.

Inspector Kolokotroni gave an undertaking to personally visit the area to investigate the problem.

A member of the public referred to the poor surface of the hard core in the cages area, and the potential for children who use the area to be injured.

Chris Jones explained that the Council has a new Highways Maintenance Partner, Colas Limited. The company specialises in surfacing treatments on roads and footways. He was confident that the company would give a quotation for the work; although it is a question of which budget the costs would come from. The Council can give advice and help with expertise, but it does not have money to spend on such projects.

The Chair stated that clearly it is the Council's responsibility to ensure that all unsafe play areas are made secure and to take steps to prevent children from accessing those areas.

Councillor Lewis reported on a discussion with the Council officer responsible for parks and open spaces following complaints about the poor state of other children's play areas. It appears that a plan is in place to refurbish 22 play areas but the play area in B Close was not included on the list. The tenants' association is pushing for money or a bid for some money for play equipment and improvements at B Close.

Councillor Blakely added that the Council has closed many of the play areas because the equipment is unsafe. Local Councillors had been told initially that some limited equipment would be provided within two weeks, and had then been told that nothing would happen before 2111 when the next funding cycle starts.

He continued that when planning permission is given, development providers are obliged to include play areas in the development area, but then the play areas are not maintained and they eventually reach the stage where they cannot be used any more.

A member of the public referred to the lack of youth clubs and facilities in the area and asked where young people can go to in their leisure time. Children as young as 12/13 are using the adventure play ground to drink alcohol and get drunk because there is nothing for them to do.

The Chair replied that young people from this area will be welcome at the Wirral Youth Parliament on Tuesday.

A young person in the audience commented that she had raised an issue about the Youth Centre last year, but nothing has happened and no explanation has been given. She asked, 'What was the point of going again this year?'

Jane McLearn agreed that youth and leisure is a huge problem. She outlined the activities of the 'Women Helping Youth' group in Leasowe.

8 PARTNER UPDATES

Streetscene: Chris Jones, Area Streetscene Manager, reported that six months ago, Colas Limited became the Council's new Highway Maintenance Partner. The expectation was that the company would introduce the new technologies that would produce efficiency savings and reduce costs for the Council. He would be interested in receiving feedback on the standard of work delivered by the Colas.

Councillor Blakely commented that from first-hand observation in Grampian Way, and in other areas, Colas' standard of work is abysmal. He added that he would prefer the use of the word 'contractor' instead of 'partner'.

Members of the public reported instances where inconsiderate parking of Colas' vehicles, including parking on pavements and grassed areas, were causing obstructions and delays to other road users, and inconvenience and potential danger, to pedestrians. The problems were exacerbated by the unhelpful attitude of Colas' personnel undertaking the road works.

Chris Jones responded to a query from Mr Seddon about whether Colas' vehicles and road signs give contact details which people can use to complain.

In response to a question by Councillor Blakeley, Chris Jones explained that Colas can sub-contract work to other companies, with the approval of the Director of Technical Services.

Chris Jones thanked everyone for the helpful feedback. He would appreciate more detailed information on specific incidents and the areas affected to enable him to raise the issues with Technical Services management.

Communal Bins: A member of the public reported that the super bins at her block of flats have only been emptied three times since May. The member of the public was asked to give the address to the Area Co-ordinator, when the matter would be followed up.

Wirral NHS. Cathy Gritzner, reported on three key issues:

1. On 10 September 2009, the Planning Committee approved a new Health Centre on the St. Catherine's Hospital site. Funding has been secured and work will begin very soon.
2. Seasonal Flu and Swine Flu. People who are at risk of infection are encouraged to take up the offer of vaccination. A swine flu vaccine will be available in the Autumn.
3. A new Walk-in Centre is due to open in Eastham Rake. An out-of-hours GP service will be based at the centre later in the year.

The report on seasonal flu and swine flu generated considerable discussion amongst members of the Area Forum and members of the public.

Cathy Gritzner replied to questions raised about the risk groups who would receive priority for immunisation against swine flu, the symptoms, and process for diagnosis and treatment of the illness, the additional resources available in GP's surgeries to store the vaccine, and the rate of remuneration GPs would receive to administer the vaccine.

A member of the public commented that he considered the rate of £5.25 per jab, to be excessive and unwarranted.

Cathy Gritzner stated that it would not be appropriate for her to give advice on medical and technical questions about swine flu. She had noted the questions and would seek specialist advice before responding.

Councillor Blakeley queried why the NHS does not fund the cost of prescriptions for children in Claire House, as it would if the child was in an NHS hospital or receiving treatment at home.

Cathy Gritzner replied that the NHS gives a substantial grant to Claire House, which was intended to cover these costs. She would investigate further and respond further to Councillor Blakeley, along with a response to the query raised about Moreton Clinic.

Wirral University Teaching Hospital Trust. Pat Higgins drew attention to the comprehensive report on pages 24/26 of the Area Co-ordinator's report.

She mentioned major capital investment in services for Women and Children at Arrowe Park Hospital; the installation of a second MRI scanner to help diagnose complex illness and injury; the steps taken to remove mixed sex accommodation for patients; and an assessment unit, manned by GPs and advance nurse practitioners, which will enable patients to be seen, assessed and where appropriate allowed to return home, without admittance to hospital. Incidents of C. difficile have reduced by 30%, and MRSA by 50%.

Older People's Parliament Copies of a report on Wirral Older Persons' Parliament Report to Area Forums, June/October 2009, were available at the meeting.

Hazel, the Public Governor for Leisure, Moreton and Saughall Massie, thanked everyone for their support in electing her two years ago. She reported verbally on the hospital's plans to deal with emergency outbreaks of swine flu.

She would be pleased to raise any issues brought to her attention. Anyone wishing to contact her should telephone Arrowe Park Hospital and ask for the Governors' office. She urged anyone over the age of 50 to consider becoming an Associate member. Application forms were available at the meeting.

Merseyside Police: Inspector Kolokotroni drew attention to the latest Neighbourhood newsletter. He reported on the Police's response to issues brought to attention during the summer months. There has been a reduction in all crime and anti-social behaviour, and a slight increase in burglaries in dwellings and break-in to vehicles.

In reply to a query from Jane McLearn on diversionary activities for children on the cusp of criminal activity, Inspector Kolokotroni advised that a trip to Alton Towers has been organised for 28 children as a reward for good behaviour.

The joint Open Day at Wallasey Police Station on 4 October had been extremely successful, with lots of involvement and interaction with the children as well as the public.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service: Sarah Patterson drew attention to the comprehensive report in the Area Co-ordinator's report on the Service. She highlighted the statistics for deliberate fires which show a year on year decline from 2006 to 2009. The Winter Warm Campaign continues to operate with electric blanket testing and free replacement blankets and free home fire safety checks. This year, in conjunction with its sponsors, chip pans can be exchanged for vouchers for deep fat fryers, and free energy efficient light bulbs are available.

Anyone with concerns about the build up of bonfire materials or the illegal selling of fireworks is encouraged to contact the service on Freephone 0800 731 5958.

Members of the public reported on the prompt responses received from Upton Fire Station to queries about faulty smoke alarms and acknowledged the excellent services provided by the Service in general.

9 **DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Minute decision:

Resolved: That the next meeting of the Area Forum be held on Tuesday, 2 February 2010 in Saughall Massie.

10 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Leasowe Community Centre: A Christmas Event will be held on the adventure playground in the Community Centre at 5 pm, on 11 December.

Moreton Cross: The Mayor of Wirral will switch on the Christmas lights outside the Coach and Horses on 7 November.

Children in Need: Any groups organising events for Children in Need should contact the Radio Station and a roving report will cover the event.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 9 pm.