

Wirral's Area Forums



Bidston & Claughton Area Forum

(also covering St James & Noctorum)

Papers for the forum meeting

Tuesday 2nd February 2010

**St James Centre, 344 Laird Street,
Birkenhead, CH41 7AL**

7.00pm

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Code of Conduct for Area Forums

- Indicate to the Chairperson when you would like to speak
- Let invited speakers finish what they have to say
- Respect others right to be heard
- Do not use abusive or offensive language
- Do not make any discriminatory remarks
- Do not have private conversations while meeting is in progress

Section One

AREA FORUM (BIDSTON AND CLAUGHTON) Thursday, 8 October 2009

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

1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

The Chair, Councillor Denise Roberts, welcomed forum members and 16 members of the public to the Bidston & Claughton Area Forum meeting being held at Birkenhead Sixth Form College, Claughton, Birkenhead. A loop system was installed for anyone with a hearing impairment. Apologies noted from John Webb, Director of Adult Social Services and Jean McIntosh, Community Rep and Councillor Jim Crabtree

2 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS FORUM - JUNE 2009 The minutes of the Area Forum meeting of 12 February 2009 were agreed a true record. Under Item 2 Results of the Funds for You bid should be known in November. Under Item 4 – it was noted that the petition had resulted in action to reduce speed limit and more road signs had been put in. Councillor Harry Smith had done a lot of work around that. Councillor Smith report that further measures would be progressed and that residents would be informed of them in the near future. Councillor Foulkes queried whether a bid had been made to the Funds for You funding pot (formally Community Initiatives Funding) from the Allotments? Michelle Gray said she would look into this and discuss with Don Charlton at the end of the meeting.

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

Minute Decision/Resolved that: Minutes of the Forum held on 12 February 2009 be agreed.

3 AGE CONCERN Pat Lloyd, Information Officer from Age Concern, attended to provide an update on the services offered by their organisation. They provided services on Wirral for people age 50 and over. They were also dealing with people in their 90's and the fastest growing age group in Wirral is the over 80's age group. Services have grown rapidly in the last few years. The Information and Advice Service provided information and advice to older people and helped to maximize people's income. They worked closely with health professionals and received referrals from GPs, community nurses etc. One of latest projects was Bereavement Support funded by NHS Wirral. There were numerous care services run from Devonshire Centre, Park Road North, including a Dementia Centre. Wirral was one of the worst areas for Early Onset Dementia. The Centre is very much activity based and provided support and respite to carers. Other services were luncheon clubs and day care for people who are socially isolated and a Befriending Services was recently launched. This included both visiting and phonline befriending services. There were currently 80 paid staff and 350 volunteers. HQ was based in Market Street, with offices also in the Lauries Centre, Pensall House, Harvest Court and outreach surgeries throughout the Borough including GP practices and One Stop Shops. Age Concern also run a busy home visiting service Income generation was through insurance/charity shops and many fund raising activities. This enabled them to run other free services such as positive ageing activities like Tai Chi, Dance classes, art etc.

Questions/Comments from the Forum: Councillor Harry Smith asked whether Age Concern were putting pressure on the Government to get Attendance Allowance to also include mobility. Pat confirmed they had, however the proposals in the new Green Paper were to abandon Attendance Allowance.

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

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

The Chair asked where Age Concern got all their volunteers from and Pat confirmed it was largely word of mouth. A member of the audience asked whether they had a problem reaching some groups such as ethnic minorities? Pat confirmed they have worked with Wirral Change and BME leaders. They were being reached, however it was harder.

Minute Decision/ Resolved: To thank the Pat Lloyd from Age Concern for her update.

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

NHS Wirral – Marie Armitage, Director of Public Health and Dr Abhi Mantgani, Medical Director Dr Mantgani updated the Forum on St Catherine's Health Centre which was now going for final approval to the Strategic Health Authority, the project should start end of this year. There was a new walk in centre at Eastham Clinic to deal with minor injuries so people don't have to go to travel to Arrowe Park Hospital or Victoria Central Health Centre. Also started a scheme in Birkenhead for a Drop-In Centre, which would be nurse-led with support by doctors and would be open Mon-Thurs until 8am and Friday until 6.30pm Health check leaflets were available for people in the 40-74 age group to receive their health check to identify people who are at high risk of cardio vascular disease/diabetes, etc. We would also send health trainers to go to hard to reach population to do these checks. The Health Centre on Laird Street now has a new builder and building expected to be opened in February. Marie Armitage encouraged anybody who normally had the seasonal flu jab to go along this year. She then briefed on the expected rise in swine flu over the winter. Certain people would be entitled to have a swine flu injection including the over 65's with other health conditions. Marie encouraged use of the vaccine as the risk of spreading was significant. Confirmation was given that work on Townfield Lane Surgery would restart and it should be ready in 12-14 months.

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

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

Wirral University Teaching Hospital – Joyce Magennis updated on the major issue of controlling infection and reducing incidence of MRSA and Clostridium Difficile which was still a priority for the Trust and gave an update of the improving stats. Updates on standards, including being named for the third year running one of the country's Top 40 performing hospitals by an independent benchmarking company, were given. Details of provision of new services were highlighted, including a major capital investment for Women and Children at Arrowe Park Hospital, this being due for completion in Spring 2011. Joyce also briefed on the new easy-to-use website and encouraged everyone to use this facility. Full details of Joyce's update can be found on pages 12-13 of the forum papers.

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

Councillor George Davies referred to the comprehensive wrap-around for the Wirral

News this week, which covers all this information. The Forum noted that 40% of Arrowe Park Hospital, within 2 or 3 years, would have single rooms with ensuite facilities.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service – Ritchie Clark The update report for Merseyside Fire and Rescue Services could be found on page 7 of the forum papers. Ritchie highlighted ongoing initiatives. There was reduction in the number of deliberate fires on Wirral. Undertaking partnership work with Wirral Roadsafe Team and holding a number of events where trained firefighters and Roadsafe Team have been in public venues and invited people to come along and have their child car seats checked to see if they have been correctly fitted. 2 further events were planned for 14 November in Heswall Aldi and Morrison's in West Kirby, with a view to continue through 2010. Winter Warm Campaign leaflets were available this evening. Would be offering Electric Blanket testing and free replacements blankets if found unsafe. Also offering to exchange chip pans for deep fat fryers and provide free energy efficient light bulbs. Events were running at Birkenhead and Wallasey Fire Stations. Also at Birkenhead Fire Station, free health checks for over 40's. There are gym facilities there which are already used by NHS Wirral. Need to call and book an appointment. Pat Landsborough asked whether MF&RS provided a call and collect service for blanket testing? Ritchie responded that it would be difficult to do that because of the logistics. A member of the audience queried why her smoke alarm was making a noise for no apparent reason. Ritchie thought it may be defective and suggested calling the freephone number and it could be replaced.

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

A member of the audience asked what was being done to address arson on places like Bidston Hill, especially in the build up to Bonfire night? Ritchie confirmed that, together with Wirral Council Community Safety, they were looking at what areas where getting anti social behaviour fires were occurring. They would target problem areas to stop vehicles being able to get into those areas.

Merseyside Police – Inspector Roy McGregor In the Mischief Night lead up, Police were visiting shops in relation to sale of alcohol. There was also a Wirral wide operation using staff from other areas to go on foot in anti social behaviour areas. The Police wanted to provide some reassurances to the public and wanted to ask for help from communities. If anyone heard about illegal fireworks, stockpiles of wood etc. they could make arrangements to get removed. Police wanted to gain public confidence and satisfaction in their service. Crime was falling but feel public perception is that people don't believe that. There was a drive to engage with the community in more visible policing. The Forum was invited to take "Your Voice Counts" leaflets. Roy briefed on a campaign running with Tesco in producing a computer/mobile phone database which increased the opportunity to get stole phones back to you.

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

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

A member of the audience raised concerns from local residents regarding youths in the area managing to get alcohol despite controls in place. He asked what was being done regarding visible policing? Inspector McGregor referred to different types of policing and different response times to 999 calls. CSOs were patrolling the majority of time on foot. The Police need communities to tell them of problems, so they know where to send officers.

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

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

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

1 – Continue with the present sort of arrangements with one difference – currently Council takes a leader over 12 months. Under the new arrangements the leader would be elected for 4 years and choose members of the Cabinet.

2 – Wirral to consider going for an elected mayor system. More information was available on the Council website. Papers were available tonight to pick up, with details of the consultation process and people encouraged to send views in.

5 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME Residents in Thistleton Avenue were raising concern with regard to this being the only side road through to Claughton Village. Lorries with heavy loads were coming through this narrow street and a car had already been damaged. Was there any way the traffic flow could be reversed? Following a discussion it was agreed the Forum would feed through this request via Technical Services.

A member of the audience handed in a petition, with 60 signatures asking for road safety measures in Boundary Road and a further petition on behalf of residents in Hoylake Road for similar measures. He was submitting this to Bidston ward councillors.

Query around Solway street demolition raising concerns has nothing been done to sort out the community safety concerns. Councillor Davies confirmed he had been contacted on numerous occasions by residents in the area. A meeting was coming up with Wirral Partnership Homes. Councillor Smith said that traffic calming measures would not be introduced if some of houses going to be demolished.

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

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

6 DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS The Chair thanked people for attending and Sixth Form College for the use of the venue. People were invited to look around the display stands and take away any literature they would like. The next Area Forum would take place on Tuesday 2 February 2010.

Section Two

Area forums provide an opportunity for people who live or work in Wirral to have a greater say on local issues and be more active in decision making and shaping local services.

They involve local ward councillors, police, NHS Wirral, University Teaching Hospital Trust, fire safety representatives etc along with community representatives and officers from various departments of the council.

Forums also provide information about current services, how they can be accessed and ultimately raise awareness of local council initiatives.

Anti-Social Behaviour Team

Legal action against the perpetrators of anti-social behaviour has included:

Reported October 2009:

Female evicted from **Birkenhead** issued with an eviction order following offences committed by her sons; two of which had been subject to an Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC) and a 3-year Anti-Social Behaviour Order respectively. The order was postponed for two years on condition she complies with the terms of her tenancy agreement and her eldest son does not reside at the property*;

Reported November 2009:

- 35-year old female from St Oswalds Avenue, **Beechwood**, was issued with an eviction order due to multiple breaches of her tenancy agreement for a range of offences committed by her and/or members of her household and/or visitors to her property. The order was suspended for two years on condition that the tenant complies with the terms of her tenancy agreement**.
- 34-year old male and 42-year old female of Rodney Street, **Birkenhead**, were issued with 2-year Anti-Social Behaviour Orders, following a catalogue of anti-social and criminal behaviour related to aggressive street drinking;

Youth Respect Team The Anti-Social Behaviour Team's youth outreach team (Youth Respect Team) has operated in Seacombe, Poulton, North Birkenhead, Bidston, **Bebington** and Noctorum;

Badges identify team members in a flash (Oct 09) Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team officers have come up with a bright idea to help them be more visible on duty as the winter nights draw in. The team, whose aim is to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour, started wearing a uniform in 2007 to help identify them on the streets. The bright red outfit, which is also worn by the Youth Respect Team, is now a well-known sight among adults and young people alike. Now the team has added LED badges to its uniform to increase its visibility at night. The badges scroll the name of the team member and the team they represent in bright red.

Partners line up for Not In My Neighbourhood week (Nov 09) Wirral residents and agencies took to the streets for a week of action to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour. 'Not in My Neighbourhood Week' ran across the country from 2-6 November 2009 to promote what is being done locally to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour and encourages the police, public services and communities to work together to keep streets safe. Police led activity took place in Seacombe, Poulton, Moreton, Wallasey, West Kirby, Heswall, Bromborough, Noctorum and Tranmere.

Local children take a starring role with new anti-social behaviour vehicle (Nov 09) Wirral Council's Anti-Social Behaviour and Housing Market Renewal Initiative (HMRI) Teams together launched a new resource to help prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour. The partnership saw the launch of a new 'Community Reassurance Vehicle', equipped with CCTV, and is designed to be deployed primarily into the Housing Market Renewal areas. The vehicle will be used as an information point for residents and will be operated by an Enforcement Officer, funded to work specifically in the HMRI area, who will use the vehicle as a resource to raise levels of awareness amongst adults, children and young people around anti-social behaviour and its consequences. The vehicle will also be used to provide reassurance and act as a deterrent to unacceptable behaviour.



At the launch event at Wallasey Town Hall, Caroline Laing, Manager of Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team, congratulated children and young people from across Wirral and North Wales for taking part in a competition held at this year's Wirral Show. At the show, the Team called upon budding young sleuths to investigate their way around their promotion stands, answering simple questions about alcohol that enabled them to enter a competition for the chance to visit a professional mobile studio at the Show and have a photograph taken, either by themselves or with their friends or siblings.

It was left to the children and young people's imagination how to make the photograph as interesting as possible using the investigation themed props such as binoculars and magnifying glasses. Those who took part also received a free 'respect' key ring containing their photograph. The twenty-one winners, whose photographs included single, couple and group shots, were invited to attend the launch with their families to witness the grand unveiling of the new vehicle. The vehicle was officially launched with a ceremonial cutting of the ribbon by 7 year-old Jack Wallace of Woodchurch, who is pictured on the vehicle posing with magnifying glass and walkie talkie.

Truancy crackdown re-launched in Wirral (Dec 09) Wirral Council and Merseyside Police joined forces to crackdown on truants. An anti-truancy blitz stopped more than 90 young people during a four-day period in November and December. The relaunched crackdown on truancy will see officers from the Police and Council return to the streets of Wirral in the New Year and use information from schools and members of the public to target known truancy hotspots. Anyone with information on truancy can contact the 'It's Your Call' hotline on 606 2020.

Confiscation Cops hit the streets at Christmas (Dec 09) A partnership between Merseyside Police and Wirral Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Team hit the streets again for the festive season following its successful operation over the summer holidays. The dedicated patrol of police officers, branded as the 'Confiscation Cops', patrolled the borough focusing on removing alcohol from young people. The officers were visiting locations across Wirral, both in a high visibility vehicle and on foot, to patrol areas where young people congregate, responding to public concerns. Targeting hot-spot locations of alcohol-fuelled anti-social behaviour, identified by analysis of data from police and other partner agencies, which includes calls from the public, the officers confiscated alcohol from young people.



During August 2009, operating on Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings, the dedicated patrol spoke to 245 young people. 90 units of alcohol were seized and 18 young people were signposted to support services.

The 'Confiscation Cops' patrols are funded by the government's Youth Taskforce as one of a number of initiatives to tackle alcohol fuelled anti-social behaviour by young people. Residents can report locations where young people are engaging in alcohol misuse to the police on 709 6010.

Community Safety

Equality and Diversity The aim of 'Wirral' Hate Crime prevention development work is to prevent and tackle hate incidents including those which can relate to anti social behavior. Being targeted because of your race, religion, sexuality or disability is a profoundly isolating experience and one in which people from all communities have a legitimate right to expect protection from the prejudice and discrimination that are at the root of hate crime. The focus of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership is on serious acquisitive crime and hate crime.

Lead Officer is working with partners in the development of a Prevention of Hate Crime - Multi Agency Risk Assessment Committee, but there is still more to do, such as ensuring victims have the confidence in reporting incidents and systems are in place to address the reported crime. Joined up working benefits all, it can improve efficiency and bring real benefits to the community. Collaboration is essential to the sensitive and effective delivery of services to victims of hate crime. Wirral's Multi Agency Risk Assessment Committee for the prevention of Hate Crime will bring together partner agencies that can co-ordinate a package of support depending on risk and or need. In this way, individuals experiencing a hate crime will be provided with an effective and consistent range of support.

Neighbourhood Watch Event This event was held on Friday 6 November at Hulme Hall during 'Not in my Neighbourhood Week' 2 – 8 November 2009. All Neighbourhood Watch Leaders and Shop / Club / Pub Watch Leaders had been invited and Neighbourhood Inspectors. It gave an opportunity to discuss matters of importance for their respective neighbourhoods and areas of concern.

Presentations included one provided by the leader of the Regional NH Watch. Our NW Co-ordinator spoke on N'hood Watch and there was a presentation by Trading Standards on 'No Cold Calling' Zones to prevent bogus callers and 'cold-calling' traders. The presentation included legislation about customer's rights.

Christmas operation - Over the Christmas period, the Community Safety Team in conjunction with Merseyside Police, Chamber of Commerce and Council Departments were involved with the overall operation to maintain public safety and security, particularly around the 'Night-time Economy' areas. As a result of the joint operation, the Christmas period was quiet with no major issues arising.

National Recognition For Arrowe Park Hospital The North West Public Health Observatory based at JMU arranged a regional conference "North West Accident and Emergency Department (AED) Data Sharing Summit" and the invitation to attend the conference included the following statement "*The North West region is being recognised nationally for its commitment to, and progress in, AED data sharing for the purpose of violence prevention.*" The NWPHO presentation was entitled "The Wirral Model" and was based upon the partnership work taking place between JMU the A&E Department at Arrowe Park Hospital and the Joint Community Safety Team. Feedback from JMU after the event was sent to the Community Safety Team stating that "*partners were expressing the need to have the 'Wirral model' implemented across the whole of Lancashire and Greater Manchester*".

Awards For Wirral Joint Community Safety Team Two members of the Joint Community Safety Team were winners at the Total Policing Awards held in November 2009. Simon Fitzpatrick won the Police Authority award for Improvement in efficiency/the effectiveness of Merseyside Police for his work on violence prevention and his work with schools, and Sophia Bridge won the award for 'Total Care for Victims' for the work she carries out with victims of domestic violence as part of the Family Safety Unit.

Crime Rates Lowered Of the 43 CDRPs within the North West Region Wirral has retained the 7th lowest recorded rate of crime of all 43 CDRP's within the North West at the end of quarter three and is lower than any of the boroughs on Merseyside. We have reduced all crime during the period April – December 2009 by 7.6% compared to the same period in 2008.

Class A Drug Re-offending: Latest figures demonstrate a 28.5% reduction in the offending rate.

Equality & Diversity

Wirral Council is accredited at level 3 of the Equality Standard!

The Equality Watch team are thrilled to announce that Wirral Council has been awarded level 3 status of the current Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG).

A peer challenge team from the Improvement and Development Agency were on site for 2 days at Wallasey Town Hall (20th/21st May) and re-visited us on 20th November for final assessment. Over the 2 day period Councillors, Chief Officers, staff, representatives from partner organisations, members of the equality watch scheme, local strategic partnership members and community representatives took part in focus groups and interviews.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank EVERYONE who took part in the process both behind the scenes, leading up to the assessment and over the 2 day challenge itself. A huge thank you is extended to Departmental Equality Groups, Staff Diversity Forums, Corporate Equality and Inclusion Group, Equality Watch Team and staff who have worked so tirelessly over the last 18 months to get us where we are today!

Second annual Diversity Day event hailed a huge success!

Wirral's second annual Diversity Day event was held on Wednesday 4th November 2009 at Wallasey Town Hall between 2pm – 9pm.

The event was organised by Equality Watch, the council's equality and diversity programme team and built on last year's event which was aimed specifically at employees. This year the event was open to members of the

public, over 800 people visited the event throughout the course of the day / evening. Everyone was invited to drop-in on the event and sample cultural food, see what services are provided by our local communities, talk to colleagues who have joined a staff diversity forum and see what services our partners are providing. Diversity Week is designed to raise awareness and involve staff and citizens in the promotion of equality and diversity.



Promoting equality of opportunity is about ensuring that people from different groups do not suffer discrimination. Recognising diversity means understanding how people's similarities and differences can be harnessed for the benefit of the whole community.

Diversity Week is also a platform to learn more about your community, challenge misconceptions, promote community relations and develop innovative ideas to achieve equality and promote diversity.

The Equality Watch event was opened by the Mayor Andrew Hodson and the Chief Executive Steve Maddox. The event was closed by the Deputy Mayor Alan Jennings.

The Equality Watch team would like thank the organisations that helped to sponsor the event:



- Merseyside Police
- NHS Wirral
- Wirral Partnership Homes
- Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service
- Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

A wide range of activities were provided throughout the day and we would like to thank all those entertainers who provided a wonderful atmosphere which helped to make the day successful. Some of the activities that took place in the civic hall were: Lion Dance, Sign along with Wirral Taiko Dragon Drummers, Bell Dancer, String Quartet, Polish Folk Musician, Wirral Youth Theatre. Other activities include the Respect bus being situated outside the town hall, a lantern parade competition involving day centres and a diverse football tournament in conjunction with Tranmere Rovers Football Club. The Council Chamber hosted a debate by members of the Executive Youth Board. The food was a great success, People enjoyed the variety of Greek, Chinese, Thai and Polish food. Lantern parade was one of the highlights the day. The lantern competition yielded a high standard of entries and the judging panel decided to award three third places.



The lantern competition results are:

First Place - Riverside People's Centre
Second Place - Prenton Resource Centre
Joint Third Place - Highcroft People's Centre, Moreton Centre, Christine Gaze Forum Housing

The prize draw was drawn by the Council Chief Executive Steve Maddox on Monday 9th November 2009.

First Prize **M Hears**
Second Prize **Sheila from Women's Enterprise Breakthrough**
Third Prize **R Perry**



Youth Voice Conference

The Equality Watch team were privileged to be invited to deliver three Equality & Diversity workshops at this year's Youth Voice conference which took place at Wallasey Town Hall on Tuesday 13 October. The theme of this year's conference was 'Perceptions of Young People'. There were 132 young people at the conference from across Wirral and the Equality Watch team would like to thank Maureen McDaid, Lindsay Davidson and Debbie McCabe from the Youth Service for their support. Special thanks of course to all the young people who took place in the workshops for making them so interactive and interesting!

Launch of new Gender Identity Policy

Wirral Council's new Gender Identity Policy was launched by the Mayor of Wirral, Cllr Andrew Hodson on 8th September, 2009 at Wallasey Town Hall. Also in attendance were Wirral Council's Chief Executive, Chief

Officers, council officers, elected members, members of Wirral's transgender community, representatives from the Council's employee diversity forums and from the community and voluntary sectors.

The Mayor welcomed people to the event and the Chief Executive re-affirmed the Council's pledge to:

- treat transgender people with respect and dignity
- support and consult with transgender employees and the wider transgender community
- strive to ensure that our policies meet the needs of the transgender community
- identify and remove any barriers that may exist for transgender people who wish to access employment and/or services

At the launch members of the transgender community gave a 'from the heart' and moving account of the issues that affect transgender people, both before and after their transition to their acquired gender.

If you would like further information please contact Jan Evans on 0151 691 8430 or Andrea Morrell-Foulkes on 0151 691 8584.

Do you want to become a member of Equality Watch?

This will entitle you to receive copies of equality watch newsletters, regular updates on national and local equality and diversity headlines and the opportunity to be involved in the council's equality watch initiatives. If you are interested in becoming a member of equality watch and would like to register please email: equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk



Operations The Fire Service on Wirral is delivered through 6 community fire stations located at Birkenhead, Bromborough, Heswall, Upton, West Kirby and Wallasey. As previously reported we have made a commitment to risk assess every home in Merseyside and now are proactively targeting those homes that are still outstanding an initial assessment.

To ensure that every home on Merseyside has had a Home Fire Risk Assessment/ **Vulnerable Property Assessment** (VPA's) by the end of the current fiscal year we commenced a new strategy of targeted campaigns in April 09. In addition to normal operations, we have run 7 campaigns across Wirral targeting those at risk properties resulting in an additional 929 HFSC being completed, 1471 VPA being passed and the identification of a further 136 vulnerable properties where there was a need for additional support and intervention in conjunction with partner agencies. Within the first 6 months we have achieved 55% of the annual VPA target for Wirral. In addition to the above work has continued in respect of reducing the risk of death and injury across the area. Attached are statistics for Deliberate Fires & Road Traffic Collisions which show a continuing year on year decline.

MFRS has a statutory duty to maintain operational readiness and training is a key element of that. The Service has carried out a number of realistic training exercises with some of our major industry partners on the Wirral including, Camel Lairds, Uni-Lever, Shell and Costains to ensure that we are operationally prepared for any incident that may occur.

Wirral Deliberate Fires Statistics The tables below show the figures for deliberate fires in Wirral from April 2006 until August 2009. The trend shows a year on year decline in Deliberate Fires from April 2006 to April 2009. The table also includes the first 6 months figures for April – August 2009 inclusive and indicates that we are likely to see another reduction for the year 2009-10.

Deliberate fires for Wirral

National Indicator	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	April - August 2009	Grand Total
NI33a - Deliberate Primary	409	310	295	128	1142
NI33b - Deliberate Secondary	2376	1639	1434	643	5449
Grand Total	2785	1949	1729	771	6463

Environment Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service has set a goal to become an environmentally regenerative service and to reduce our carbon footprint with the ultimate aim of becoming carbon positive. The aim of which is to leave the climate in better shape at the end of each year. This goal will take a sustained effort over a number of years and will require radical change in how we operate as a business, whilst we maintain our high levels of service, intervention and response to the people of Merseyside. In 2004 we became the first Fire Authority to be certified to ISO 14001 for our Environmental Management System. In addition we received in 2008 an award for our Bike wise scheme in the Merseyside Annual Transport Awards as 10% of our staff has taken up the offer of our salary sacrifice scheme to purchase bikes to travel to work.

Recently we received a British Standards Institute Award for our **Energy Efficiency Accreditation**, and a Certificate from the Carbon Trust in recognition and appreciation of our efforts in the field of carbon management, emission reduction and the mitigation of climate change. These awards will be converted over to the Carbon Trust's Carbon Standard in November.

Partnerships The Fire Service are committed to working in partnership to achieve strategic objectives within the Local Area Agreement, examples of this are

A partnership has been set up between MFRS and **Wirral Roadsafe Partnership** to impact on RTC Reduction National Indicators. We have trained staff to check Child Car seat fitting for safety and to give advice on type and legal requirements.

A partnership has been set up between MFRS and Wirral Community Patrol with a view to tackling anti-social behaviour on the beaches in Wirral. Over the summer period Wirral Community Patrol and MFRS personnel patrolled the beach areas and interacted with youths, providing them with information and education on issues of anti-social behaviour, its effects on the local community, alcohol use by young people and anti-social behaviour fires. Although only in its early stages the partnership approach has been well received by the youths and local community alike. It is envisaged that the campaign will continue when the weather or the circumstances dictate the likelihood of youths being present on the beach.

Following on from the success of our previous collaborative **Bonfire Strategies**, which have seen a significant reduction in the number of bonfires requiring Fire Service attendance and decrease in the illegal selling and storing of fireworks, we are again working in partnership with the Police, Trading standards, Probation Service and Community Safety Team to ensure the same impact over the bonfire period this year. We continue to encourage safe & responsible use of fireworks during this period. However, if anyone has any concerns over build up of bonfire materials, they can contact MFRS on **Freephone 0800 731 5958** Similarly any concerns over the illegal selling of fireworks can be reported on **0151 296 4607**.

Wallasey Youth Centre is a joint project currently underway involving MFRS and Wirral Borough Council Youth Service. The scheme involves the development of facilities at Wallasey Community Fire Station to provide amenities for young persons to interact; these will include meeting area, I.T.C suite, dance studio and a number of activity rooms. The overall design was developed in conjunction with young persons who will ultimately be using the facility. Work is due to commence on site at the beginning of October and the facilities should be available by the end of the current fiscal year. This scheme will complement the recently completed Lifestyle Centre at Wallasey and will provide an opportunity for interaction between all age groups.

Fire Support Network is a non-profitable registered charity which works in partnership with the Fire Service on Merseyside to promote fire safety to the local communities through volunteers and partner organisations. Volunteer roles vary from working directly with the fire-fighters, leafleting and replacing batteries in smoke detectors to providing an after fire care service and fund raising. Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer can register online at www.firesupportnet.org.uk or contact via telephone on 0151 296 4600. FSN are looking to recruit a total of 60 volunteers for their **Bright Spark** programmes running in October, January and February. The principal criteria for volunteers are that they should not currently be in Employment, Training or Education and should be aged between 16 and 25. The principal objective of the programme is to work in the most vulnerable parts of Wirral encouraging residents to take advantages of some of the free services available to them in order to make their home safer, warmer and more energy efficient during the winter months. There are lots of incentive activities as well which are sure to maintain interest and enthusiasm throughout the 4 week programme. Cadets will be involved in a huge variety of activities which should enhance many of their

skills and hopefully enable them. If you could circulate the programme to your partner agencies in the hope that they might have young people they would like to nominate. Further details can be obtained by contacting Isabelle Walker, Project Delivery Officer on **0151 296 5346 / 07837 113330**

Community Fire Stations Contact Numbers

- **Birkenhead:** Exmouth Street. Birkenhead.CH41 4AX. 0151 296 5325
- **Bromborough:** Dock Road South. Bebington.CH62 4SQ 0151 296 5925
- **Heswall:** Telegraph Road, Heswall, CH60 OAF. 0151 296 5805
- **Upton:** Arrowe Park Road. Upton.CH49 OUF. 0151 296 5895
- **West Kirby:** The Concourse. West Kirby. CH48 4HX. 0151 296 5955
- **Wallasey:** Mill Lane. Wallasey. CH44 5UE. 0151 296 6180

For a FREE Home Fire Safety Check, including FREE smoke alarm installation if required please contact Fire Service Direct on FREEphone 0800 731 5958

Older People's Parliament

Patrons: **Lady Grace Sheppard** Ethnic Minority Groups: **Lady Irene Chan**

Membership continues to grow, and is currently about 800. It is free to join, and you get various benefits:-

- 1 **receive newsletters and information about events which you can attend free**
- 2 **can contact us with any issues you have about services for older people. We try to take them up with the authorities, and usually get some satisfaction**
- 3 **get involved in one of a number of different groups and projects we are running or involved in.**

Full parliament meeting was addressed by Angela Eagle, Wallasey MP, in her new role as Minister for Pensions and the Aging Society. Questions were addressed to her, and she answered them well.

Away Days during the autumn. The topic was "Home Alone". Speakers covered a range of topics of importance to older people on their own, including doorstep crime, suitable housing, and how to downsize; avoiding loneliness; befriending others and more. We were very grateful to Wirral Partnership Homes for sponsoring the day. Such events can accommodate up to 100, and a lunch is provided free. There is another day planned for this month (February 10th) specially for grandparents caring full time for grandchildren. Do let us know of any such households – they are often really stressed. On March 19th we have booked the Williamson Art Gallery for a big event to coincide with National Dying Awareness Week. We will have solicitors, bereavement workers, and an opportunity to let the NHS and Adult Social Services know just what we want from them when the end of life draws near for us.

We had a number of people coming to us last year about some fairly undignified incidents in hospital. These include aspects of clothing (undignified hospital issue, and difficulties for some in getting their own things laundered); people admitted in an emergency often don't have things they need from home, and have sometimes left their home in a worrying state, or have a pet or a fire left on; some people with hearing or visual handicaps are not receiving the care and support they need and some patients with mobility problems are having difficulty getting to and from the toilet. We collected some of these accounts and sent a letter to the hospital chief executive and others, making sure that we also reported on the high degree of satisfaction of many patients. We have been delighted with the response. Several consultants contacted us, and the Matron for older people's wards came to meet with a number of us. She is taking all the issues very seriously. Since the letter, we have also had reports of some people not getting sufficient fluid and nutrition in hospital, and this is an issue of which they are aware.

Community Podiatry (Chiropody) Service - told us of recent improvements in service. We gave him the clear message that older people want to maintain maximum mobility, and this means good feet amongst other things. We support any expansion of this service.

We are, in conjunction with others in Wirral, trying to set up a project to look at quality of care in our many residential and nursing homes. Some are excellent. Some receive less good reports. We are applying for a large sum of money over three years to run a project to try and identify what we want from every care home in Wirral. We will need a number of volunteers who will be trained and expenses covered, to visit regularly. Please contact the office if you might be interested.

We would like more people to get involved with our public transport group. Do you have any problems using your travel pass? Are there some journeys you want to make, but the bus and train routes are not there for you? We also want more older people with an interest in lifelong learning and adult education. If you have a national focus – pensions, human rights, age discrimination etc, we have a very active national issues organiser, who wants to know what we all want from the system. And there are some exciting developments in the Wirral over housing for older people needing support.

Our Chair for our first three years Jack Cuffe, has just handed over the reins to me. We are most grateful for all his efforts, and are delighted that he will accept the new role of President.

Sandra Wall (Chair)

Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

The Trust is pleased to be able to participate in the Local Area Forums and welcomes the opportunity to brief Wirral residents and our partner organisations on topical issues. Representing the Trust will be an Executive Director or Senior Manager and the elected Public Governor for the host constituency. The Trust looks back on 2009 as a year of progress. We now have more than 8,500 Public Members and 5,000 Staff Members, represented by 19 elected Public Governors and five elected Staff Governors. We very much value the contribution that our Members and Governors make to help shape the services we provide.

Capital Investment 2009 saw the start of our £30million, three year development programme at Arrowe Park Hospital. This includes an £11.5million investment to provide a dedicated Women and Children's Hospital at Arrowe Park. This will bring together under one roof, for the first time, all acute hospital services for women and children. A leaflet outlining the changes, the benefits they will bring and the schedule of the dates when various improvements will be open, is enclosed.

The development will include:

- A major refurbishment of the maternity wards, providing all patients with single rooms and en-suite facilities
- A brand new maternity delivery suite featuring five new delivery rooms, including two with birth pools and additional facilities to allow partners to stay overnight
- Creation of an attractive single front entrance and reception area to welcome patients and visitors.

We have already opened a brand new Children's Outpatient Department and December saw the official opening of a new 'Ronald McDonald House' facility to benefit families who need to stay close to their sick children. On the general side of the Hospital we have just installed a second MRI Scanner and opened Ward 12 as a fully re-furbished 20 bed Orthopaedic Unit with 10 en-suite single rooms. We are also investing nearly £1million in adapting our wards to comply with Department of Health guidance on eliminating mixed sex accommodation for patients. For more information about our full three year development programme, please take a look at the enclosed plan or go to the interactive plan on the homepage of our website www.whnt.nhs.uk

Controlling Infection The Trust is committed to reducing the incidence of healthcare associated infections. We are one of the few trusts nationally to screen admitted medical & surgical patients for MRSA (meticillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus). This has reduced the risk of those patients who carry the germ harmlessly from developing an infection and reduces the risk of cross-infection to other patients.

We have implemented improved antibiotic prescribing practice and increased our isolation facilities. We also investigate **all** serious infections so that we can learn from them and take action to improve

practice where necessary. We routinely publish our infection rates on our website and information can also be found on the Health Protection Agency's website www.hpa.org.uk

To meet targets set by the Strategic Health Authority and NHS Wirral we aim to reduce the number of MRSA bloodstream infections (bacteraemias) to no more than 18 in 2009/10 and the number of *Clostridium difficile* cases to no more than 190 in the same period.

We are well on track to achieve this goal and figures released by the Health Protection Agency show that between April and December 2009 there were 118 cases of *Clostridium difficile* compared with 161 cases during the same period in 2008 - a **27%** decrease and, in the same period, recorded cases of MRSA bloodstream infection reduced to 12, a reduction of nine from the same period in 2008.

Our Elective Surgical Unit at Clatterbridge remains MRSA bloodstream infection free – this Unit undertakes most planned surgical and orthopaedic procedures including joint replacements. Our Women's Services Unit at Arrowe Park is also MRSA bloodstream infection free.

'Working Together to Keep It Clean' is an on-going campaign that aims to raise the Infection Control profile even higher at the Trust and to increase awareness amongst staff, patients and visitors of how important it is to 'Keep it Clean'

Improving Standards

- The Trust was awarded the title 'Best Large Hospital*' in the Dr Foster Good Hospital Guide 2008 which compares services and treatment outcomes at all hospitals across the country.
- We have been named, for the third year running, as one of the country's Top 40 performing hospitals by an independent benchmarking company that compares our performance in 20 key areas – including infection rates, mortality rates and waiting times – against other, similar hospitals.
- In June 2009 we were delighted to receive accreditation by the NHS Litigation Authority (NHSLA) at Level 2, with an exceptionally high level of achievement. This shows our commitment to delivering the highest quality and safety in our patient care.
- In the most recent (2008/09) Care Quality Commission Annual Health Check we scored 'excellent' for our use of resources and 'good' for the quality of our services
- Our Maternity Unit was judged to be one of the 'best performing' in the country according to the 2008 Healthcare Commission's Maternity Services Review and was named 'best in the region' in a national survey of new mothers and mothers-to-be.
- An external assessment of our standards by the Patient Environment Action Team resulted in the following scores being awarded to the Trust for 2009 -

	<i>Environment</i>	<i>Food</i>	<i>Privacy & Dignity</i>
<i>Arrowe Park</i>	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>
<i>Clatterbridge</i>	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>

Our easy access website can provide lots of useful information for patients, the public, staff and GPs about the Trust and its services. Go to www.whnt.nhs.uk The website is speech enabled for browsers with sight related problems and the easy click, 'email a patient' facility continues to be a popular feature. Our full Annual Report and Accounts for 2008/09 is now available to view in the About Us section of the Trust website. A summary version, 'Highlights of the Year 2008/09', together with a summary version of our Annual Plan for 2009/10 and our Goals entitled 'Moving Forward', are also available either on the website or in hard copy from the Foundation Trust Membership Office at Arrowe Park Hospital ☎ 0800 0121 356

Come and Join Us! As a Foundation Trust we want to involve our Public Members in helping us to shape future services – we currently have 8,500 Public Members and are keen to recruit more. Public Members can get involved as much or as little as they like – from just receiving 'Public Membership News', our regular newsletter, to participating in surveys or standing for election as a Public Governor. To join on-line go to www.whnt.nhs.uk or complete the pink form that is enclosed in this information pack and return it to the Freepost address given.

- **Best large acute trust outside London – awarded jointly with Darlington/County Durham NHS Foundation Trust.**

Welcome to 2010 – The Year of Health and Wellbeing 2010 is the Year of Health and Wellbeing and we would like to support and encourage Wirral residents to improve their health and wellbeing. This supplement will provide information on how you can improve your health and on how to get involved with activities that you may not have previously considered taking up. It will also help you to choose the right service (see Choose Well).

A focus on good mental health and wellbeing One in four people will suffer a mental health problem at some time in their life. Problems could include mild anxiety, stress or depression. Recognising the early warning signs and knowing what to do is really important.

Help is available from:

- Kooth (for young people aged 11-24) or visit: www.kooth.com
- CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably) Call 0800 585858 or visit: www.thecalmzone.net
- Advocacy in Wirral Call 0151 650 1530 or visit: www.aiw.org.uk
- MIND Call 0151 512 2200 or visit: www.mind.org.uk

The five ways to wellbeing, Evidence has shown that building actions on a daily basis from the following five ways can add seven and a half years to your life!

1. Connect... with the people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home, work, school or in your local community. These connections will support and enrich you every day.

2. Be active... Go for a walk or run. Step outside. Cycle. Do some gardening or dancing. Exercising makes you feel good. Discover a physical activity you enjoy and that suits your level of mobility and fitness.

3. Take notice... Savour the moment, whether you are walking to work in the snow, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters. Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual.

4. Keep learning... Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility at work. Mend a bike. Learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving.

5. Give... Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone with a smile - it doesn't cost anything! If you have spare time - volunteer some of it. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in. Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding.

NEW YEAR - NEW YOU - 2010 THE YEAR OF HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Book your free health check, The best things in life are free! Over 40? Book for your FREE NHS Health Check at your GP practice. The Health Check will help prevent the onset of stroke, heart disease, diabetes and kidney disease. The Health Check is a few straightforward health tests and simple questions about your medical history. To book your appointment for your FREE Health Check call your GP practice. FREE NHS Health Check Helping you prevent heart disease, stroke, diabetes and kidney disease

Get active

- Why not consider cycling or walking to work?
- Walking 10,000 steps per day helps maintain a healthy heart.
- Half an hour's exercise per day will help you feel much better and it can help you lose weight
- Seven minutes of stair climbing per day halves the risk of a heart attack

Eat healthily

- Eating five portions of fruit and vegetables a day can help reduce the risks of cancer, coronary heart disease and other chronic illnesses by up to 20%.
- Too much salt can raise blood pressure, which triples your chances of heart disease and stroke.

- Cut down on saturated fats e.g. butter

NHS Wirral runs free MEND courses aimed at children who are above their ideal weight. The ten week course helps 5 to 13-year-olds and their families learn about food and how to eat more healthily, and discover fun ways to get fit. Jean from Claughton said: "My 12-year-old-daughter absolutely loved doing the MEND course. She looked forward to it every week. We learnt so much and it was great meeting other parents and children with the same problems. MEND was so much fun, and now we all have a much healthier diet and lifestyle." For further information call 0151 630 8383

Quit smoking Stopping smoking is the most important step people can take for their health and if you smoke on average 20 cigarettes per day you can save £2,000 per year. NHS Wirral's Stop Smoking Service has helped more than 16,000 smokers quit. *Ciggies... On your bike! Theresa, aged 46, from Wallasey, quit cigarettes after her dad died as a result of smoking. She said he suffered his first heart attack when he was just 47. Teresa has saved more than £1,000 and she's bought herself a new bike.*

For FREE help and advice call 0151 630 8383 or visit <http://www.wirral.nhs.uk/yourhealth/stopsmoking/>

Alcohol .. Your Life back on track Getting help with alcohol problems in Wirral Chelsea was frequently severely intoxicated, being seen at A&E and in trouble with the police. After being helped by the Wirral Alcohol Service she said: *"I feel as though I am in more control of my life".* Chelsea's life is back on course.

Look after your Sexual Health Anyone, male or female, can use our free Wirral Sexual Health services. We have the expertise to discuss your contraceptive needs, and assess your sexual health issues. You will be seen by healthcare professionals in a comfortable and welcoming environment.

Call 0151 604 7290 for information on clinic details and opening times.

Get Back to Work NHS Wirral has launched a new service to help people who are out of work due to health problems get back into employment, education or training in 2010.

Wirral Working for Health (WW4H) works with health professionals and community-based action teams to give people support and advice on the best way to manage health problems while at work, and directs them to services that can help them return to employment.

Call 0151 630 8383 or visit www.wirralworking4health.co.uk

Angela from Wallasey said: "The team helped me get the support I needed to overcome my anxiety and get my confidence back. I've now got a new job as a carer and I've been accepted to study for an NVQ level 3 Care in the Community. My life has changed dramatically and I'm happier than ever."

SELF CARE
www.nhs.uk

The best choice to treat very minor illnesses and injuries
If you need health advice or information about local health services, contact NHS Direct on **0845 4647** or visit www.nhs.uk

Pharmacy

For fast, effective expert advice. Your pharmacist can provide advice on common health problems and the best medicines to treat them. To find your local pharmacy visit www.nhs.uk

GP

Find your local GP at <http://www.nhs.uk>
For emergency GP Out-of-Hours call **0151 678 8496**

Walk-in Centres treat minor illnesses and injuries without an appointment.

Walk-in Centre and Minor Injuries unit based at Victoria Central Health Centre, Wallasey. (This centre also has x-ray facilities). Open 7am until 10pm Monday to Friday/Open 9am until 10pm weekend and bank holidays

NEW Walk-in Centre, based at Eastham Rake, Eastham Open 5pm – 9pm Monday to Friday and 8am – 6pm weekend and bank holidays (**Opening 1/2/2010**)

All Day Health Centre – based at Arrowe Park provides a nurse led Walk-in centre and you can book an appointment with a Doctor by calling 0151 201 4188. Open 8am – 10pm 7 days a week

A&E Accident and Emergency departments should **only** be used in a critical or life threatening situation

Have Your Say GPs, Dentists, Opticians, Pharmacies, Community Services or Health Service

Planning: We're always interested in what you think about your local health services. We'd love to hear your views on how we can improve our services. Please get involved with YOUR NHS – join our membership scheme today. Call 0800 085 1547 or visit www.wirral.nhs.uk

Swine flu vaccination Children aged six months to five years will be the next group of people to be offered the swine flu vaccine - there are about 18,000 children in this age category across Wirral. Marie Armitage, Joint Director for Public Health for NHS Wirral said: "Evidence shows that the under fives are vulnerable and are being particularly affected by the swine flu virus. They are the largest group needing hospital treatment at the moment and children who are otherwise healthy, are often affected." Parents of children under five years are currently being contacted by their local NHS and will be invited to bring their young children into clinics for vaccination. Marie's Grandson Sam Armitage gets his Swine Flu vaccination. In total, 18,000 under 5s in Wirral will be invited to have the vaccination.

Youth Service

Provides opportunities, which are open to all Wirral young people. Youth work helps young people learn about themselves, others and society, through informal educational activities which combine fun, challenge and learning. The Service works with young people aged 13-19 years, and specifically targeted young people aged 20 until their 25th birthday who have additional needs and need support with transition into adult life/services.

The Service is flexible and able to respond to the needs of young people and offers opportunities that are both universal and targeted. Youth work on Wirral is delivered through joint working between the Local Authority, voluntary organisations and other agencies.

Youth workers work with young people in many different localities in Wirral. Having a variety of youth clubs and street work projects allows youth workers to work with young people in their neighbourhoods, meet their specific needs and respond to issues that are important to them. Much of the work of the Youth Service takes place in one of fourteen open access youth clubs located across the Borough. Street work teams of youth workers make contact with young people who do not access the service elsewhere, build relationships with them and in negotiation with the young people, develop programmes which address their specific needs. This work is delivered on the streets, through project work and on mobile Kontaktabuses.

Response is a Borough wide Youth Service provision, providing counselling, support, advocacy and information for young people. Many of these young people have complex needs requiring intensive support from the service including homelessness, abuse, poor health and poverty. The agency also has a team of specialist workers providing support to young people who have drug and alcohol problems. The team work with those individuals in a variety of settings including outreach street work and one to one work in their homes or wherever young people feel safe. The team also deliver educational programmes within schools and other youth settings on the risk, consequence and health implications of substance misuse. Partnership work plays an important role in targeting vulnerable, hard to reach groups of young people. Service level agreements and regular joint working ensures the needs of young people are met.

Each year the Youth Service runs a comprehensive programme of International Youth Exchanges. Young people from Wirral take part in a number of international opportunities.

The Youth Service holds the operating licence for administering and running the DofE. The Youth Service is therefore able to issue individual operating licences to single units such as schools, youth clubs and uniformed organisations. Young people within the borough are able to participate in at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels and are offered a wide and diverse menu of opportunities. A well equipped Open Award Centre is able to provide comprehensive and quality expedition training for those wishing to attempt their expedition or exploration. Young people are encouraged to make improved use of their leisure time and by participating in the DofE they are guided towards, helping their own communities, acquiring new skills, keeping fit and taking on new and exciting challenges. Anyone aged between 14 and 25 can take part in the DofE regardless of background or ability and

participants are able to increase their own self confidence and self esteem, make new relationships and develop fresh skills.

Wirral Youth Theatre operates across the Borough to enable young people to access a wide range of performing arts related activities. Art forms such as drama, dance, music, technical theatre and new media are used to help young people to develop personally and socially as well as developing theatre and media related skills.

The Cavendish Youth Centre is open on Monday and Wednesday 7.00 pm – 10.00pm. The newly refurbished club is proving very popular with young people; there are now separate areas for specific activities including a chill out area, a computer room and a fitness room. The theme of health continues with workshops on sexual health, alcohol awareness and street drinking.

The North End Young People's Project undertakes streetwork in the North End of Birkenhead, in Birkenhead Park and in the Exmouth area. The Kontakta Bus is also used in some locations. The young people participate in a wide range of activities that aid their personal development as well as making a positive contribution to the community. At October half term, the young people participated in a 5 a side competition at the Soccer Dome. Promoting personal safety is of great importance and issues relating to bonfire and firework safety, alcohol awareness and knife crime have been on the discussion agenda with the young people.

The Fender Youth Action Project continues to work with young people on the streets of Beechwood and Ballantyne Estates and strives to access local resources for the young people's use.