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CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE - WIRRAL SOUTH

Thursday, 18 June 2015

Present:

Councillors	C Carubia	C Povall
	P Gilchrist	W Smith
	A Hodson	Sutton
	D Mitchell	A Sykes
	C Muspratt	J Walsh
	S Niblock	Ward
	T Pilgrim	I Williams
		KJ Williams

In attendance:

Co-optees

L Longshaw Parr
MA Craig
WA Ward

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Kathy Hodson and Les Rowlands and Mr M Wright.

2 **MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Christina Muspratt declared a personal interest in Item No. 4 – Wirral South Impact Review 2014/15 as she was a member of a community group – The Friends of Mayer Park. (Minute No. 5 refers.)

3 **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22 January 2015 be confirmed as a correct record.

4 **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR**

It was proposed and seconded and

RESOLVED unanimously: That

- (1) Councillor Jerry Williams be elected Chair of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year; and**
- (2) Councillor T Pilgrim be elected Vice-Chair of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.**

5 WIRRAL SOUTH IMPACT REVIEW 2014/15

A report by the Constituency Manager reviewed the work carried out by the Committee throughout 2014/15. The report broke down all the elements of work carried out (e.g. grants funds, priority based projects etc.) and detailed the impact it had on the residents of Wirral South. The report also set out the budget spent in relation to each strand of work carried out.

The Committee considered its 2014/15 budget as follows:

- £50K Wirral South Health & Wellbeing Fund
- £38,720.50 core budget rolled over from 2013/14 (allocated £10k per ward)
- £50K Core budget allocated to three main priorities
- £77,750 Road Safety Money
- £35K “Your Wirral” funding
- £10k “Love Wirral” funding

It was noted that one of the Committee’s priorities was to improve open spaces and to increase the number of green flag parks in Wirral South and the main judging criteria for the Green Flag Award was as follows:

- A welcoming place
- Healthy, safe and secure
- Well maintained and clean
- Sustainability
- Conservation and heritage
- Community involvement
- Marketing
- Management

The Committee also considered the following list of progress made so far as follows:

- Park management plan revised
- Application for green flag submitted
- A brand new main entrance sign erected
- A secondary entrance sign erected at Ellen’s Lane entrance
- Lines of sight improved by reducing height of existing hedges
- New flower beds dug and planted up

- Dead trees removed
- New litter bins throughout
- Work carried out on offending vegetation in roof of Mayer Hall/Pennant House
- Stonework repaired on Mayer Hall/Pennant House
- Stumps removed (Parks)
- A new fence at Ellen's lane
- Replacement of rose bed in Ormerod gardens
- Edging of all paths throughout
- Disabled access swing installed
- 'Legacy Kit' donated to Friends Group consisting of tools etc.
- New play equipment installed

It was reported that the 'Park's Priority Task and Finish Group' had been set up to focus on Mayer Park. Progress made had included the following:

- Park management plan revised
- Application for green flag submitted
- A brand new main entrance sign erected (Beb Cllrs Core Budget)
- A secondary entrance sign erected at Ellen's Lane entrance
- Lines of sight improved by reducing height of existing hedges (Friends)
- New flower beds dug and planted up (Beb Cllrs Core Budget)
- Dead trees removed (Parks)
- New litter bins throughout (Constituency Budget)
- Work carried out on offending vegetation in roof of Mayer Hall/Pennant House (Asset Management)
- Stonework repaired on Mayer Hall/Pennant House (Asset Management)
- Stumps removed (Parks)
- A new fence at Ellen's lane (Constituency Budget)
- Replacement of rose bed in Ormerod gardens (Beb Cllrs Core Budget)
- Edging of all paths throughout (imminent Friends)
- Disabled access swing installed (Constituency Budget)
- 'Legacy Kit' donated to Friends Group consisting of tools etc. (imminent Constituency Budget)
- New play equipment installed (teen see-saw and nest swing)

The Constituency Manager informed that the green flag judging of Mayer Park had taken place but no formal decision had yet been received. He invited Mr Dennis Boyd of the Friends of Mayer Park to report on the proceedings of the judge's visit. Mr Boyd provided the detail of the judge's visit and informed that she had been very impressed with Mayer Park and that as a result, he was hopeful that Mayer Park would be awarded a green flag which would demonstrate how well everyone was working together to improve facilities in the Park. Mr Boyd thanked the Constituency Manager for all of his help and

the Committee for its bold decision to invest in the Park and for the trust it had in the Friends Group.

RESOLVED:

That the progress made by the Committee throughout 2014/15 and detailed in the report be noted.

6 WIRRAL SOUTH PROPOSALS REPORT 2015/16

A report by the Constituency Manager set out in great detail for Members' information on proposed projects for 2015/16 and their associated budgetary spend.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Constituency Manager be requested to continue to work with colleagues in parks, (the "Friends of Dawstone Park and the Wirral South Parks Task and Finish Group) to progress the improvement works in the chosen location as expediently as possible (this includes delegated authority to spend the relevant park's budget for 2015/16);**
- (2) the existing 2015/16 budget for gaps in youth provision be utilised to commission and establish an ongoing service reflecting that of the pilot project (with the aim of launching the service in October 2015);**
- (3) the commissioning of a service aimed at tackling existing/preventing future social isolation in Wirral South based upon the outline detailed in section 3.3 of the report be agreed;**
- (4) the Your Wirral assessment and allocation process be continued in 2015/16 as in 2014/15 (i.e. one councillor per ward plus a representative from Magenta Living sitting on an assessment panel).**
- (5) it be noted that the Your Wirral fund for 2015/16 will open on 20 July 2015 and close at noon on 14 September 2015;**
- (6) a Wirral South Anti-Social Behaviour Task and Finish Group be established (Councillors Andrew Hodson, Christina Muspratt, Dave Mitchell, Steve Niblock and Tracey Pilgrim) with delegated authority to make budgetary decisions on. Budget of £15k for 2015/16;**

- (7) the “Community Clean Up” budget of £10K be split evenly between the five wards and delegated authority be given to make budgetary decisions which will be reported to the committee on 15 October 2015; and
- (8) Members of the Love Wirral Task and Finish Group (Councillors Phil Gilchrist, Christina Muspratt, Steve Niblock, Tracey Pilgrim and Les Rowlands) be requested to work with the Constituency Manager to finalise relevant projects for the associated budget and that the task and finish group have power to make delegated decisions to spend power to spend and report back to committee in October.

7 WIRRAL SOUTH COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES PROPOSALS 2015/16

A report by the Constituency Manager proposed a new approach to how the appointed community representatives interacted with the Committee. The report also proposed a timeline for re-recruiting community representatives in line with the amended structure and role specification (not excluding those community representatives who were currently co-opted on to the Committee).

The Committee noted that whilst community representatives did not have a mandate to speak on behalf of the public, they did provide a level of expertise and/or knowledge to help inform the debate. Their role responsibilities were to:

- proactively engage with residents and communities beyond those within their existing networks;
- accurately reflect the community’s feedback and views in the discussions and decision making processes;
- communicate with residents and communities, feeding back the work of the Committee;
- be well informed and be clear about local priorities; and
- champion the Community Representative role ensuring it has value in the Constituency Committee process.

It was proposed that a new recruitment drive took place to recruit one community representative for each electoral ward. Members noted that this process would not exclude the five existing community representatives and the Committee agreed that it was important to acknowledge the contributions they had made so far. Councillor Phil Gilchrist, the Committee’s previous Chair had requested that the following statement be noted:

“I would like to thank our community representatives for the advice, assistance and local knowledge they have brought to our work over the

past year. It is important that our activity is informed and supported by the leading figures in our communities. Their perspective has been valuable.”

The community representative role specification and description (Appendices one and two to the report) had been amended slightly to highlight the need for community representatives to hold a Community Forum (with support from the Constituency Team) within their ward. The Committee noted how it was proposed that the Community Forum would link with the Committee and that it may take the form of an existing community meeting.

The Committee also noted that the timeline for the proposed recruitment process should allow for those appointed to be co-opted onto the Committee at its meeting scheduled for 15 October 2015.

Representations were made about how important it was for the Committee to engage with the youth as it made key decisions that would affect the young people of Wirral South and it was essential that consultation took place first.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) a new recruitment process to appoint community representatives for the Committee be commenced in a timely fashion to ensure that successful applicants can be co-opted onto the Committee at its meeting on 15 October 2015;**
- (2) one community representative be co-opted specifically to represent the youth of South Wirral and all youth in the area be given the opportunity to apply to take on this role;**
- (3) the newly proposed structure of engagement between community representatives and the Committee by adopting Community Forums be agreed; and**
- (4) the following Members be nominated to sit on the Selection Panel that will meet to assess the applications following an agreed time period during which the Community Representative roles will be advertised:**

Councillors Phil Gilchrist, Andrew Hodson, Christina Muspratt, Steve Niblock and Tracey Pilgrim.

8 UPDATE FROM THE MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

The Constituency Manager reported that the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service was in the process of restructuring its whole service provision and as a consequence had been unable to send a representative to this meeting. It

was expected that it would be represented at the next scheduled meeting of the Committee on 15 October 2015.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

9 UPDATE FROM MERSEYSIDE POLICE

Ross Meredith, the Neighbourhood Inspector was in attendance at the meeting to provide an oral report on crimes and anti-social behaviour that had taken place in Wirral South in recent months. This included providing data particularly on auto crime, theft from vehicles, burglaries from, shops, sheds, houses, industrial premises etc. drug offenses and domestic violence. and making comparisons across Wirral. The Committee noted that there were less crimes committed in Wirral South than in the rest of the Wirral.

Inspector Meredith informed that the Police no longer had red and green targets but they were still monitoring crime. Every month he attended a Task Co-ordinator meeting to look at risks and decide where to allocate resources for the following month. There was a new proposal to agree one priority per neighbourhood each month and there would be a priority setting meeting to determine what it should be. Inspector Meredith also informed that he received a monthly list of persons due to be released from prison along with arrangements for monitoring their activities etc.

Inspector Meredith informed that drug dealing was relatively low in Wirral South but those found in possession of cannabis was quite high. Also, there had been a record number of dog bites recorded in Wirral South in the last few months and 'the summer flashing season' was upon us.

Inspector Meredith agreed to establish how many crimes had been solved in Wirral South in recent months, provide statistics re domestic violence and it was agreed that if Members required any other statistical information they would let the Constituency Manager know so it could be provided for discussion at the next meeting of the Committee on 15 October 2015.

Inspector Meredith set out the current Police staffing structure and informed that because of austerity and funding issues he expected significant changes and a reduction in staff over the next few years. Inspector Meredith also provided a progress report on the development of Bebington Police Station which he hoped would be completed by Christmas and the planned refit scheduled for Bromborough Police Station which would mean staff relocating to Wallasey Police Station whilst the work was underway.

The Committee noted that there had been a couple of unsubstantiated reports of a man attempting to pick up children in a car and one Headteacher had sent out letters to parents to be on the safe side.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Neighbourhood Inspector be thanked for his report; and**
- (2) the Neighbourhood Inspector and the Constituency Manager be requested to work together to prepare a report containing the statistical information Members' have requested for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee scheduled for 15 October 2015.**

10 PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION (APPROXIMATELY 20 MINUTES)

Committee Members and members of the public in attendance at the meeting raised the following questions, issues, concerns and requests.

Number 1

A member of the public perceived that little was done in Newferry. She made reference to children from Bromborough setting fires in Newferry and the urgent need to clear up the land where the fires had been set. Also, she informed that local residents did not feel safe in the Newferry Shopping Centre.

It was also noted there were problems with overgrown trees and dog dirt in Longfellow Drive area. It was an 'eyesore' and the owner needed to be contacted.

It was agreed that the three Bromborough Ward Members (Councillors Steve Niblock, Joe Walsh and Irene Williams) would stay behind after the meeting to discuss issues of concern in Newferry and provide advice on how to access funding to clear up the local area etc.

Number 2

Concerns were raised about the increased number of cyclists riding on paths and pavements. There had been a number of occasions where people had been nearly knocked down by cyclists and it was considered that it was only a matter of time before this actually happened. There had also been incidents with speeding car and it had been noticed that the Police were no longer visible.

It was noted that there was a particular cycle path on the Wirral that abruptly ended and this was confusing to cyclists. Some cyclists used the pavements because they considered that the road was unsafe for them. However, this meant that the pavements were unsafe for pedestrians. There were also problems on the Wirral Way where people and dogs had been hit by cyclists. A lot of cyclists chose not to have a bell on their bikes and pedestrians were unable to hear them approaching whilst others did not use lights or wear bright clothing.

The point was made that some motorists today had never cycled themselves and did not understand that bikes should be given a wide berth.

Reference was made to the bridge at Bebington Station where pedestrians walking underneath had nearly been knocked down by cyclists and the four bridges to Seacombe Ferry cycling route which was ignored by cyclists who used the road instead. The question was asked whether the Council was investing money wisely in cycling infrastructure. This seemed to be a national problem.

It was proposed that the support and assistance of the Cycling Forum be sought in attempt to address the issues raised.

Inspector Meredith informed that the Police now had less staff than ever before. They had to 'save life and limb' and were struggling to attend 999 calls on time. As they were struggling with their core role, quality of life issues had to wait.

Number 3

The Co-ordinator of the Home Watch Scheme in Heswall informed of the recent anti-social behaviour that had been occurring in Telegraph Road. In the evenings children between 14-16 years old were engaging in nuisance youth activities. The PCSO had stopped children who did not live in Heswall and asked them why they were visiting the Town. They had said that it was because there were no Police in Heswall.

It was noted that a Subway Store had recently opened which the children were going to for an expensive meal and then they congregated with some core Heswall children. The Home Watch Co-ordinator urged the Police to nip this-social behaviour in the bud.

Number 4

Concerns were raised over the current state of Bebington Town Hall, its Annexe, Pennant House and the Police Station. They looked abandoned and grass had not been cut for six to eight weeks as there had been a dispute over who owned it. However, it was noted that the grassed land was in the ownership of the Council.

The Committee received an unsubstantiated report that the Town Hall was to be occupied again soon.

Number 5

Some new shops had opened in Bromborough but no new car parking had been provided which was a concern.

Number 6

The question was asked whether Wirral South Policing area had 3 Police Constables per shift or in total.

Inspector Meredith reported that there were three Neighbourhood Police Constables aligned to Wirral South but Policing Teams based elsewhere would also provide emergency cover.

Number 7

Concerns were raised over vehicles parking on grass verges, on pavements and very close to schools. It was noted that parking enforcement was a matter for the Council.

Number 8

The Committee's attention was drawn to a new form of anti-social behaviour in Bebington where a number of drones had been flown recently. They had taken photographs e.g. Newferry Butterfly Park and Bebington Station which were posted on social media sites.

A request was made for feedback on Council's policy on drones at the next meeting of the Committee scheduled on 15 October 2015.

Inspector Meredith informed that he was sure that there was legislation regarding drones and that the Police were always slow to pick up on new technology. He had not been issued with any guidance or instruction and probably would not be until the Police received a specific complaint about drones.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting had been advertised as taking place at 6pm on Thursday, 15 October 2015 at Mayer Hall, The Village, Bebington.