

CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE - WIRRAL WEST

Thursday, 15 March 2018

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	W Clements (in the Chair)	
	Councillors	E Boulton P Brightmore D Burgess-Joyce W Clements D Elderton	G Ellis M Patrick T Smith M Sullivan G Watt
<u>Apologies</u>	Councillors	JE Green L Reecejones	S Whittingham

24 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Councillor Jeff Green having proffered his apologies for the meeting and in the absence of a Vice-Chair, nominations were requested for the appointment a Chair for this meeting. It was,

Proposed: by Councillor David Elderton

Seconded: by Mike Sullivan

That Councillor Wendy Clements be appointed as Chair for this meeting of the Wirral West Constituency Committee.

No other nominations were put forward.

Resolved (unanimously) –

That Councillor Wendy Clements be appointed as Chair for this meeting of the Wirral West Constituency Committee.

25 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In addition to apologies for absence from Councillor Jeff Green (see minute 24 ante), apologies for absence were also received from Councillors Louise Reecejones and Stuart Whittingham.

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 declarations were made.

26 **MINUTES**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2017 be approved as a correct record.

27 **CONSTITUENCY MANAGER UPDATE**

Prior to the Constituency Manager Update, the Chair invited Acting Sergeant Neil Bradley to give a verbal update on the issue of burglaries and thefts that had occurred in recent months.

Acting Sergeant Bradley informed that the geographical area for Wirral West Constituency fell under the remit of the Community Police Team – ‘Hub One’ area team. He informed that, in general, Wirral West had relatively low levels of reported crime but issues of concern remained with regard to burglaries. He informed that the standard advice of keeping items of value out of sight, and locking doors and windows did help in preventing crimes of this nature. He added that members of the public should also be wary of ‘cold-callers’ who in some cases were fraudulently knocking on the doors of vulnerable persons with a view to assessing the security and value of possible target properties. Sergeant Bradley explained that burglaries were often aimed at those homes with high value vehicles – with vehicle keys being the primary (but not only) target.

Acting Sergeant Bradley provided a detailed summary of actions taken by the Merseyside Police to combat crime in the area and provided extensive explanation in respect of successful arrests and prosecutions for a range of recent criminal activity that included anti-social behaviour, vehicle theft, suspicious behaviour, distraction-based crimes, drugs etc.

Members questioned Acting Sergeant Bradley on some specific matters relevant to certain locations and recent meetings attended by residents. The questions also included a request for ongoing communication / feedback and whether the Police Force was coping, or would benefit from additional Police Officers. Acting Sergeant Bradley responded stating that he was confident in the ability of the Officers working in the ‘Hub One’ area team, but additional staffing would always be welcomed. He added that in all cases, response to crime was prioritised on risk-based assessments.

The Chair and Members of the Committee thanked Acting Sergeant Bradley for his update.

Nicola Jones, Senior Public Health Manager delivered a verbal update on behalf of the Wirral West Constituency Manager that provided an update on key achievements in respect of projects funded by the Constituency

Committee since the last meeting in October 2017. The update included information on the following:

- Completion of work on the 2nd Memorial Garden on Hoole Road by 'Flourish at Ford Way' using Community Fund underspend in Upton ward - the garden will be officially opened at 1pm on Monday 19th March to mark the improvements that have taken place. The Princes Trust will be presented with certificates of achievement by Flourish for all their help with the project.
- The Little Brothers project, funded by the Constituency Committee through its ASB budget, had been awarded the High Sheriff of Merseyside Award in recognition of great and valuable services to the community. The initiative had also been awarded a certificate from National Crimebeat commending their outstanding contribution to helping reduce crime and creating a safer community. Little Brothers and Little Sisters had been set up to provide activities for pupils in Years 5 and 6 in an attempt to reduce the chances of the children becoming involved in ASB and early criminal activity. It started 2 years ago and was led by young men and women who were excellent role models due to their involvement in sport and coaching. The clubs were overseen by the school Home/School Link Worker who lived on the estate and knew the families and the barriers and risks facing the pupils. The clubs took place two nights per week. Pupils had designed a logo for both clubs, made rules and a promise, completed homework tasks and been involved in healthy living and making choices sessions. They were also given guidance, academic support and were able to access 1 to 1 sessions with the coaches to discuss worries or fears which may arise in their lives.

The report also included information on a number of projects funded in Pensby and Thingwall Ward using the remaining Community Fund allocation for this area, these included:

- Holidays at Home - a group who support people within the community aged 60+ who may be socially isolated while other groups closed for the summer holidays. The group provided company and support and aimed to help individuals to meet other like minded people in the community.
- Kylemore Luncheon Club – the club provided a meeting place 1 day a week, 50 weeks a year for elderly people to socialise, enjoy a hot meal and to have a much needed change of environment. The funding paid for singers, speakers and musicians to come along and entertain the members once a month.
- Pensby Library Volunteers – to promote enjoyment of reading and easy access to books as well as enhance the use of Pensby Library within the community. The funding would help towards an ongoing project to

light up Pensby from Christmas 2018 and in following years, with the installation of streetlamp Christmas lights.

The report summarised that 42 Community Fund projects had been completed from the last round of funding (2016/17), and that a number of projects had been given extensions:

- Greasby Community Association, Traffic and Heritage Team – The funding helped towards the Installation of a series of new boundary place-name signs. The signs proclaim that the township of Greasby contained information that it was the earliest dated settlement in Western Britain, and one of the oldest in the country – remains having been found and dated from around 8,500BC.
- Wirral Festival of Firsts – the 2017 Festival focused on celebrating Hoylake old and new, community participation and inclusion of disability groups such as Hoylake Wild Cats Basketball team were both very strong features of the Parade – 335 people were a part of the event and approximately 2,500 people came to watch. The funding helped towards the traffic management for the event.
- Carers Get Together – the group held monthly meetings for carers and former carers in the Pensby & Thingwall Ward who provided a better quality of life for those they love, who through a wide range of disabilities, cannot provide for themselves. The group offered mutual support and friendship and in doing so helped to improve wellbeing and reduce social isolation. The funding paid for two short trips out for the carers.
- HYPE (Helping Young People Everywhere) – a youth organisation working with young people aged 9-24 that aimed to improve health, social and educational skills and enhance opportunity for employment. The group delivered workshops, events and projects. Funding helped towards developing an area of land in Woodchurch into a multi-purpose community space, carried out by the young people. The space is to include an exercise area, gardening, relaxation and child friendly area.
- Friends of Grange Community Park – Funding was used to re-vamp equipment in Grange Community Park. The Friends had now transformed the equipment with help from a group of young people carrying out their Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Members noted two underspend items within the Constituency Committee area, as follows:

Upton: Flourish at Ford Way – a local community gardening group, ‘Flourish at Ford Way’ with help from Wirral Met College’s Princes Trust team and support from the Wirral West Constituency Team had worked to bring the 2nd Memorial Garden on Hoole in Woodchurch back into use after it fell into

disrepair many years ago. The gardens were established to provide a place of reflection for people who have lost loved ones on the estate.

West Kirby & Thurstaston and Hoylake & Meols: West Kirby Drop-In – the group was set up to help those with any degree of mental health, providing somewhere to go to be with other people, to be accepted and through interaction with others, be understood. Funding support to help towards running costs for the group.

In conclusion the report informed that the Constituency Engagement Officer had also worked hard to support the Love Where You Live initiative, with local hubs now having equipment on hand for use by litter picking groups. In addition the West Kirby group 'The High Tidiers' were reported as going from strength to strength, working closely with the Council to shape future approaches to assist with local clear ups, e.g. actions to aid the reduction of single use plastics.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

28 **UPDATE ON NEIGHBOURHOOD REVIEW**

The Chair invited Ms Rachel Musgrave, Consultant in Public Health and Councillor Matthew Patrick, Cabinet Member Localism and Engagement to deliver their joint presentation entitled Wirral Together – working with our local communities.

A review considering the effectiveness of current neighbourhood working arrangements had been undertaken. The Constituency Committees were part of the current approach, the Committees being formed several years ago to replace Area Forums to provide an opportunity for residents to hear updates on local services and to raise issues. Reference was made to a study indicating that 97% of people felt that local communities would improve if people had an input, but that around 51% of Wirral residents felt they had no influence; this suggested that things had to change if the Council wished to increase participation. This was important as 75% of the actions related to the 2020 Vision and Pledges required local working and resident involvement.

The review into Constituency Committee effectiveness had considered what other models there were for neighbourhood working in use elsewhere; what value could be placed on investment to date; and what were the views of partners, residents and councillors.

Rachael Musgrave advised that a review of approaches elsewhere revealed a variety of approaches but none that had been formally evaluated. While there were some success factors, such as in differing ways of engagement and in ensuring ownership and transparency, there was no particular answer but to find the best way forward for Wirral. Looking at social value and return on the Committees' budget expenditure since 2013, while acknowledging that individual Committee's adopted their own priorities and approaches the review

had shown an average £2.68 return for every £1 Committee grant. In seeking the views of others, there was a consensus that work with partners and the community had both to be done and be valued, and that community action made a difference.

It was concluded that one size would not fit all, and that existing networks should be used to engage with agencies and with communities, as opposed to expecting them to come to the Council. It was felt that a Committee meeting was not necessarily the best way to approach this. Other considerations from consultation were that small grants and seed funding was really useful; that the dedicated officer support for Councillors benefited the process in tackling issues and making connections; there was a need for a 'community builder' to better connect local groups; but there was a feeling of apathy with the political system.

Councillor Matthew Patrick informed that the next steps in the review process would take the form of a written report to Wirral Council's Cabinet.

A number of questions we put to Councillor Matthew Patrick on the use of volunteers and engagement with young people, by including them as youth members on various organisational bodies. Councillor Patrick informed of work that had recently been completed in respect of the Council's Volunteering Strategy that enabled council staff 2 days paid leave to engage in voluntary work in the borough. He added that such arrangements would expand the council's network and provide additional opportunities to engage with the community.

The Chair thanked Ms Musgrave and Councillor Patrick for their presentation.

Resolved – That the presentation be noted.

29 **UPDATE FROM COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE**

The Chair invited Jackie Hall, community representative for Hoylake and Meols to deliver her update.

Ms Hall's report informed that community and voluntary work continued to keep going with various projects and activities being undertaken by as many as 45 different groups within the Hoylake and Meols community. The report further informed that a recent community event was attended by 22 of the voluntary / charitable groups.

Ms Hall informed the Constituency Committee that by far the biggest feedback on any issue received to date had been the number of complaints put forward from many independent sources regarding the Council's proposal to introduce parking meters on Wirral's coastal promenades. She added that the feedback related to the effect on visitor numbers to the area and attractions such as the Marine Lake, in addition to access to the local community centre and other facilities. Ms Hall pointed out that many residents were of the opinion that the

introduction of parking fees could be offset by discontinuing the Council's publication 'Wirral View'.

Ms Hall's report included information regarding the ongoing success of Market Street, Hoylake made up of 100 businesses. She reported that 4 new businesses had recently been added to this number.

Councillor Matthew Patrick replied to the points raised in Ms Hall's report informing that parking fees were being introduced as a result of cuts to local government budgets, and the need to provide sufficient funding in other areas of the Council that had been placed under severe pressures e.g. Children in Care. In response to the suggestion that Wirral View was an increased burden on the Council budget, he informed that the publication had resulted in less money being spent on communications in the past, and was designed to provide information across the borough, particularly those that had not been well served by the local media in the past.

Resolved - That Ms Jackie Hall's report be noted.

30 **PRESENTATION FROM THE HIVE**

The Chair invited Mr Stuart Barnes, HIVE – Wirral Youth Zone General Manager and Tony Lewis, Chief Executive Barnet Youth Zone (OnSide) to deliver their joint presentation.

Mr Barnes informed that the establishment of the HIVE – Wirral Zone had demonstrated a significant investment in Young People, and that the state of the art building had been open less than a year. He explained that the HIVE concept was founded in 2008, replicating the successful model of Bolton Lads & Girls Club in disadvantaged areas of the UK. He added that Wirral was the 8th Youth Zone to be established in the OnSide network and had a target of 20 live projects by 2020, aiming for 100 projects by 2030.

Mr Tony Lewis, Chief Executive Barnet Youth Zone informed that he had been seconded to the Wirral project for a period of 6 months to observe and engage in what was OnSide charity's flagship project. He added that the charity supported existing Youth Zones in operating effectively, as well as introducing new Youth Zones to towns and cities across the country.

The presentation informed that Wirral Youth Zone provided 46 hours per week of open access, covering 7 days a week, delivering 20 activities per night. Supported by staff and other organisations such as an employment and enterprise team, the Wirral Youth Zone provided a safe, quality and inspirational environment for young people at a cost of 50p per visit with a one off annual joining fee of £5.

Members noted that the HIVE opening hours were currently 4:00pm to 10:00pm every day, with additional 'Holiday Club' access during school holidays (8:00am to 6:00pm) at a cost of £10.

Mr Barnes and Mr Lewis further informed that the Wirral Youth Zone had a growing membership of 7,000 young people with 80,000 visits and had created 75 jobs, full-time & sessional, recruiting over 100 volunteers since its inception.

The Committee noted that outreach work was ongoing to encourage young people from across the borough to join the HIVE, it being a facility for all Wirral youth not just those living in close proximity to its Birkenhead location. Mr Lewis provided additional information regarding the outreach work and detailed how attendance at the HIVE had been recorded and attendance statistics for the Wirral West Constituency were as follows:

Ward	Target	Members	%
Greasby, Frankby & Irby	113	108	93
Hoylake & Meols	117	89	76
Pensby & Thingwall	105	136	130
Upton	153	350	229
West Kirby & Thurstaston	113	64	57
Total	601	747	124

He informed that work continued to encourage young people to try out the facilities, by engaging schools, parents and working with local transport companies to allay fears and make it as easy as possible to access the HIVE.

Members of the Committee questioned Mr Barnes and Mr Lewis on a number of matters, particularly regarding outreach work, accessibility of transport and affordability for locations some distance from the Hive, and work to encourage ongoing visits / membership for those affected.

Questions were asked regarding safety and management of behaviour. Members were informed of the measures in place, and were informed that the HIVE concept and working practices meant that the HIVE had been remarkably successful in delivering a safe, enjoyable and stimulating environment for young people.

The Chair thanked Mr Barnes and Mr Lewis for their presentation.

Resolved – That the presentation be noted.

31 **COMMUNITY QUESTION TIME**

Prior to consideration of Community Questions, the Chair informed that a request had been made from Ms Susan Brown of the Wirral Arts Society to address the Constituency Committee in order to promote a project where Wirral Libraries were joining forces with Wirral Festival of Firsts this summer to launch the borough's first ever 'Troll Trail' featuring trolls created by residents, families and individuals. Its aim - to increase footfall at Wirral Libraries and promote the excellent work and services provided.

Ms Brown informed that once created, the handmade trolls may be taken to any Wirral library between 15 February and 1 June 2018, to be displayed as part of a Wirral Troll Trail from between 30 June and 14 July 2018, to coincide with workshops and talks about trolls, Vikings and Norse mythology. The project also aimed to help highlight libraries as valuable community assets, and by encouraging visitors, to also raise awareness of volunteering opportunities, opening hours and access to computer equipment (currently available at two thirds on Wirral Libraries). Leaflets providing information on the Troll Trail were distributed.

The Chair thanked Ms Brown for her contribution, and then invited questions from members of the public upon other matters that were relevant to the Wirral West Constituency.

The Chair informed that a large number of written questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting, but given the restricted time available, priority would be given to questions from members of the public in attendance. She informed that many of the questions submitted related to the Hoylake Golf Resort, and that a document '*Common questions relating to the Hoylake Golf Resort*' had been prepared and published on the Council Website, and that a printed copy had also been circulated at this meeting of the Constituency Committee. Information may be found on the Council website here:

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/hoylake-golf-resort/common-questions-about>

A resident of Heron Road, Meols re-asserted an earlier request presented to the Constituency Committee that road safety improvements be made to Heron Road, namely the introduction of a speed camera halfway along the road, introduction of a sight mirror opposite Acres Road, Meols and installation of a 'No Entry' sign at the Birkenhead Road junction roundabout.

Mr David Armstrong, Assistant Chief Executive informed that the road safety officer had been unable to attend this evening's meeting, but he was aware that discussions had taken place with the police and that the locating of a fixed speed camera would not work at this location. He added that mobile traffic enforcement was a possible option and that road markings had been repainted at the Birkenhead Road Junction, but that the request for road signage would cost in the region of £3-4k and there was no funding available in the Constituency Committee's budget.

The Constituency Committee was informed by the questioner that there had been 2 accidents on Heron Road in the past 2 weeks and 7 road closures in the last year.

A resident commented on the subject of Hoylake Golf Course and the building of Band H properties and stated that it seemed that Members were being

prevented from talking on the subjects. Councillor Matthew Patrick informed that Councillors were not 'gagged' and that the document '*Common questions relating to the Hoylake Golf Resort*' would help.

Another resident commented that Councillor Matthew Patrick had refused to meet with their 'Defend the Greenbelt' group, and stated the claim that the Council would be borrowing £26m to re-lend to the developer. Councillor Patrick stated that he had not refused any direct requests for meetings, and had answered questions on the topic and engaged with residents at many meetings.

A question was directed to the Committee regarding whether the 160 properties would be developed before the Golf Course was built, and could residents have a guarantee that this was not the case.

A number of Councillors replied, explaining that the Planning Committee would be the final decision maker in respect of the development, to either approve (with conditions) or to refuse basing its decision purely on planning grounds and planning law. If refused and appealed, the decision would fall to the Secretary of State. Members also commented that those Councillors who sat on the Planning Committee could not express an opinion on the proposed development until the application was before them, with all the facts, and to do so could give claim to pre-determination and give cause for challenge in law.

A resident of Heron Road raised the matter of a local market gardener who regularly burnt rubbish at their site. Although challenged, it was clear that claims that timber only was being burnt, this was not the case and photographic evidence was circulated to the Constituency Committee showing domestic rubbish (carpets/soft furnishings/plastic) was being disposed of. Councillor Gerry Ellis informed that a visit from the Council's Environmental Health Team had been arranged for the following week.

A West Kirby resident raised the issue of the 'temporary' closure of West Kirby rail bridge two years ago. He requested that some action be taken to arrange for the bridge to be re-opened to two-way traffic, with a weight restriction to expedite access for local residents. Mr David Armstrong, Assistant Chief Executive informed that he would take the matter to Officers to see if a solution could be found. It was noted that the bridge was under the management of Network Rail, and options may be limited.

A resident raised a further point regarding the earlier question about the proposed Holylake Golf Resort and the lack of definitive answers. Mr David Armstrong, Assistant Chief Executive responded stating that a number of copies of the Cabinet decision report had been provided for the public at this meeting, and in response to questions at the last meeting of the Constituency Committee a copy of plans for link road was also available for inspection. A Member re-iterated the earlier point that some Councillors may not publicly express an opinion in support of, or against, the proposed development by

virtue of their membership of the Planning Committee. Mr David Armstrong, Assistant Chief Executive added that in response to earlier comments the housing development would take place after the establishment of the golf course.

A resident expressed a number of views regarding the suitability of the Joint Venture Partner, the need for first-time buyer properties and prioritising of brownfield sites for development on Wirral. Mr David Armstrong, Assistant Chief Executive informed that a number of new dwelling developments had just been announced, on brownfield sites, former school sites in addition to specialist dementia care provision and a variety of bridge and infrastructure projects many of which had been supported by inward investment grants.

A copy of the document 'Common questions relating to the Hoylake Golf Resort' referred to above is appended to the meeting minutes.

32 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

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

Information regarding the date and time of the next meeting - to be confirmed.