

AREA FORUM (BIRKENHEAD & TRANMERE AND ROCK FERRY)

Wednesday, 14 October 2009

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	P Davies (Chair)
<u>In attendance:</u>	Councillors	C Meaden WJ Davies, M McLaughlin
<u>Community Representatives:</u>		Peter Exley
<u>Lead Officer:</u>		David Ball
<u>Area Service Co-ordinator:</u>		Andy Brannan
<u>Wirral University Teaching Hospital Foundation Trust</u>		Sandra Shannon
<u>NHS Wirral:</u>		Tina Long
<u>Merseyside Police:</u>		Inspector Mick Blease
<u>Merseyside Fire and Rescue service:</u>		Richie Clarke
<u>Area Street Scene Manager</u>		Garry Cummings
<u>Council Officers</u>		Ian Lowrie (Community Safety Team), Carol Sharratt (minute taker)
<u>Apologies</u>	Councillors	B Kenny, J Stapleton Lenny McCormick , Hazel Roberts (Together)

1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Councillor Phil Davies informed the Forum that the Chair, Councillor Jean Stapleton, was unable to attend the meeting due to feeling unwell and that he would be chairing the meeting. He opened the meeting, welcomed the Forum members and thanked the 7 members of the public who had made the effort to attend this Area Forum meeting in Well Lane Primary School. He invited the Forum members to introduce themselves.

Apologies were received from Cllr Jean Stapleton, Cllr Brian Kenny, Hazel Roberts and Lenny McCormick.

2 AREA CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT, INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING FROM JUNE 09 AND YOU DECIDE RESULTS FOR BIRKENHEAD, TRANMERE AND ROCK FERRY

The Area Co-ordinator, Andy Brannan, thanked everyone for attending and informed the Forum that copies of the report were available at the meeting, and included:

- the minutes from the last meeting, on page 4
- matters arising, on pages 10-11, covering issues raised at the last Forum meeting

Andy added that he would be happy to deal with any questions / issues arising from the report and that his contact details were included on the report.

Peter Exley mentioned that he was still waiting for confirmation of how much each yellow sign costs. David Ball confirmed that Gary Cummings would find out and contact Peter about this.

You Decide 09/10 – Andy informed the Forum that this was the second year of the project and confirmed that £20,000 was available for additional Council services and that the top results of the recent questionnaire were as follows:

- Positive outdoor activity days for young people
- Temporary CCTV
- Household security
- Deployment of 3 youth respect workers
- Community sports festival and community environment day

In addition to this £18,200 was available for highway and road safety improvements, with the following top results:

- More street lighting
- Additional dropped kerbs

The area should see some positive results from these additional services / improvements.

Andy also informed the Forum that consultations were taking place for the following:

- Shoreline Management Plan
- Governance Review

Information on these, along with details of how to get involved and have your say, was available at the meeting.

The Chair thanked Andy for his report / update and asked if there were any issues / questions. None were received.

Minute Decision:

Resolved that:

- (i) **The Area Co-ordinator be thanked for his report / update**
- (ii) **Garry Cummings contact Peter Exley re: cost of yellow signs**

3 **AREA PLANS UPDATE**

David Ball informed the Forum that the Area Plan needs to be refreshed and discussions were taking place with the Chair on how this should be done. Information on this will be sent out in the next few weeks and it is hoped that a draft plan will be available for discussion at the next Forum meeting.

4 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The following questions / issues were raised:

1. Jim Cadwallader – are there any plans to try and reduce the carbon footprint for police / emergency / council vehicles? The Council could look at putting resources into place for this, e.g. setting up a green energy petrol station, where fuel is produced from waste, for such vehicles
2. The Chair asked if there were any initiatives on this from public agencies. David Ball informed the Forum that carbon reduction was important and that some work was going on nationally on the introduction of electric vehicles, but that not enough facilities were available at present. He agreed to see if he could get any more information on this.
3. Inspector Blease added that Merseyside had trialled a dual fuel vehicle (in Heswall) but that the results were not available on this yet. All police vehicles went to diesel, but the expected savings were not made, and prove to be very costly.
4. Peter Exley added that bio-fuel has to be refined and filters and requires additives. It is sought after and can be purchased, but demand is leading to the production of crops for fuel rather than food. Electric vehicles are not suitable for police cars.
5. Richie Clarke informed the Forum that he had been on various conferences about this. A lot of effort was being made both nationally and locally, to reduce energy consumption and the Carbon Trust are putting resources into reducing the carbon footprint. Bio-diesel is not suitable for emergency vehicles as they are too big but initiatives, such as replacing ancillary vehicles more often, are in place.
6. Peter Exley – Rock Ferry shore was mentioned at the previous Forum. £10m of funding is required to put into place plans to sort out the wall between Rock Ferry and Seacombe, is this dependent on private or council funding?
7. David Ball – the funding will need to come from external sources and will form part of a larger scheme, including:

- a. Yacht club - improving facilities, access to water, opening up the pier, the esplanade
 - b. Shorefields area – New Ferry
 - c. Bromborough Landfill Site – part of a major scheme through Newlands Phase 2 programme
 - d. International Business Park down to Eastham
8. The next step will be to get external funding and the whole project will take several years to complete.
9. Peter Exley – Which external sources are being looked at to fund the above project?
10. David Ball – North West Development Agency, National Lottery, English Heritage. The local MPs (Mr Chapman and Mr Field) are in support of this, along with the local ward councillors.
11. Richie Clarke – Are there any plans for the disused jetty, as this is a safety issue?
12. David Ball – the Admiral PH is to be demolished to make way for a new yacht club and boat storage area adjacent to the slipway. It is proposed that the structure of the jetty will be refurbished for use as a public view point. The plans are at a very early stage and will be discussed in more detail when the amount of funding available is known. Consultation will then take place with relevant agencies and planning permission will be sought.
13. Councillor McLaughlin added that the councillors are supportive of this scheme.
14. Garry Cummings – will the Yacht club keep their current premises?
15. David Ball – Yes, this is a Grade II Listed Building, and this may be used as offices, but the detail still has to be agreed.
16. David added that detailed discussions need to take place re: access through the residential area and the possibility of an access off the by-pass. The Police will be invited to comment on this.
17. Peter Exley expressed his disappointment that the Admiral PH was being demolished.
18. David Ball - confirmed that the plans include the demolition of the PH but that the quality of the new build will be impressive.
19. Jim Crocker – the Yacht club premises is older than Birkenhead and could be used as a visitors centre.
20. David Ball – confirmed that the history had been looked at in detail, and that the aim was to blend the historic into the new development. He was not sure about the feasibility of a visitors centre, but this would be considered. The Heritage Trail tries to pick up such sights.

21. Councillor Bill Davies – the Yacht club building is listed and there are always three rooms in use, what state is it in? On a health and safety note the number of people living in the area may need to be considered due to its proximity to the Shell refinery.
22. David Ball – It is not in a good state of repair but it does have a lot of history. The plan is to keep and improve the building but the future use has not yet emerged. The project will be discussed with the Health and Safety Executive and other Statutory Authorities when more detailed plans are drawn up.
23. The Chair confirmed that the Forum would be kept updated on this project.
24. Jim Cadwallader - dealers bringing drugs into the country should be treated as terrorists, as money used to buy arms that may be used against English forces abroad.
25. Inspector Blease – the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 is fit for purpose when dealing with drug dealers. Anti-terrorist laws wouldn't add any more power to the police when dealing with such matters.
26. Collette McDonagh – Could the Birkenhead CSO's patrol the Harden Avenue / Grange Road West area on Saturday afternoons and weekend evenings? There are groups of youths walking alongside elderly people and young girls walking in the area and knocking them into the road.

Inspector Blease – agreed to look into this. Ian Lowrie also agreed to look into this

Collette also raised the issue of disabled access to Merseyrail stations at Rock Ferry, Hamilton square and Green Lane. David Ball said he would refer these issues to Merseytravel for a response and report back to the next meeting of the Forum.

Minute Decision:

Resolved that:

- (i) **David Ball to find out if there was any further information on schemes to reduce carbon emissions**
- (ii) **Inspector Blease and Ian Lowrie to look into problem of youths knocking pedestrians into the road within the Harden Avenue / Grange Road West area**

5 AREA FORUM PARTNER UPDATES

The Chair invited the partners to give brief updates:

NHS Wirral:

Tina Long informed the Forum that a detailed briefing was available in the Area Co-ordinator's report and highlighted the following:

- Planning permission for the redevelopment of St Catherine's Hospital has been approved
- Swine Flu – Wirral still has a relatively low number of incidents, but this could increase in the winter months. In most cases the symptoms are fairly mild, but tammy flu vaccinations for vulnerable groups will start next week and people will be invited in by their GPs along with the seasonal flu vaccinations.

The Chair thanked Tina Long for her update and the following questions / issues were raised:

1. Jim Cadwallader – How often do specialist dieticians go into schools to ensure that issues such as children with celiac disease are picked up, as it can result in young people being chastised for creating a disruption when it could be that they have such a disease and that the food they have eaten has triggered off their change in behaviour? I have been working in schools on a drumming project and am concerned about this.

Tina Long – we are doing a lot of work with schools and working with the Council to put sessions into schools looking at all aspects of health.

Wirral University Teaching Hospital Trust:

Sandra Shannon informed the Forum that she was pleased to be attending her first Forum. She confirmed that leaflets and information on the Trust were available at the meeting, and highlighted the following:

- Infection control – there has been a lot of successes in reducing infection with MRSA down by 50% from last year and bowel infection further reduced by 30% from last year.
- Improvements - there has been a big focus on improvements and capital investment, including:
 - £1.6m investment by NHS Wirral to provide a specialist stroke centre
 - Development of a multi-purpose women's / children's hospital service, including birthing pools, overnight facilities for parents, ward upgrades. Photos of the new facilities were available at the meeting
 - New dialysis unit
 - Installation of a second MRI scanner at Arrowe Park Hospital.

The Chair thanked Sandra Shannon for her update and the following questions / issues were raised:

2. Chair – when will the new hospital open?

Sandra Shannon – it will be a phased approach over the next 18 months. The Ronald MacDonald accommodation facility for parents has opened.

Police:

Inspector Mike Blease informed the Forum of the following:

- Robberies were down; there had been no robberies in the neighbourhood since 26 July 2009.
- Since 1 April 2009 we have had to improve public confidence levels re: anti-social behaviour, the police ran a survey on this and our neighbourhood had the best return figures (80%).

- We have been working hard at reducing crime and levels have dropped compared with the previous year
- Bernard Lawson is the temporary Acting Chief Constable and a new Chief Constable should be in place by January 2010
- New Police Station – planning permission has been approved and station should be ready by early 2012. Birkenhead and Laird Street Police Stations will close and Well Lane Police Station will remain.

The Chair thanked Inspector Blease for his update and the following questions / issues were raised:

Councillor Meaden

3. Have you noticed any decrease in incidents now that the alley gates have been secured?
4. At the Youth Parliament conference yesterday the young people asked for statistical information on anti-social behaviour (ASB) within age groups, as only read about bad youths not good youths in the media, yet mainly often only read about adult ASB in the newspapers.
5. At the previous Forum it was agreed that you would bring a Tsar gun to the meeting

Inspector Blease – (3) yes, since catching the perpetrator (the window cleaner) the gates are now secure and the quality of life for the residents has improved dramatically. (4) Older people (25+) would go straight to an ASB order whereas other options would be considered for younger people prior to issuing an ASB order, therefore need to be careful when using statistics. (5) This has been delayed as a de-activated gun is not yet available.

Councillor Bill Davies –

6. What is your view of the knife culture in Birkenhead?
7. Has the level of violence decreased at clubs and are detectors used to see if weapons are being carried?
8. Is there a fixed penalty for people riding bicycles through the Precinct, as the security staff say that they are not allowed to stop them?

Inspector Blease – (6) incidents are mainly domestic, it is very rare to see people on the streets with knives. (7) Incidents at night clubs are tackled to make them safer places, e.g. premises where glass has been used as a weapon is made to use plastic glasses to stop incidents. (8) The security staff does not have powers to stop cyclists, and the Police have to prioritise where to put resources.

(7) Ian Lowrie added that part of the condition of club licences is that they must have CCTV system to video image and if this is not available the club could lose its licence.

9. Peter Exley – Why are motorists being observed and cars being pulled in when coming out of the tunnel / train stations, causing delays?

Inspector Blease – spotters looking out for drivers using mobile phones, not wearing seat belts etc. pass on information and these drivers are stopped. The Police do not pull over all cars, such events are usually surveys, such as the census where the Police assist to ensure safety.

10. Jim Cadwallader – thanked Inspector Blease for help with building links with schools and Police through the CSOs.

Jim Crocker

11. Can something be done about the traffic in problem in Ionic Street, as this is getting out of hand?

12. Disabled access is required at railway stations – such as Rock Ferry.

13. Collette McDonagh – The lower level lift at Hamilton Square are being switched off causing difficulties for passengers.

(11) Inspector Blease agreed to look into this.

(12) & (13) The Chair requested that the Area Co-ordinator take these issues up with Merseytravel.

14. Collette McDonagh – can there be more co-ordination with Wirral Partnership Homes (WPH) on the dates of the Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) meetings, as WPH had date of 7th October for meeting.

Inspector Blease – confirmed that the meeting is due to take place on 21st October and that WPH would be informed of this.

Community Safety:

Ian Lowrie informed the Forum that information on the work of the Community Safety team was included in the Area Co-ordinator's report and highlighted the following:

- We need to design out crime by putting into policies and checklists to aim to stop crime before it happens - an inter-agency meeting on serious inquisitive crime is taking place tomorrow.
- St Catherine's Hospital has been designed to stop crime happening.
- Crime and Reduction Partnership – involves a number of different agencies and meets quarterly. It is responsible for checking on crime and disorder and putting strategies into place.
- Face the public session – event will be held on 3rd November 2009, 9.30 – 1.00pm at the Belmont Suite, Tranmere Rovers (including lunch). Anyone interested in attending should contact Kim Harvey at Royal Standard House on 0151 644 4500. Inside Justice Week – on 22nd October 2009 the courts will be closed for the day and sessions aimed at violent crime, e.g. mock trials, will be held. This will involve young people and will hopefully be effective in reducing crime and showing what is involved, such as witness protection.
- Hate Crime – there will be a conference early next year to look at the six strands of hate crime and to help ensure that this becomes a thing of the past.

The Chair thanked Ian Lowrie for his update and the following questions / issues were raised:

15. Jim Cadwallader – One in ten Caucasian young men find it difficult to read and write. Are you coming across these under the hate crime as they find it difficult to communicate?

Ian Lowrie – I have not come across this as an issue, but people that are arrested are assessed and helped through the process where appropriate.

Fire & Rescue Service

The Chair advised the Forum that Richie Clarke had to leave the meeting early, but that an update was available on page 15 of the Area Co-ordinator's report.

16. Peter Exley - the new recycling scheme requires van/trailers to have a permit at the recycle centre and wood is not treated as recyclable – why is this as wood can be used to make chipboard?

Garry Cummings – agreed to look into this issue and report back

Minute Decision:

Resolved that –

- (i) The partners be thanked for their updates**
- (ii) Inspector Blease to bring a tsar gun to the next meeting; look into traffic problem in Ionic Street; and contact WPH re: date of NAG meeting**
- (iii) Andy Brannan to contact Merseytravel re: disabled access at railway stations / lifts at Hamilton Square Station and report back on these issues**
- (iv) Garry Cummings to report back on the issue of wood as a recyclable product**

6 FUTURE MEETINGS / PRESENTATIONS

The Chair informed the Forum that there will be a report on the Area Plans and that it had been suggested that some of the groups that had been funded through the Forum could be invited to give a brief presentation on the project funded. It was agreed that this would be the main item at the next meeting.

The next meeting will take place on 11th February 2010 at Rock Ferry Community Centre.

Minute Decision:

Resolved that - Andy Brannan to organise an Area Plan update and presentations by groups funded through the Forum for the next meeting

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Publicity / Forum attendance

The Chair – are residents groups informed of the Forum dates as part of the forum advertising?

Area Co-ordinator – the Forums are advertised in the Globe, Information Points (Libraries / GPs / Dentists etc.) and through the Voluntary and Community Sector

Network. He explained that areas had been leafleted in the past, but this had not led to an increase in attendance at the meetings.

Bethany – commented that she went onto the Council website and only found dates of forums up to June 2009. The Area Co-ordinator agreed to look into this.

Collette McDonagh – could the Ward Councillors include details of the Forums in their quarterly newsletters?

Chair – felt that this was a good idea and agreed that this would be done.

Peter Exley – added that he was aware of at least five residents' representatives that had been told about this meeting, but that only one of them was at the meeting. He added that, with some co-ordination, information on the Forums could be included in the leaflets handed out by Tranmere Together.

The Chair requested that the Area Co-ordinator follow this up

Garry Cummings – the forum dates could be included on the bin calendars

David Ball – information on the forums could be sent by e-mail

Councillor Meaden added that a previous forum held workshops rather than a meeting over 100 people attended.

The Chair agreed that this would be considered for a future meeting.

Tranmere Together

David Ball informed the Forum that Tranmere Together Neighbourhood Management will merge with Lairdside Trust from 2nd November 2009.

Community Action Nepal

Ian Lowrie informed the Forum that a fundraising event was taking place on 16th November 2009 – 7pm at Birkenhead School to raise funds to provide educational facilities and urged everyone to attend. Leaflets were available at the meeting.

Promenade Improvements

Jim Cadwallader – the costs for works on the promenade improvements could be kept down by the following:

- Working with the long-term unemployed, using them to work on the project and just paying their expenses / providing meals.
- Working with Jails to utilise skills of prisoners (such as scheme is in operation at Walton Jail).

The Chair thanked Jim for these suggestions and David Ball confirmed that he was aware of such initiatives and agreed to consider using such schemes.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending at the meeting closed at 8.40pm

Minute Decision:

Resolved that –

- (i) Andy Brannan to look at updating Council website with forum dates and to liaise with Tranmere Together to arrange for the Forum dates to be included in their leaflets**
- (ii) Councillor Phil Davies to arrange for forum dates to be included in the Councillor's quarterly newsletters**
- (iii) The Chair to consider workshop style format for future meeting**