

# AREA FORUM (HESWALL AND PENSBY & THINGWALL)

Thursday, 18 June 2009

## Present:

Councillor	L Rowlands (Chair)
Councillors	P Johnson, R Wilkins
Community Representatives	Tony Garrett, Mark Johnston
Older People's Parliament	Sandy Cameron
Lead Officer	David Armstrong (Head of Finance and Resources, Children and Young People's Department)
Area Service Co-ordinator	Tracey Smith
Streetscene Manager	Phil Miner
NHS Wirral	Russell Favager
Wirral University Teaching hospital NHS Trust	Larry Doherty
Merseyside Police	Inspector Kate Cunningham
Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service	Tony Mooney
Council Officers	Mike Collins (Community Safety, Corporate Services)

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

Cllr. Rowlands welcomed everyone to the meeting, and wished to draw everyone's attention to the Code of Conduct on Page 2 of the Introduction because there have been different thoughts on how the Area Forums are conducted. This document has been produced so that everyone knows how to behave during the Area Forums. The

document states what the Area Forums are for and that everyone should have a chance to speak and air their views.

Cllr. Rowlands reported that as this was the first meeting of the new session, it would be necessary to elect a new Chairman. It was suggested, and everyone agreed that there should be two Chairmen – Cllr. L. Rowlands for Heswall and Cllr. Wilkins for Pensby and Thingwall.

Mike Collins seconded this proposal, and the meeting unanimously agreed the arrangement

All the members of the panel introduced themselves and who they represented.

## 2 **AREA CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT**

Tracey Smith had prepared the Minutes and Cllr. Les Rowland proposed they be accepted and Mark Johnson seconded, and it was agreed that they were a true record.

Tracey asked anyone who had any queries to contact her, and details to where to contact her are on the front of the papers.

Tony Garrett asked whether the dental practice at 44 Ridgewood Drive was accepting NHS patients, also the new one at 336 Pensby Road, and he understood there is a new one in Irby.

Russell Favager reported that the one in Pensby is open, and it is a NHS dentist, but he was not aware of a new dentist in Irby but that a former NHS dentist had gone private, and he stated that, if they wished, all dentists could carry out private work.

Tony Garrett reported that Heswall Hills Station has a free car park, and there are always many cars parked there, but he reiterated that the car park should only be used by people using the train, not people in the area or people shopping.

## 3 **YOU DECIDE**

Tracey Smith reported the £20,000. was spent last year on Council services, particularly sport and youth activity, cleanliness and education. Ten rubbish bins had been purchased, and these had been fitted at Thingwall Road, near the bus shelter, Fishers Lane at the start of the footpath

Irby Road by the Spar, the bus stop near Rosemead Avenue and Thingwall Road East. There are still three left, and she asked for suggestions as to where they might be useful.

Liz Ashdown suggested one in the vicinity of the Chiropractic clinic on Pensby Road or one somewhere mid-way between the Chip Shop and Belmont Drive, going toward Heswall. Tony Garrett said that he had asked last time for one, with a top on, for the Banks Road car park. Beryl Crocker said that one would be useful on Whitfield Lane Common.

£10,000.00. is also available for the Community, and Tracey introduced Joanne (who was sitting at the back) who is working with young people. Anyone with any ideas should speak to her with their suggestions.

There is also £3,000. to go towards library books, DVDs and CDs etc. This has not yet been spent, but it will be. Cllr. Johnson pointed out that Heswall and Pensby Library might share.

£20,000. for the area. Please fill in the details on Page 4. There is a delegated budget of

£18,200. for the roads, the integrated transport plan. Dropped kerbs, pedestrian routes. Tracey will send out details to any who wants a copy.

A request was made for Pensby Primary School to be sent 200 You Decide Questionnaires.

Cllr. Rowlands stated that he thought this scheme was working well, and that the money is being spent where it is needed. A crossing is to be constructed in Telegraph Road, near to the Gayton roundabout where many people have trouble, especially at school times, and it is to be hoped that this will be installed shortly. He proposed that all the Officers be thanked on behalf of the constituents.

#### 4 **PARTNER ORGANISATIONS UPDATE**

##### **Merseyside Police/.Community Safety.**

Inspector Kate Cunningham reported that crime in Heswall is low compared to other places on Wirral. For the period April to May crime was down by 25%. There were a couple of unpleasant burglaries in Heswall recently, and detailed investigation is going on into this.

One of the dedicated PCOs is at the back of the Hall, Alistair, and please talk to him if you wish. Three more burglaries were committed than last year, but we have caught someone, who has admitted to some in Pensby, and he is now in custody. If anyone would like their property marking, we will come and do so. Surgeries are held regularly in Tesco and Aldi.

Anti-social behaviour figures show a decline 33% and 20% over the past two years. In the summer months priority will be patrolling Whitfield Common, the Beacons and Dawstone Park. We have meeting every two months with local people and our priorities are at the moment in Irby to reduce under-age drinking and in Ridgewood Park, Pensby, to monitor young people around the bus station, the Puddydale and Dawstone Park. We want the young people to have a good time, but not to cause too much disturbance. The Police are responding within ten minutes for 94% of the time to calls, and a little longer for less urgent cases. Wirral as a whole is more satisfied with the services they get from the Police than the fifteen other areas in the country. They are showing an improvement across the board, and our work is of a high standard.

Sandy Cameron said that the Police produce a very accurate web page, and Inspector Cunningham said there is a card if people wish to fill one in and receive the monthly report.

The Police have also been out with speed guns on Pensby Road and Fishers Lane, and it is a good thing.

##### **Street Scene.**

Phil Miner reported that there has been a major change with the day to day Partnership works.

The name of the company now carrying out all related works is COLAS. They started in April, and so far it has shown a good improvement.

### **Wirral NHS**

Russell Favager drew attention to Pages 26 to 29 of the Forum Papers, which show the main issues – National Carers Week and the link with your G.P. and the opening of a new All Day Health Centre ON THE Arrow Park site There is also a swine flu update included.

### **Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service.**

Tony Mooney reported a comprehensive update in the Forum note. He pointed out that, locally, they have been carrying out risk assessments, but there are some households that have not had full fire risk assessments. If there are any buildings where we have noted work is needed, we leave a note. With the better weather the danger of gorse etc. fires increases, and patrols are in place, and he asked the public to let them know if they have any information as to where youths are gathering. They have dedicated members of staff to deal with the arson misfits. He also reported that they do a great deal of work with the other emergency services, and in Wallasey on Saturday there will be a show of everyone – Police, Coastguards, Ambulance etc.

### **Community Safety.**

Mike Collins reported that there are a number of diversionary issues going on across Wirral

Linking up with the Fire Service and other Agencies to keep the young people interested during the summer holidays. The dog fouling argument which has been in the press recently, which is mostly centred on the waterfront, but also the Beacons and Whitfield Common. Please let us know any other spots and we will look into it. We will be linking up with the

Inspectors on the Community Patrol and will be working with the Police and their patrols to make sure everything is safe. We are also training staff about litter enforcement in the area.

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

Gary Doherty said that he had information at the back with examples of where the hospital is being compared with to other hospitals, and that it has come out as one of the best in the country, and you will see that there is a great deal of building going on at Arroe Park hospital. Some further information is available at the end if you wish, and in the pack how you can become a Member of the Trust.

### **Older Peoples' Parliament.**

Sandy Cameron reported that this is of great benefit to older people on Wirral, and it does not cost anything to join.

Peter Scammell asked 'what are you doing'? Sandy Cameron replied that he looks after the interests of all the older people on Wirral by links with the older peoples' clubs and associations, and keeping them up to date with changes in policies over transport, pensions etc. and bringing all the information together so that everyone is aware of what is going on.

Cllr. Rowlands pointed out that there is a large proportion of old people in the area, and it is not always possible to keep track of all the changes and advise them, and the work undertaken by the Older Peoples' Parliament is of assistance when someone needs some help or advice.

## 5 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Mr. Keith Dawson who lives near the Church in Boundary Lane. He wished to ask a question of the Police regarding the speed vehicles travel up and down the road. It is very, very difficult if you are pushing a pram, and you are taking your life in your hands. Alistair and Kim (CSOs) are aware of the problem, also the parking in the road. A few parking tickets were given out, and this certainly helped, and it is hoped that word will get out that more tickets might be issued. Inspector Cunningham stated that the CSOs have noticed the parking, and it might be a proposal to put double yellow lines. The parking on the pavement is difficult, as sometimes people are causing an obstruction, and they can be given a ticket.

Liz Ashdown said that the same should apply to people parking on the grass verges. Lady from Belmont Drive rang the Police Station (Heswall was closed) because there were so many cars parked it was dangerous for her to try and get out. She was told to ring the Council as it was Street Scene's responsibility. Is there any way you can put a notice up that people must not park in a particular position? Inspector Cunningham said that there is now only one none-urgent line to the Police, but she apologized and said that if you could not get out, they should have done something about it.

The same lady also stated that Downham Road South, up the hill, when collecting children from school and trying to get into Downham Road North. She had spoken to a Community Police Officer, and was told, again, it was the Council. Inspector Cunningham said the Council are responsible for the double yellow lines, and she is consulted. She will visit and view the situation.

Phil Miner, Street Scene said there are Enforcement Officers who go round schools and they try to educate parents to walk to school. Regulations have to be adhered to, and a list of places that need to have yellow lights is already quite excessive. He said he will take the problem

back and report again. Everyone here would know an area where they would like yellow lights. The criteria mentioned should be in the public domain. The guide lines are national, and the Council base on the statistics.

Douglas George stated that driving between May Road and Pensby Road it is often impossible to get through because of parked vehicles. People park to go over to the cash point at Lloyds.

The other serious spot is in Pensby Road where people stop their car and go to Sayers for a lunch-time sandwich, or to the other cash point at HSBC. Phil Miner said that this had been pointed out and highlighted, and they will try to do something about it in the future, but all these measures have to be approved by the Government.

It was also pointed out that many mothers have difficulty pushing their prams in safety because of the obstruction of overhanging hedges and trees. Phil Miner said there is a team of officers who walk the area, and highlight any such problems.

Jonathan Birch reported that he keeps getting letters from the Lib-Dems about the failure of the super-market application in Pensby Road. It is unsightly, but with the current financial position, is there nothing going on across Wirral to try and get more businesses coming to the Wirral? Cllr. Rowlands said that these are private applications, but it is very difficult for the councillors to start handling private matters.

Jonathan asked whether conditions round Wirral were being created where the Council have buildings which are becoming derelict and need to be demolished?

Cllr. Johnson replied that in respect of the super market application, the Appeal may decide.

With regard to the state of buildings, they have to be in a derelict condition before the Council can step in.

Cllr. Wilkins said, on a general point, the Council does have some interest and finance in the large shopping areas of the Borough, but none for small shopping parades. There are many problems with those small shopping parades and there are also problems with environmental health conditions at the back of the shop and the pavements at the fronts. It is very difficult to find out who owns many of these shops. No-one wants to take responsibility, and there has been talk with the Re-generation people to try and get people to work to improve the shopping facilities for the benefit of everyone. That particular application is the subject of an Appeal now.

Someone asked "is the Agent aware that the owner of the premises evicted the tenants?"

Communications – it was stated that the Police are fantastic and the worst are Street Scene.

The lady said that she had never received a reply from Street Scene, and she regularly rings up.

Tracey Smith said that she has a line, and will give anyone who asks for it the number.

Peter Scammell asked about Asset Transfer and transferring an asset because the same will happen with Heswall Hall. There is a gap. What are the Council doing to focus on this?

Cllr. Rowlands replied that asset transfer is under consideration, and it was reported to the Secretary of State and an Enquiry has been held in New Brighton.

David Armstrong reported that the Inspector has requested some more information by 24th June, and the report will be ready by the end of July. There is an Officer called David Ball who reported yesterday on the terms of the halls, and indicated he had met with all the people and there were no more than three or four of these. He had been assured that the Council, and in particular Ian Brand, were taking every step to try and sort something out.

Diana Lane asked whether he could indicate if anything had come forward in regard to Heswall Hall. Mrs. Lane said that it had been rumoured that Birkenhead Town Hall has a possible purchaser.

David Armstrong replied that the deadline had not yet expired, and that Birkenhead Town Hall will be looked at by English Heritage.

Mrs. Lane said that it had been quoted to her that the loss of running Heswall Hall would be £164,000. per year.

David Armstrong replied that the people running them have been asked to let the figures be made known, and also a schedule of the state of the building has been put in hand. A process has been put in place to let the people interested in perhaps forming a Committee to run Heswall Hall have this information in order to give it serious consideration.

Cllr. Rowlands said that he will be keeping a very close eye on all that is happening, not just Heswall Hall. At the moment the stage has not been reached because the Officers are waiting for some information.

Peter Scammell said that, as far as he was aware, the annual running costs were £100,000 and the bookings in the region of £50,000.00.

Douglas George asked how the venue for this evening was confirmed, and why was it not held in Heswall Hall? Tony Garrett replied that Heswall Hall was not available, as they were taking blood transfusions this evening. Mr. George asked how are people informed, as he had only seen a small advertisement in Pensby Library. Tracey Smith said that she had a mailing list of between 50 and 60, and that she would add Mr. George to it.

Inspector Cunningham said that if Tracey would let her have a pile of notices, they will be put out at the Police surgeries.

Lady said that she has spoke to Cllr. Sarah Quinn about the growing concern over the Pensby Hotel with their blackboard type advertising just about everything. A huge A board advertising many events, and this is on a corner position of a very busy road, and is causing a problem along the road. This is not a planning matter, this is to do with Street Scene.

Phil Miner said that if it is on his property, there is nothing they can do. It was stated that a fence has been erected just inside the property. Phil Miner said that someone will come down to check the safety aspect.

A request was made for the painting of the street lamps in Belmont Drive – they are rusty from top to bottom. The lady has lived there for 40 years, and she cannot remember them ever being painted in that time.

Mr. Garrett also wished to follow up the complaints about Pensby Road and drivers stopping to buy a sandwich from Sayers, or use the cash machine at HSBC. He said the whole area is a disgrace during the daytime, double decker buses cannot get through when there are parked vehicles on both sides, and he did point out that some he has seen doing this, should know better. Inspector Cunningham said that she will follow this up.

Mr. Garrett also raised one other matter – the use of St. Peter's School as a Polling Centre. It is very difficult for the disabled to access, and even going round the side of the school means that there are steps to be negotiated, and you have to walk past the bins. He watched a gentleman with two sticks negotiating his way, and felt that this is unacceptable. Cllr. Johnson said that it had been suggested that the new St. Peter's Centre be used, but the Rector did not want to upset the shopkeepers by the loss of parking spaces. The disabled access and the siting of the bins have been raised with Lesley Hales, who is in charge of Polling Stations, and a request has been made for a rail down the steps.

Mr. Garrett said that all in Banks Road area are grateful for the work which has been done to Banks Road. The car park at the bottom is still rough. He wondered why Sheldrakes could not pay for re-tarmaccing it. Phil Miner will have a look at it with a view to doing some work.

David Steel asked Russell Favager what is the latest situation on the Heswall and Pensby surgeries regarding building a new facility here.

Russell Favager replied that Planning permission was refused by the Council. Further discussions are being held with the GPs, and they are looking at the reasons why the Council rejected the proposal. Mr. Steel said that at the meeting before last he asked what has been the result of the peoples' survey. Russell Favager said that 907 had responded and which 78% were in favour of the development.

Cllr. Johnson said there are 26,000 patients in the two surgeries.

David Steel said that everyone he spoke to in Pensby said they were happy to go – the exercise would be good for them, but just for a GP visit you do no want to go a distance. This is not going forward – it is going backward. If you go into the history of it, Dr. Seagar had foresight to build this many years ago.

Russell Favager gave an update on the Warrens. A Planning application was submitted last week, and this is for building on the glass house area.

Sandy Cameron said that 85% were in favour of the one in Thingwall and 85/78% in Heswall.

The Planning Committee that turned it down was 100%.

If you quote all percentages 2700 responded, of which 2400 all strongly agreed the proposal.

I can only quote from the figures given me of the numbers of the patients 562 residents responded, 460 in favour. The Planning application at the Warrens affects the whole of the area – Heswall, Pensby, Thingwall and Irby.

Lady asked Mr. Favager whether the patients wanted Pensby surgery to close and everything to move to Heswall. It was put in the document that would you like the new facility but in the operation guide it didn't say that the Pensby surgery would close and everyone would move to Heswall.

Russell Favager said the consultation document stated quite clearly that there was going to be a complete re-organisation on the Heswall site and it did say that the Pensby surgery would be relocated to the new site.

Russell Favager said that as the Council had rejected it so they are talking to the GPs and looking at their options.

Ken Gethen said he would like to state how valuable our Fire Service is (no disrespect to the Police), but they responded in under four minutes to the house, and saved everything.

Tony Garrett asked what supervision is being taken over Heswall shore. There are a great many old boats (wrecks) left on the shore. Can Wirral Council do anything? There is a sign at the bottom of the road accessing the shore saying DO NOT COME DOWN ON THE SHORE BEYOND THIS POINT. Two months ago it was going to be replaced, and it seems that they have forgotten all about it.

Peter Scammell asked "is there a schedule for re-surfacing Brimstage Road to the Clatterbridge roundabout?"

Cllr. Rowlands has brought this to the attention of the Highways Department, and the Officers are aware, and it is down on the list.

The question was asked "when was that road classified as an A road from a B road? Phil Miner will investigate.

A gentleman asked whether there is any update on the change of the Centre from Clatterbridge to Liverpool.

Russell Favager said the centre is a regional centre and not just for Wirral and that 70% of the patients come from across the river. An independent cancer expert has recommended that there should be some inpatient cancer beds located within Liverpool, preferably at the Royal with its close links to the University. Nothing has happened yet and there is no agreement, but they will be looking at different options over the next couple of years. Whatever the outcome there is no suggestion that there won't still be beds at Wirral. It is just about putting the right numbers in each area where the patients are. A full public consultation would take place before anything happened.

Susan Proudlove asked the Committee in February what about the dropped pavements in Old Wood Road? Can someone drive where the children's school is? It is very dangerous. Susan is a representative for the Burness Farm Group. The site proposed for the Warrens is not waste land, but the glass houses. In all the surgeries what is going on? The doctors are trying to get somewhere to improve access for patients, not just the specialist treatments. It is impossible to gain access



to any of the doctors' surgeries, and I hope the Councillors here tonight will support the doctors. It has been going on for about ten years.

Cllr Wilkins will follow up the dropped kerbs requirement, especially Ridgewood Road, and Fishers Lane where it is really bad. There should be some concrete decision on the doctors' surgery by the next Forum.

This is one of the worst areas for access for shops. Heswall and Pensby are a disgrace to what they used to be, and the Government should put more money into the Health resources. There is more money going into Birkenhead, and they are forgetting about it here, young families and old people. Pensby and Thingwall, Heswall and Irby should stand up for themselves.

Cllr. Rowlands thanked all the Officers for attending and answering the questions.

## **6 DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next Area Forum will be held on Wednesday, 21st October 2009 at 7 p.m. at the Hope Centre (formerly Pensby Community Centre) in Fishers Lane, Pensby with a presentation on Planning.