

WIRRAL COUNCIL

WIRRAL SOUTH CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE

4 FEBRUARY 2016

SUBJECT:	WIRRAL SOUTH COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE REPORT
WARD/S AFFECTED:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <u>BEBINGTON</u>▪ <u>BROMBOROUGH</u>▪ <u>CLATTERBRIDGE</u>▪ <u>EASTHAM</u>▪ <u>HESWALL</u>
REPORT OF:	CONSTITUENCY MANAGER (WIRRAL SOUTH)
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR GEORGE DAVIES NEIGHBOURHOODS, HOUSING & ENGAGEMENT
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report details progress to date following the co-opting of five Community Representatives to the Wirral South Constituency Committee 15 October 2015. This report also highlights particular issues being experienced by the communities within the five wards and seeks to bring them formally to the attention of the committee.

2.0 PROGRESS TO DATE

2.1 Since being co-opted onto the committee in October 2015, the Community Representatives have held a number of development sessions. The aforementioned sessions produced a discussion document (see Appendix 1 and Recommendation 16.1) that outlines how they see their role and responsibilities moving forward. Each Representative has also done individual work in their respective wards collating community issues/developing engagement strategies.

3.0 BEBINGTON

- 3.1 An open meeting was held at Jireh Church on Thursday 21st January 2016 by Mal Wright, Community Representative. There were approximately 12 individuals in attendance, representing various local community groups. The group agreed to become a steering group for change in Bebington and would try and encourage other groups to join. The community representative for Bebington has agreed to try and start a Retailers Association in Higher Bebington, and will work with local groups and Council Officers to achieve this

4.0 BROMBOROUGH

- 4.1 Anti-social behaviour hotspots have been identified as New Ferry Park, Shorefields, and Port Sunlight River Park. Although some levels of anti-social behaviour have dropped due to young people moving to the Oval instead, these locations are still problem areas.
- 4.2 The residents of New Ferry are concerned about the maintenance of the centre of New Ferry and the number of derelict shops. Despite several attempts made by both New Ferry Residents' Association (NeFRA) and the Constituency Manager to solve the problem, several of the lighting columns in the centre of New Ferry were not repaired over the festive period and as such a number of the Christmas lights were not operational. Furthermore, on a more general note, several lighting columns do not work and this is leaving parts of New Ferry in darkness. They are also concerned about the level of rubble left at new advertising site and its overall appearance. It is feared this may become worse due to weather over the coming months.
- 4.5 Residents raised an issue related to an impending planning decision regarding the placement of a drug and alcohol recovery service in the centre of New Ferry, and made it clear that they would not support this.
- 4.6 Local community groups are concerned over the lack of small grants in the future and worry about the sustainability of their projects if funding isn't accessible.

5.0 CLATTERBRIDGE

- 5.1 Meetings have been held with Elected Members and the Community Representative and it was agreed that they will work as a team on engagement. An invitation has been made to the Constituency Manager and the Engagement Officer to attend future meetings. The first meeting will be in early February when it will be discussed how best to secure the support of residents.
- 5.2 Clatterbridge Ward, compared to the other wards, is broadly spread out with a significant area of localised population (Thornton Hough), some small villages (for example Brimstage) and parts of larger areas of population (Lower Bebington, Brookhurst and Poulton). Because individual residents strongly identify with place it has been concluded by the Community Representative that holding a forum or forums is not likely to be the most effective form of engagement in Clatterbridge,

unless the residents specifically ask for it. The Thornton Hall Community Trust is an example of where a forum setting works and the Community Representative has already attended their most recent meeting. In some circumstances the areas of named population overlap into more than one Ward, for example in Bebington, and the Community Representatives have agreed in principle that joint discussions with residents affected in this way should be made. Further discussions are needed on this.

6.0 EASTHAM

6.1 The Wirral South Constituency Community Co-opted member for Eastham represents the established Eastham Community Forum whose purpose is to promote the wellbeing and community of Eastham by working together with partner agencies, local groups and the residents of Eastham in a common effort to advance and deliver the following:-

To create an effective forum for all community groups, youth organisations, schools, church and other groups within Eastham to develop an integrated approach to meeting the needs and aspirations of all the residents of Eastham;

To work together to provide facilities that improve the quality of life of all residents;

To develop opportunities to access educational and life skills classes;

To promote community cohesion;

To facilitate the provision of or directly provide access to play facilities for all children and young people;

Any other activities that will benefit all the people of Eastham.

The Eastham Community Forum met on 2nd November, 2016 and the following group updates and issues were discussed after a presentation on the work of the Wirral South Constituency Committee and Constituency Manager and Wirral South Engagement Officer.

6.2 .Eastham Village Preservation Association: The Association is still concerned with the amount of traffic passing through the village and has been monitoring this.

6.3. Eastham Centre: The Eastham Centre will be transferring over to the new company Wirral Evolutions soon but there has had to be a further reduction in staff. The cycle scheme run by Sustrans at the centre has been one of Sustrans most successful projects and it is hoped this will raise additional funds for the centre.

6.4. Delamere Centre: The centre is running successfully, with the newly formed After School Club, run by local volunteers, being particularly popular. The security lighting has

been improved and there will be a soft play area and new Activity Centre outside in the near future to support facilities and future activities at the Centre.

6.5. St Mary's Church and the NET@68 and the NET@73: The premises for the NET Community Shop and the Community Hub is now on a rolling contract, but the long term plan for the flats and boarded up shops in Clifton Avenue was still uncertain. The foodbank is very successful currently and the NET team continue to work with the local tenants and residents' association.

6.6. The Eastham Community Forum would like to start producing a seasonal community newsletter on which all groups could advertise events they are holding. It will be looking for assistance and funding opportunities to support this initiative.

7.0 HESWALL

7.1 Heswall Together: Heswall Together have now developed a full proposal to support its aim and will be holding meetings in April. They acknowledge the support of the Wirral South Constituency Committee.

7.2 Heswall Hall Community Trust: The hall is now home to nearly 30 regular groups who hire out the rooms for their events, and the Trust also puts on its own regular events within the hall that have been popular with the local community. The only frustration of the Trust is the inability to ensure that those in residential homes can take part in regular community activities, due to the homes being unable to commit regularly because of lack of transport options or funding.

7.3 Heswall U3A: The U3A is a popular organisation in Heswall and makes a large contribution to Heswall community life. It has 700 members and over 50 special interest groups. It addresses the needs and wellbeing of older people and gives an opportunity to learn a new skill or improve social life.

7.4 Heswall Arts Festival: The festival held its 5th successful event last Autumn and footfall has increased to over 5000 people. The festival would welcome more support and sponsorship.

7.5 Heswall and District Business Association: The Association successfully campaigned for the reduction in parking charges across the Wirral, we started a monthly Farmers' Market in the town and have now organised three Taste of Heswall Events, we have started a loyalty card scheme and a parking refund scheme in the town to try to entice customers back in to shopping locally. The year culminated with the Heswall Christmas Festival, including new and improved Christmas Lights throughout the town along with a skating rink and Christmas Market. All of this has led to improvements in footfall in the town with parking statistics confirming improvements in the number of people using the council car parks along with the longer durations customers are now staying for. The Association would like the council to further support their local high streets by offering a period of up to 2 hours of free parking in their car parks. Also, maybe offer rate relief to small independent high street businesses.

- 7.6 The Heswall Society: The Society is involved in all local environmental issues and is consulted by the Council on policies affecting the Conservation Areas. They review every planning application and, where necessary, make their views known to the Council. The Society is not just about opposing harmful change; it has also been active in enhancing the area over many years: for example, many trees in the Puddydale and in the Thurstaston Road triangle amongst others were planted by the Heswall Society. In the past year, the Society has taken over the management of the flower beds outside Castle Buildings and funded (with additional donations from Charles Stephens and Sue Huntington) the summer and autumn planting of these beds. The Society was also instrumental in the promotion and setting up of a Friends of Dawstone Park community group. The Society has a continuing concern about the Council's commitment to Heswall's open spaces (The Dales, The Beacons, Poll Hill, etc.) and will continue to monitor the situation.
- 7.7 Heswall Consolidated Homewatch Scheme: This group communicates via e-mail and is run by Ray Squire (Heswall Community Representative) and local volunteers, in co-ordination with Bromborough Police Station and the Neighbourhood Inspector. The scheme has over 400 members and keeps the safety of Heswall residents as a priority.
- 7.8 Friends of Dawstone Park: The Friends of Dawstone Park were set up in the last 12 months and have had a very successful first year. With support from the Constituency Committee the group have made some tangible changes to the park and it is now much improved. The group will meet with Council Officers in the coming months and discuss future plans for the park and the group in the next financial year.

8.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 Community Representatives have been given the freedom to assess which form of communication works best for their area.

9.0 CONSULTATION

- 9.1 Existing evidence from the Wirral South Profile Document (produced by Public Health) has been used to inform the formulation of Wirral South's priorities. Feedback from communities to Elected Members has also factored into the priority setting process. Wirral South's Community Representatives have been consulted upon the proposals relating to their allocated theme.

10.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 10.1 The overarching proposed model for neighbourhood working will strengthen the Council's relationship with the voluntary and community sector.
- 10.2 Tackling the priorities of the Constituency will benefit communities directly.

11.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 11.1 This report has implications for the expenditure of budget allocated to Wirral South Constituency Committee.
- 11.2 Funding may assist in greater use of and/or access to community assets.

12.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The arrangements will help the Council to deliver on the Localism Act 2011 and Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012.

13.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

Yes an impact review can be found at the link below (Progressing Neighbourhood Working). A specific EIA related to the grants fund itself will be carried out should the relevant recommendation be approved.

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/chief-executives>

14.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 By supporting localised initiatives the need for residents to travel outside their immediate area is reduced.

15.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 This report may have positive community safety implications dependent upon the allocation of spend determined by the Constituency Committee.

16.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

It is recommended that:

- 16.1 Members note the progress made by Community Representatives by producing the 'Community Representatives Role and Responsibilities; Discussion Document' (Appendix 1)
- 16.2 Members note the progress outlined within this report.

17.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 17.1 To enable the work of the Constituency Committee to be focused upon the needs of the local area and to ensure projects commence as expediently as possible.

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REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Wirral South Constituency Committee	15 October 2015

Appendix 1

Wirral South Constituency Committee (WSSC)

Community Representatives Role and Responsibilities: Discussion Document

The five community representatives on WSSC believe that the Constituency Committee structure for neighbourhood working is a worthwhile approach, an approach which readily supports ABCD initiatives and Vision 2020 plans.

They also believe that this structure will deliver significant benefits to communities and their residents if all parties, i.e., Community Representatives, Elected Members, Officers and Residents 'work together' in support of Vision 2020 pledges and ABCD activities.

At the heart of the neighbourhood working model is an annual Constituency Plan, and it is the preparation of the Constituency Plan that the Community Representatives believe should be the main focus of 'working together' at a local level.

The neighbourhood working model is clear, the Constituency Plan needs to be developed from a comprehensive understanding of the needs and wishes of communities and their residents. The Community Representatives believe that it is their prime function to facilitate through 'working together' the detailed knowledge of each community's needs and wishes.

Each Ward and each distinctive community within a ward will have their own specific needs and wishes and the Community Representatives recommend that individual plans be developed for each community, plans which will then form an integral part of the Constituency Plan.

The Community Representatives believe that it will be their responsibility to co-ordinate the preparation of the individual community plans. The full participation of residents in the preparation of a community plan based on local needs and wishes should be an essential component of an 'offer' and an invitation made to communities and their representatives to participate in neighbourhood working.

Full engagement by communities in the preparation of local neighbourhood plans will create expectations and if those expectations are not managed and met neighbourhood working will be discredited. WSSC, both Officers and Elected members, need to ensure that all plans arising from neighbourhood working are given appropriate resource and priority and that clear unambiguous understandings as to the delivery of support are in place well before final plans are established.

The Community Representatives accept that they do not have voting rights on the WSSC but believe that they must be given an active role in the decision making processes through being represented on all task and working groups set up by WSSC, including those which make financial decisions.



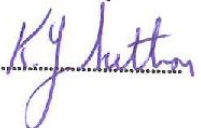
Mark Craig

Bromborough Ward Community Representative



Ray Squire

Heswall Ward Community Representative



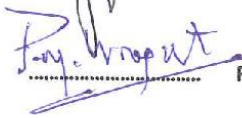
Kevin Sutton

Eastham Ward Community Representative



Mal Wright

Bebington Ward Community Representative



Peter Wright

Clatterbridge Ward Community Representative

Appendix 2

Ward	Issue	Aspiration	Committee Date
Bebington		Create a Retailers' Association for Higher Bebington	Feb 4th 2016
Bromborough	Rubble left at new advertising site		Feb 4th 2016
	Lighting columns not working		Feb 4th 2016
	Lighting column stump left on bypass bridge		Feb 4th 2016
	Residents not happy with plan to place Drug and Alcohol Recovery Centre in centre of New Ferry		Feb 4th 2016
Clatterbridge		Create a successful community engagement team with Elected Members and Council Officers	Feb 4th 2016
Eastham	Level of traffic passing through Eastham Village		Feb 4th 2016
		Create Eastham Community Forum seasonal newsletter	Feb 4th 2016
Heswall		Council to offer up to 2 hours free parking in their car parks	Feb 4th 2016
		Council to offer rate relief to smaller independent business in their car parks	Feb 4th 2016

