

CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE - WIRRAL WEST

Thursday, 30 June 2016

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	JE Green (Chair)	
	Councillors	T Anderson E Boulton P Brightmore D Burgess-Joyce W Clements	D Elderton G Ellis L Reecejones G Watt
	Community Representative	Jackie Hall MBE	
<u>Apologies</u>	Councillors	J Hale M Patrick T Smith	M Sullivan S Whittingham

1 **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2016-17**

The Clerk to the Wirral West Constituency Committee requested nominations for the appointment of Chair for the 2016-17 municipal year.

On a motion by Councillor David Elderton, seconded by Councillor Eddie Boulton, it was –

Resolved (unanimously) – That Councillor Jeff Green be appointed Chair for the municipal year 2016-17.

(Councillor Green in the Chair)

On a motion by Councillor Jeff Green, seconded by Councillor David Elderton – “that Councillor John Hale be appointed Vice-Chair for the Municipal Year 2016-17”.

A further nomination was received from Councillor Louise Reecejones, seconded by Councillor Mike Sullivan – “that Councillor Phil Brightmore be appointed Vice-Chair for the Municipal Year 2016-17”.

A vote was taken, and following a show of hands, it was:

Resolved (9:3) – That Councillor John Hale be appointed Vice-Chair for the municipal year 2016-17.

Following the confirmation of Vice-Chair of the Wirral West Constituency Committee, the Chair informed that apologies had been received from Councillors John Hale, Matthew Patrick, Tony Smith and Stuart Whittingham.

2 **ORDER OF BUSINESS**

The Chair informed that a request had been submitted that time be set aside during the meeting to receive an update on the Hoylake Golf Resort plans.

With the agreement of the Committee it was noted that this matter be considered prior to the meeting agenda item 'Community Question Time'.

3 **APPOINTMENT OF COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES**

The Constituency Manager (Wirral West) informed that, as per the Council's Constitution, Constituency Committees can appoint Community Representatives with non-voting rights. The Constituency Manager further informed that Wirral West Constituency Committee had 5 such posts – one per Electoral Ward – and that recruitment continued for these vacancies.

The Chair informed the assembled meeting that any person(s) interested in serving on the Constituency Committee should contact the Constituency Manager or her office for further information on the post(s).

The Chair also informed that Jackie Hall MBE had kindly agreed to continue in her role as a Community Representative on the Wirral West Constituency Committee pending the outcomes of the recruitment process, and expressed his thanks stating his delight at her continued involvement with the work of the Committee.

Resolved – That the verbal report be noted.

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

Members were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

No such declarations were made.

5 **MINUTES**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2016 be approved.

6 CONSTITUENCY MANAGER'S PROGRESS REPORT

The Constituency Manager (Wirral West) presented her report that provided an update on current projects and activities funded using the Committee's 2015-16 budget allocations and budgets carried over from previous years.

A slideshow presentation, containing photographs of events funded by the Committee in celebration of HM The Queen's 90th birthday was displayed with a verbal commentary provided by the Constituency Manager. The Committee and members of the public were informed that a copy of the presentation would be made available online. .

The report informed on a number of key areas relating to constituency projects and activities, that included:

- Community Fund 2015-16 core budget allocation - a summary detailed voting on specific projects (over 2,800 residents placed their vote, representing around 1,000 more people voting than the previous year) and a summary of grant allocations by ward. Members noted that the outcomes of the voting and projects funded had subsequently been published at www.wirral.gov.uk/wirralwest.
- Special Places Project (2014-15 Love Wirral budget allocation) following recommendations of the Wirral West Special Places Panel and subsequent work by the constituency team to establish final approvals and costings, the list of locations being taken forward as a priority at the current time was as follows:
 - Pump Lane Pond, Greasby;
 - Carr Lane Play Area, Hoylake;
 - Grove Park, Hoylake;
 - Ridgewood Park, Pensby;
 - Thingwall Road, Thingwall;
 - Outside St Bartholomew's Church, overlooking the Village Green, Thurstaston;
 - Footpath 43, Grange Hill (Lang Lane / Grange Old Road), West Kirby;
 - Cubbins Green, West Kirby;
 - Hilbre Island;
 - Warwick Park, Upton.
- Patron's Lunch Small Grants (2014-15 Love Wirral budget allocation) - as referred in the Constituency Manager's report to the Committee in November 2015, the remainder of the Committee's Love Wirral budget following the Big Picnic event in summer 2015 has been used to

encourage Wirral West schools and communities to organise events as part of HM The Queen's birthday celebrations.

- Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (2015-16 ASB allocation) - The ASB Panel had met in September 2015 and reached a broad agreement on a number of proposals for utilising the Committee's ASB which had been set out in the Constituency Manager's report to the Committee in November last year. A number of projects were now well underway:
 - Promoting Neighbourhood Watch in Wirral West
 - Youth Engagement in Woodchurch
 - Little Brothers Project
- Environmental Budget (2015-16 allocation) - the aims of the project would be to focus on environmental issues in the constituency and:
 - Work with local businesses and community groups to engage them in the campaign, with a focus on the use of social media;
 - Undertake an audit of environmental issues at these locations and work with the Waste and Recycling team to tackle these using the budget available and any additional resources secured through working with local businesses and other partners; and
 - As part of the campaign, to identify and introduce localised, small scale behaviour change initiatives where possible.
- Road Safety Budget – the report informed that Following a meeting of the Road Safety Panel on 26th January 2016, work has been ongoing with colleagues in Regeneration and Environment to collate the information requested by the Panel in respect of a 'shortlist' of schemes. The Panel will meet as soon as practicably possible to agree its recommendations as to which schemes should be funded using the remaining road safety budget (amounting to £40,879).

The Constituency Manager (Wirral West) provided a verbal summary and update on progress for each item of report.

Members questioned the Constituency Manager for clarification on the timeline for the establishment of neighbourhood watch schemes. Members were informed that the constituency team have been working closely with Merseyside Police and the Wirral Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator to take this forward and had supported the delivery of an event at Woodchurch High aimed at community members currently acting as Neighbourhood Watch leaders across Wirral. This was to be followed up with a constituency campaign to encourage new schemes and target particular areas and neighbourhoods.

A Member questioned whether any restrictions may apply to the amount of funding allocated to each ward in relation to the environmental budget . It was agreed that the Constituency Manager consult with members of the Committee on developing the proposal to use the budget for a the proposed project focused on the constituency's key shopping / retail areas (i.e. West Kirby Town Centre, Upton Village, Irby Village, Greasby Village, Market Street, Hoylake, Pensby Road and Woodchurch – Hoole Road / Eltham Green).

Resolved – That the progress and updates set out in the Constituency Manager's report be noted.

7 2016-17 CONSTITUENCY BUDGET ALLOCATION

The Constituency Manager (Wirral West) presented her report that set out considerations in respect of taking forward the Committee's core budget for 2016-17 and assessing the impact of the Committee's core budget (Community Fund) to date. The report also made suggestions for further improving the Community Fund should the Committee agree to again allocate its core budget on the same basis.

The report informed that for the first 3 years of its operation, the Constituency Committee had invested its core budget of £50,000 into small grants for local groups and organisations to deliver quality of life improvements in each ward, with a maximum grant award of £1,000 for each project. Whilst it was recognised that sustaining and developing the work of larger voluntary organisations through the use of small grants presents challenges, much of the activity which had been funded by the Committee had demonstrably added value to the core work of smaller community groups.

The Constituency Manager detailed a number of suggested improvements to the administration of the Community Fund that included the following proposals:

- Timetable – to ensure that the networking event(s) can take place and that there was sufficient time for consultation and promotion, it was proposed that the timetable be brought forward and that the Fund reopened in July 2016, with decisions by November 2016 - a detailed timetable to be circulated and published on the Council's website prior to the Fund launch.
- Raising awareness of the Committee's contribution – it was proposed that the Constituency Manager investigate how best to ensure that the contribution of the Committee via the Community Fund was recognised and that this be done within existing resources.

- Increasing scope for groups and organisations to apply for projects which will take place across ward boundaries - it was noted that, in respect of the funding allocated on a ward by ward basis, for example Hoylake and Meols and West Kirby and Thurstaston wards where the ward boundary effectively runs through West Kirby centre town, that some projects work across ward boundaries and or benefit residents from neighbouring wards. It was therefore proposed that groups and organisations be allowed to apply across ward boundaries (i.e. to select 2 or more wards as part of the application process) and that the proportionate funding split between wards is calculated accordingly (retaining the maximum allocation of £10,000 for each ward and no more than £1,000 for each project). To mitigate against multiple applications, it was also proposed that, as a general principle, groups would only be eligible to apply for a maximum of 2 projects but with discretion to increase this where there are umbrella organisations in existence which oversee a range of groups and activities;
- Evaluating the impact – it was proposed that more thought be given to evaluation of the social value of the Community Fund - over and above the individual progress reports that groups and organisations were asked to submit.

The Constituency Manager informed that to demonstrate the impact of the Committee's investment in a way that can be widely shared, it was proposed that a short film be produced (within existing resources) and presented to the next meeting of the Committee, and that the opportunity to get involved in making this film be extended to local schools.

Members questioned the Constituency Manager on a number of points that included the grant limits applied to cross boundary applications (£1,000 per project max per project, but costs may be shared between wards i.e. £500 from each) and clarification on the handling of multiple applications (max 2 per year).

Resolved –That

- 1) the broad framework approach now established in respect of the Community Fund, i.e. £10,000 per ward allocated through small grants with an opportunity for residents and communities to show their support for project applications, be continued;**
- 2) the process for allocating the Community Fund is improved as set out in Section 3 of the report, be approved; and**
- 3) any remaining monies from the Community Fund continue to be allocated to local improvements at the discretion of Ward Councillors, supported by the Constituency Manager.**

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS - HOYLAKE GOLF RESORT

Further to a request from Councillor Gerry Ellis, and with the agreement of the Chair and Committee, an additional item providing an update on the progress and status of plans for Hoylake Golf Resort was added to the meeting agenda under any other business.

The Deputy Chief Executive informed on the position subsequent to the Head of Regeneration and Planning's verbal report to the Committee in February.

The Committee and Members of the Public were informed that since that time, the project had entered a technical phase which required the Joint Venture Group to complete a number of technical studies which will inform their final proposed layout for the Golf Resort. This stage of the proposed development will also include sourcing of funding and phasing of the project. Once completed, in approximately 12 months, the Council will then organise further public consultation prior to a planning application being submitted, enabling the final proposal and technical detail to be commented upon.

It was further reported that, once submitted, the planning application will be subject to statutory consultation as part of the formal planning process. This would entail consideration by the Council's Planning Committee as the application will be a departure from the Council's approved land use plan.

Members of the Wirral West Constituency Committee (Councillors Boulton, Brightmore and Elderton) stated that as members of the Planning Committee they would not make any statements on the matter until the application was presented to the Planning Committee, when they would be in full possession of all the facts relating to the application and any indication of pre-determination on their part could jeopardize the integrity of the planning process.

Councillor Gerry Ellis stated that the proposal for the Hoylake Golf Resort would not only affect the development's immediate location, but would also affect other areas of the Wirral West Constituency. He stated that as such this was an important matter for all to note, particularly when considering issues such as the impact on highways, both during construction phase and afterwards should the development go ahead. The Chair informed that the consultation already undertaken had noted such concerns, and that the technical work now underway would provide information on the issues raised. Councillor Gerry Ellis pointed out that there had been limited information provided to Members on the proposed development and hoped that this would be rectified in the months to come.

A Member of the public echoed the points raised by Councillors in relation to the proposals for Hoylake Golf Resort.

The Chair thanked the Deputy Chief Executive for his update and attendance, reiterating that work would continue behind the scenes, and that further consultation would take place at the relevant stages of the planning process.

Resolved – That the verbal report be noted.

9 COMMUNITY QUESTION TIME

The Chair invited questions from members of the public upon matters that were relevant to the Wirral West Constituency. No questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting.

- A number of residents from the Heron Road, Meols informed the Constituency Committee of the ongoing issues relating to speeding, heavy goods vehicles and general condition of the highway (road width, surface, and winding nature) that had caused years of upset and intolerable traffic misery on Heron Road. The residents are of the view that as a result of lack of investment over the past 40+ years, road safety had been compromised. Having already raised the matter with Margaret Greenwood M.P. they enquired as to whether the Constituency Committee would sanction the use of part of the surplus road safety budget be allocated for additional signage at each end of Heron Road, Meols to help alleviate the problems currently experienced. Suggestions included no entry signs on the junction to prevent vehicles using the wrong side of the road, and weight restriction notices to halt the use of Heron Road by large lorries. In addition, the residents further requested that infrastructure improvements, that had been first been proposed many years previously be prioritised and finally actioned to ensure the situation did not continue to cause upset for those living in the locality, or contribute to any further traffic collisions on, or at the junctions of Heron Road (7 accidents having taken place in the current year alone).
 - The Chair thanked all the speakers and informed that the resident's concerns and suggestions would be fed back to the officers responsible and considered as part of the process for looking at the allocation of the constituency budget available for road safety schemes.
- Mr John Hutchinson Chairman, Hoylake Golf Resort Committee addressed the Constituency Committee on the subject of traffic flows, congestion and whether a new rail crossing or improvement to the existing crossings would be addressed as a result of the proposed Golf Resort plans.

- The Chair thanked the speaker and advised that, as had been reported earlier, technical studies currently underway would identify any required highway improvements, and that all such matters would be the subject of report in due course.
- Ms Susan Brown, resident questioned the Constituency Committee regarding the decision making process by which the Council had agreed to the introduction of a Council 'newsletter'.
 - The Chair explained that in line with many other decisions such matters fell to a 'Cabinet' group of 9 Councillors made up of Members of the majority political party. He informed that such decisions may be challenged by other members of the Council via a 'call-in' process, whereby the matter may be supported or referred back, with additional recommendations, to the decision making Members (Cabinet) for reconsideration or amendment.
- Mrs Brown informed the Constituency Committee that in her experience it had been extremely difficult for community groups to have information and/or events advertised on the Council's website.
 - The Chair thanked the speaker and agreed that the Council should be doing what it can to support such community groups in advertising events occurring across the Wirral. Councillor Phil Brightmore offered to pursue the matter on behalf of the resident - the Chair further commented on the benefits of advertising arts events and organisations sharing resources between organisations such as Heswall Arts, Wirral Society of Arts and the Williamson Art Gallery. The Constituency Manager (Wirral West) also informed of a number of additional options available e.g. using the Council's 'Twitter' account that had been used by other local organisations to promote themselves and their events.
- Mr Harry Webster, Irby raised a number of issues in respect of vehicles parking on grass verges (and damage caused), the selling of vehicles on the highway, and advertisement(s) on fences. He stated that these issues had been the subject of complaint for many years and questioned what was currently being done to address the matters.
 - The Deputy Chief Executive promised to take the matter back to the relevant officers for review.
 - The Chair informed that given limited resources these issues were difficult to enforce, but in the past the Council had addressed the matters of verge parking and sale of vehicles through the use of 'sticky' warning notices that required extensive

effort to remove. He hoped such an approach might be re-introduced.

- Councillor Gerry Ellis informed that private sale of vehicles on the highway was not unlawful, unless actioned by a vehicle trader. He further informed that although the Police would investigate, difficulties existed given that the adverts nowadays tended to include mobile telephone numbers, however if a link could be established to vehicle traders the DVLA will come and 'clamp' those vehicles so identified.
- Mr Phil Simpson, a member of the Hoylake Golf Resort (HGR) Committee addressed the meeting on the subject of lack of support from Elected Members at the HGR public meetings. He explained that as at the time of the Constituency Committee meeting two public meetings of the HGR had taken place, with another scheduled for the week commencing 4 July. He stated that Elected Members had been invited but hadn't attended, giving the impression of 'sitting on the fence'. Mr Simpson also reiterated that the development would result in the end of the green belt.
 - The Chair thanked Mr Simpson, and stated that he was entitled to his views and to express his opinion based on his experience. The Chair advised that the accusation of 'sitting on the fence' was unfounded, and that as had been explained under the earlier discussion on the Hoylake Golf Resort a number of Councillors served on the Planning Committee and must be wary of giving the impression of pre-determining the application. Each Councillor would have to review the evidence as presented as part of the planning process, and he supported their actions. He further informed that it was not possible for Councillors to attend every public meeting in the Constituency, given the number of meetings scheduled in the Council's Committee Calendar, and as such it was a decision for each Councillor to prioritise their own diaries.
- Mr David Bevington a resident of Woodchurch commented on the ongoing issue of road repairs on the Woodchurch Estate.
- The Constituency Manager (Wirral West) informed that the condition of Hoole Road, Woodchurch had been the subject of discussion at earlier meetings of the Constituency Committee, and a very detailed briefing had been drawn up by Highways as to the condition of roads on the Woodchurch estate. The key points being as follows:

- Reinstatement of the concrete surface at the junction of Hoole Road and Home farm Road which is in poor condition is programmed during this summer; and
 - The middle section of Hoole Road (outside the shops), after only a few months showed signs of 'reflective' cracking as identified by residents and will only have a short life expectancy, i.e. this will be programmed accordingly.
- The Constituency Manager (Wirral West) informed that the aforementioned report would be shared with interested parties.
- Mr David Bevington then raised concerns about expenditure relating to the Woodchurch ICT project and the role of the steering group.
 - The Chair requested that the Deputy Chief Executive and Constituency Manager investigate the situation and report back as appropriate.
- A resident expressed concerns regarding the revised timetable for entering bids into the Community Fund, particularly given the length and complexity of the application form / documents. A request was made that the bid period be extended past the current end July – September timeframe for voluntary bodies. A further request was made as to the feasibility of increasing the Community Fund, combining allocations from departmental budgets for specific projects.
 - The Chair thanked the speaker, and supported the idea that, subject to the production of sound business cases, there could be opportunity for additional budgets in the future. He noted that Councillor Matthew Patrick was Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Communications and that he would no doubt be to exploring the matter further.
 - Councillor Phil Brightmore spoke in support of the suggestion to simplify or fast track applications, with the proviso that it should not lead to a two tier system / process.
 - The Constituency Manager informed that her office provided support to any applicant wishing to apply for Community Funds, and the process and associated application forms were continually under review to ensure ease of use.
- Mr John Cranney, Thingwall raised the matter of grass and weeds in Sunningdale Drive, commenting on the cracking of tarmac and apparent lack of concern regarding ongoing preventative maintenance which had seemingly been cut back in the Constituency.

- A number of Elected Members provided first-hand report on their actions undertaken to address the points raised.
- The Deputy Chief Executive provided further information on the processes involved, staffing and seasonal issues affecting weed control, grass cutting and other matters such as waste disposal. He confirmed that the comments had been noted and would be fed back to the relevant officers.

The Chair thanked all speakers, members of the public, Officers and Elected Members for their attendance.

Prior to closing the meeting the Chair provided information about an early morning vigil to be held at West Kirby War Memorial to commence at 07:30hrs on Friday 1 July. He informed that the Mayor of Wirral would be in attendance at the ceremony to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the commencement of the Battle of the Somme.

10 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Wirral West Constituency Committee was scheduled for 6 October 2016, at St Hildeburgh's, 1 Stanley Road, Hoylake, Wirral CH47 1HL.