

# CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE - WIRRAL WEST

Thursday, 5 October 2017

## Present:

Councillors	E Boulton	J Hale
	P Brightmore	M Patrick
	W Clements	L Reece Jones
	D Elderton	M Sullivan
	G Ellis	G Watt
	JE Green	S Whittingham

## Apologies

Councillors	T Anderson	T Smith
	D Burgess-Joyce	

## 15 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

### **The Committee stood for a minute's silence following the recent death of former Cllr Rob Gregson**

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.

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors T Anderson and D Burgess-Joyce; and Community Representatives Jackie Hall MBE, Hoylake/ Meols Ward and Alisha Butler Ward, West Kirby/ Thurstaston Ward.

## 16 MINUTES

**Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2017 be approved.**

## 17 ROAD SAFETY PROGRAMME

The Constituency Manager (Wirral West) provided a brief introduction on the variety of matters relating to highways, road and pedestrian safety schemes and budget allocations. The Constituency Manager advised that Mr Dave Rees - Wirral Road Safety Manager had been asked to attend the meeting following discussions at the last meeting about road safety matters in Heron Road in Meols. Members were informed that Heron Road had been considered by the Road Safety Panel as part of their ongoing discussions but

action had not been prioritised given that addressing the issue was deemed beyond the limited budget available to the Committee.

Following the brief introduction, Mr Dave Rees Wirral Road Safety Manager provided a verbal update on road safety matters in a variety of locations across the constituency, and answered a series of questions put by members of the public.

Discussions took place on a number of topics that included the relevance and impact of speed humps, volume of HGV traffic on minor roads, speeding and enforcement. Mr Barry James and Heron Road residents reiterated their request that 'No Entry' signs be installed at the junction with Birkenhead Road, further to the recent repainting of markings on the road. Mr Rees indicated that no further measures were planned for this location, and outlined the rationale for this position.

Cllr Green requested that an options report be prepared in relation to Heron Road for consideration by the Committee and community members.

A member of the public from Woodchurch questioned the legality of parking 'half on - half off' the footway, pointing out that on many roads in the area it was impractical not to do so without restricting the passage of emergency vehicles.

A number of suggestions and comments on highway safety matters were put forward by members of the public. The Wirral Road Safety Manager provided a further update on how schemes had been prioritised and that, for speed humps in particular, there were no plans (or budget) for their removal. It was noted that the introduction of such speed limiting devices had an impact and it was likely that removal would just reintroduce the problem.

The Constituency Manager confirmed that constituency schemes taken forward originated from a much longer list, and schemes were constantly reviewed and reassessed.

The Chair thanked Mr Rees for his attendance.

**Resolved – That the report be noted.**

18 **DONG ENERGY / BURBO BANK EXTENSION COMMUNITY FUND PROJECTS**

The Chair had proposed deferring a further discussion on this item to allow representatives from DONG or Grantscape to be present for the discussion as they had been unable attend the meeting. However he indicated that it was appropriate that the Constituency Manager provide a brief update on the Fund status.

The Constituency Manager (Wirral West) outlined how Wirral West had benefitted to date from the Burbo Bank Extension Community Fund, informing that in December 2014 DONG Energy had decided to construct the Burbo Bank Extension offshore wind farm. The site was located west of the existing Burbo Bank operational wind farm in Liverpool Bay. DONG Energy had committed to a Community Fund worth approximately £225,000 each year for the lifetime of the Project.

The Constituency Committee noted that the Constituency Manager was a member of the advisory panel that had oversight of a diversity of projects across the Estuary region i.e. North Wales, Wirral and Sefton. She informed that the fund had delivered a series of projects totalling £450,000, of which Wirral had benefitted to sums equalling almost 50% of the total. This had been as a result of the quality of the projects being submitted from Wirral.

**Resolved – that the update be noted.**

## 19 CONSTITUENCY MANAGER'S PROGRESS REPORT

The Constituency Manager (Wirral West) presented her report that provided an update on current constituency projects and activities funded using the Committee's 2016-17 budget allocations and any budgets carried over from previous years.

The Constituency Manager (Wirral West) provided a verbal summary and update on progress against the Council's key pledges. The report also formed part of regular update to the Constituency Committee that ensured that the budget decisions and work programme of the Constituency Committee were being progressed as required and that the Committee was updated on the work of the constituency team and other initiatives impacting on the constituency area. This included ongoing consultation with the local community and proactive engagement with voluntary, community and faith groups in support of the primary objective of neighbourhood working.

The Constituency Manager identified a series of initiatives on a ward by ward basis that also included topics of road safety, anti-social behaviour and combatting littering, neighbourhood watch initiatives and 'the love where you live' project that supported volunteers in keeping the borough clean and tidy.

The report provided a summary of the current budget status as follows:

<b>Budget Area</b>	<b>Amount Remaining / Purpose</b>
Core budget underspend (i.e. remaining monies carried forward from the Committee's annual £50,000 allocation following the award of grants via the Wirral	<b>£19,858.83</b> for improvements at the discretion of ward councillors*: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Greasby, Frankby and Irby – £4,964.00</li> <li>▪ Hoylake and Meols – £176.60</li> <li>▪ Pensby and Thingwall – £4,661.46</li> <li>▪ Upton – £7,406.48</li> <li>▪ West Kirby and Thurstaston – £2,650.29</li> </ul>

West Community Fund)	*The underspend budget is constantly subject to variation given payments being processed etc. The amounts shown are accurate at the time of writing.
Public Health Outcomes Fund (2013-14)	<b>£3,000</b> in returned grant to be used for health and wellbeing activities in Hoylake and Meols (in line with the objectives and location of the original grant award)
Anti-Social Behaviour	<b>£5,900</b> for activities in line with the broad recommendations of the Committee's ASB Panel
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2015-16 allocation - <b>£5,000</b> for Big Difference grants and <b>£3,000</b> for community / partnership clean ups</li> <li>▪ New allocation of <b>£12,500</b></li> </ul>

The Chair thanked Jane Morgan and Helen Gallagher from the Wirral West Constituency Office for all their work in supporting the community and Members of the Constituency Committee.

#### **Resolved - That**

- (1) it be noted that the road safety budget has been allocated in principle, in its entirety, to a series of local schemes and that the monies for this have been carried over accordingly into the 2017-18 financial year.**
- (2) a further meeting of the Road Safety Panel will be convened as soon as practically possible to finalise the programme; and**
- (3) expenditure of £1,545.00 from the remaining Anti-Social Behaviour budget to support diversionary activities as part of the multi-agency Operation Banger initiative from late October to early November and equipment for youth activities in Woodchurch, be authorised.**

#### **20 COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES UPDATE**

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 where there are vacancies.

The Chair informed that one nomination / application to serve as a co-opted member of the committee had been received. Following the formal agreement by Members of the Constituency Committee, he invited Mr Roy Sherriff to step forward and take his place at the table.

The Chair informed that Mr Sherriff's appointment as community representative for Upton would run for the remainder of the municipal year.

The Chair then requested that the Constituency Manager deliver a summary update on behalf of Jackie Hall, community representative for Hoylake and Meols who was unable to attend the Constituency Committee meeting due to her prior engagement at the launch in Hoylake of a new Charity Hub.

Ms Hall's report informed that since the last meeting 2 Friends Groups had been set up in Hoylake to monitor and improve the area, the Friends of Hoylake and West Kirby Beach and the Friends of OMD Telephone Box 3003.

The report further informed that consideration of planning for the Presbyterian Church Alderley Road was still awaited, and was causing nearby residents concern. Work had begun on the Lifeboat Museum and hopefully a suitable cafe will open for the visitors to Hoylake Beach.

Ms Hall's report included information on the Sandyachting European Championships that had taken place the previous week that had given a lot of pleasure to those who saw it. It was noted that it was not widely advertised as it was not considered a Spectator Sport but the area had benefitted from the many competitors from home and abroad. The Constituency Manager informed that due to the nature of Sandyachting and risks, it was often the case that such events would not be advertised, for risk of individuals venturing onto the course.

The report continued informing that a new support group for the Boating Lake was in the pipeline and progress would be reported to the next meeting of the Constituency Committee. New businesses were opening to replace those closing as a result of shopkeepers retiring, and the main street was looking good. Plans for the Christmas Lights to be switched on Saturday December 2<sup>nd</sup> were also reported. Copies of a new leaflet compiled of all the organisations in Hoylake and their contacts, a very busy village were available.

#### **Resolved – That**

- (1) Mr Roy Sherriff be co-opted as community representative for Upton for the remainder of the municipal year; and**
- (2) Ms Jackie Hall's report be noted.**

21 **COMMUNITY QUESTION TIME**

The Chair invited questions from members of the public upon matters that were relevant to the Wirral West Constituency. A number of written questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting from, as follows:

Mr Sills by email:

I and my fellow neighbours have written many times over the last thirty years in our attempts to have the trees in the top 18 properties in Burlingham Avenue, West Kirby, pollarded. These attempts have met with no response and we are left with ever larger falling branches, broken drains and sewers from growing roots, damaged kerbs, paving slabs and Tarmac, blocked drains from excessive leaves and unsafe pavements. Only this week we have had days of repair work to pavements, which are now becoming an annual event, due to root damage. What a waste with nothing being done to tackle the main tree issue.

There will eventually be a serious accident due to falling branches, downed telephone wires etc. unless these trees are pollarded. Visits by Streetscene officials, local council members and United Utilities specialists have all come to nothing, so we simply wait for the inevitable accident or material damage to property. Every winter our drains have to be cleared several times and the sewers specially cleaned or repaired. United Utilities tell us that they cannot afford to replace the broken pipes due to ever growing roots. What grows ever bigger above ground is replicated below.

Instead of paying every year for patch up repairs why not solve the problem with a short exercise to deal with the issue once and for all, saving money and preventing the inevitable accident and/or expensive damage?

Response:

This has been raised previously at the Constituency Committee meeting. The Highways Asset Manager met with contractors in July to inspect the trees in Burlingham Avenue. The Highways Asset Manager has now reported that emergency tree work is taking place across Wirral to first tackle sick, dead and dying trees. He has confirmed that work should take place in Burlingham Avenue between January - March 2018.

Mr Geoffrey Davies by email:

The wooded area at the end of Thorns Drive, opposite Lombardy Avenue, is in a poor and dangerous state, and needs immediate attention. Many residents walk in this area, but with great caution. There are a number of trees which are in danger of falling, and a small pond which is contaminated with dead branches. Is this the responsibility of the Council, or is the land owned by a private party? I would appreciate your comments.

Response:

The Highways Asset Manager has advised that he is meeting the Council's tree contractor on Friday 6th October and will request that works are undertaken at this location by the end of October.

Mr Phil Simpson by email:

What due diligence has been carried out on the proposed bidder/company NJVG (Nicklaus Joint Venture Group), as well as any other company involved with construction of the Hoylake Golf Resort? Giving that, it has to be passed by the planning committee, what assurances will council give, that every person/company involved, will be subject to the highest due diligence to protect the Wirral Taxpayer?

Response:

David Ball has advised that the next stage of the project is the submission by the developer, of the Funding and Phasing Plan. This will contain information on the parties involved in taking this project forward and due diligence will be done on each of them at this next stage of the project.

Ms Keren O'Rourke by email:

In 2015 a significant number of properties in Meols and Moreton flooded, having a devastating effect on families. Investigations found that the flooding was caused when surface water drains could not discharge into the River Birkett and Arrowe Brook, because the river system was ALREADY full. This was described as a 1 in 86 year storm event, (i.e. a statistical chance of occurring once in 86 years based on historic records).

The large concrete areas of the Hoylake Golf Resort, housing estate and new by-pass will dramatically increase surface water run off - which will increase flood flows in the River Birkett System.

Planning policy will only require the developer to protect for flood risk up to a 1 in 100 year storm – based on historic statistics. However, with Climate Change, we are seeing more and more frequent extreme weather events. If (and when) the Wirral experiences a flood event greater than a 1 in 100 year flood, the Golf Resort WILL increase flood risk in the Birkett Valley. Do the Councillors agree that is just too risky to build such a massive development on the River Birkett Flood plain and do you agree that any profits from the Golf resort could be swallowed up by having to deal with the clean-up of properties flooding more often?

Response:

David Ball has advised that the Council is aware of the environmental issues in this area. At this stage of the project there is no detailed layout for the proposal so the Council cannot comment on the detail. All of these matters will need to be addressed through detailed studies done as part of the planning process. These documents will be publicly available and representations on them can be made at that time. All those matters will then be considered by the Planning Committee when they make a decision on the planning application.

The Council's Lead Local Flood and Coastal Risk Manager has also provided clarification as to causes of the flooding in September 2015 referenced by Ms O'Rourke as well as information about National Planning Policy and flood risk.

In September 2015 four properties in Meols experienced flooding (3 external, 1 internal). The flooding in Meols was caused by operational problems with drainage assets, not by high levels in the River Birket. In Moreton the flooding around the Millhouse Lane area was caused by high levels in the Arrowe Brook preventing discharge of surface water drainage systems. It is thought that the railway and road bridge at Bermuda Road caused a localised backwater effect.

The water levels within the River Birket were not a factor in any property flooding.

National Planning Policy requires any new development to ensure flood risk is not increased within the site or elsewhere as a result of the development, for example by giving priority use to sustainable drainage systems to help manage the risk of surface water flooding.

Sustainable drainage systems are designed to mimic natural drainage such that the existing undeveloped discharge rates from the site are replicated for rainfall events up to 1:100 year, with an allowance for climate change of up to 40%. Sustainable drainage systems do not manage the risk of flooding from other sources, such as from rivers and the sea. These risks are managed by the Environment Agency.

All sources of flood risk are considered as part of any planning application early in the planning process, for example through a site specific flood risk assessment and/or the submission of a sustainable drainage strategy, as required.

Mr Tim Watson by email:

The Nicklaus Joint Venture Group is the Council's chosen and only potential partner for the Hoylake Golf Resort. It is based in a house in South Wales and Jack Nicklaus is not a director or part owner. The Nicklaus Joint Venture



Group has a dubious track record, including a bankruptcy and failing to deliver the promised Hilton Hotel at their previous development in Llanelli. They did manage to build 175 executive homes on that site but then put their housing construction company into voluntary liquidation owing over £1million to local businesses. This action served only to enhance the profits of their other company, which sold the houses, and given that to date, the promised hotel in Llanelli, and the associated jobs and tourism, have failed to materialise, do Councillors believe this is a suitable partner for Wirral Council?

Response:

David Ball has advised that the Council is aware of the NJVG and the details in the question. The next stage of the project is the Funding and Phasing Plan where the whole project and all the partners in the project will be subject to further due diligence.

The Chair advised that a number of questions had been emailed in advance of the meeting re: the golf resort. He informed that it was his understanding that Cllr Patrick and David Ball, the Council's Assistant Director for Environmental Services had met with a number of community members recently to discuss issues regarding the project and that the Council's Assistant Director for Environmental Services had offered to keep attendees informed of progress and meet with them once again when the Council has received the detail of the proposals from the developer.

Mr Neil Parry by email:

Hoylake Bypass - there is talk of a new road into Hoylake, where will this run from and to? How much will it cost and who will pay for it?

Response:

This road will be part of the proposed Hoylake Golf Resort project and will go from the level crossing at Hoylake railway station through to Saughall Massie Road. The cost of the road is still being worked on, as is the funding source(s). I am happy to provide further information when the detail is known.

A number of additional public questions were then taken by the Chair. Committee Members and Officers responded accordingly.

At the close of the public question session Ms Susan Brown addressed the Constituency Committee and offered councillors a guided tour of the Wirral Society of Arts Open Exhibition at the Williamson Art Gallery, the opening of which was scheduled for Friday 6 October, between 6pm and 8pm. The Constituency Manager agreed to facilitate this.

22 **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

23 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

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

The next meeting of the Wirral West Constituency Committee will take place on 15 March 2018.

Venue to be confirmed.