

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Julie McManus
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	Community Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Community Services to Members of the Council on matters relevant to the portfolio.

Leisure

- *Beechwood Recreation Centre*

Beechwood Recreation Centre will be managed and operated by Tranmere Rovers for the next five years after a concession contract for the running of the centre was agreed between Wirral Council and the borough's professional football club. Under the terms of the agreement, Tranmere will provide the continued delivery of a community leisure service at the centre while leasing the building from the council, saving the local authority an estimated £73,000 per year.

- *MacMillan*

Back in 2017, Wirral Council was awarded £300,000 funding by Macmillan to deliver a project for a 24 month period to undertake an EHNA (electronic holistic needs assessment) for those living with and beyond cancer in the Wirral; to understand their needs and provide support and signpost them to relevant services.

The project was hosted within the leisure team and included 12 weeks access to the leisure centres and also a range of specific targeted sessions for those referred.

The success of the project has been recognised by Macmillan and the team were shortlisted for a National Award for integration. The awards ceremony took place on the 7th November, and whilst unfortunately they didn't win, the progress and life changing interventions demonstrated across the Borough are significant.

Parks

- *Mersey Park and Ilchester Park*

Mersey Park and Ilchester Park have been selected as parks that will benefit from a funding grant of £56,000 received from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

The parks will receive work over the coming months to improve and enhance green space and introduce new features. The parks have been highlighted as areas of important green space in the surrounding area, both parks are situated in areas of dense housing.

- *North West in Bloom Competition 2019*

31 groups across Wirral received awards for their fantastic projects at the 'North West In Bloom Competition' Awards Ceremony in October.

Birkenhead Constituency Committee and team have supported the projects with funds, co-ordination and project management.

In Your Neighbourhood Awards

- 8 groups won Outstanding level 5
- 11 groups won Thriving level 4
- 6 groups won Advancing level 3
- 2 groups won Improving level 2

Village in Bloom

- Oxton Gold
- The Ship Inn Bronze
- Wirral Parks Silver
- Hillside School School award

- *Birkenhead Park*

Birkenhead Park hosted an event 8–13 Nov R.I.B.A (Royal Institute of British Architects) in conjunction with FINSA (FINANCIAL MADERERA S.A.) the event showcased works by Liverpool John Moores University architecture students.

- *Christmas food collections*

Landican Crematorium has been collecting food donations for the Neo-natal Community project Christmas Hamper Appeal. They are collecting items for 1000 Christmas Hampers and are asking for non-perishable food items, toiletries, small gift sets and Christmas treats. If anyone would like to donate and help give a local family the Christmas they deserve, please drop these off at Landican Crematorium.

- *Landican Cemetery recycling of metals*

Landican recently presented a cheque from the Crematorium's Recycling of Metals scheme, to the Candice Coley foundation for a total of £8000. The Foundation aims to help Leukaemia and other blood cancer patients and their families and at the moment focuses their support on Ward 30 at Arrowe Park Hospital, Wirral and The Bone Marrow Transplant Unit at The Royal Liverpool Hospital.

Museums

- *Williamson Art Gallery*

From September to the end of November the Williamson Art Gallery has hosted two very important exhibitions: A retrospective from Christian Furr, who is the youngest artist ever to be invited to paint the Queen; and Distinctly which shows the best of British Documentary photography. Distinctly was developed to be shown in China, and the Williamson's exhibition is its only showing in the UK. Events such as these have helped to attract visitors into the gallery and visitors are up over 8,000 on this time last year, with 45,680 visitors between January and the end of October.

The furniture gallery reopened at the end of October following redecoration made possible through sponsorship from Brewers Decorating Centres.

Williamson Art Gallery & Museum won the RHS Britain in Bloom Neighbourhood Award, achieving a Level 5 – Outstanding

- *The Priory*

Our Priory volunteers celebrated their 5th Birthday on 4 November. The Priory volunteers act as tour guides, manage the planters and support events.

- *Volunteers and Friends*

Our Friends organisation has over 500 members and are active in fundraising for the Gallery and the Priory. Their largest investment to date was in the development of the Green Gallery, which turned waste land in the centre of the Gallery into a delightful garden/outdoor seating area. The Friends maintain the Green Gallery and recently commissioned lighting for the space with installation starting in November.

15 Documentation volunteers, supporting the audit of our collections as part of the capital project to reduce the backlog of documentation and accessioning and digitize our collections, have processed over 2,500 items since they started in the summer.

Golf

- *Arrowe Park and The Warren*

In October a decision was made on the next steps for the future provision of municipal golf courses. It was agreed that Arrowe Park and The Warren golf courses be retained in-house. The Council will now commission a ground survey to be carried out at each course and the capital programme be amended to carry out any work that is identified from the survey findings over the next eight years, to ensure that each of the courses is brought up to standard and that grounds maintenance staff have the appropriate equipment required. A consultative user group will be set up to meet once a quarter with each of the golf courses to discuss any issues and problems identified.

Libraries

- *'Food for Fines'*

Wirral Libraries' 'Food for Fines' initiative - which allowed borrowers to clear unpaid library fines by donating food and toiletries to Wirral Foodbank took place during libraries week. A substantial amount of food and toiletries was donated to foodbanks to help families in-need across Wirral. A total of £1,900 worth of library fines were waived in return during the week.

- *Library Week*

An under 5's morning was held at Birkenhead Library during Library Week. Over 150 people attended for a Baby Bounce and Rhyme session and to visit information stalls.

- *Booktrust's Time to Read*

F2 classes had a special story time in Bebington Library based on *The Cave* by Rob Hodgson, which the reception children have all received a free copy of as part of the Booktrust's Time to Read initiative. 15 classes have so far booked in for sessions in the West Wirral area. Over 20 schools have booked into the Birkenhead area.

Highways

A multi-million-pound investment in Wirral's road network is drawing to a close, with more than 270 roads and footways on this year's programme successfully repaired.

The current strategy for highways maintenance utilises a variety of surface treatments and patching programmes. Table 2 below provides the number of potholes repaired month by month.

17-18	Potholes Repaired	18-19	Potholes Repaired
Apr-17	18	Apr-18	26
May-17	24	May-18	26
Jun-17	25	Jun-18	53
Jul-17	16	Jul-18	32
Aug-17	16	Aug-18	8
Sep-17	20	Sep-18	11
Oct-17	11	Oct-18	15
Nov-17	10	Nov-18	13
Dec-17	23	Dec-18	17

Jan-18	27	Jan-19	29
Feb-18	31	Feb-19	18
Mar-18	55	Mar-19	24

TABLE 2: POTHOLES REPAIRED APR-18 TO MAR-19

2018	Potholes Repaired	2019	Potholes Repaired
Apr-18	26	Apr-19	28
May-18	26	May-19	45
Jun-18	53	Jun-19	13
Jul-18	32	Jul-19	22
Aug-18	8	Aug-19	7
Sep-18	11	Sep-19	25

TABLE 3: POTHOLES REPAIRED APR-19 TO SEP-19

Street lighting

Around 10,300 streetlights in Wirral have been installed with new LED lamps. It will take two years to complete the LED programme replacing a total of 26,000 new LED lanterns and 9,000 columns. Work on columns will begin in the New Year.

Wirral has more than 35,000 streetlights and once complete, the streetlights will help to cut carbon emissions by 1,346.34 tCO₂ per year.

As well as helping to meet carbon reduction targets by dramatically reducing energy use by 4,414,240 kWh per year, the new LED lights will also reduce running costs, these lamps are longer lasting than the original fittings, as well as requiring less maintenance.

In order to ensure the programme is delivered successfully and residents are kept informed, a Streetlight Action Group has been established, a project plan produced, performance dashboard created, and customer training planned for 100+ delivery staff.

A Street Lighting & Operations Manager has been appointed to supervise the programme.

Snapshot of Performance May – November 2019:

- Number of streetlights in Wirral:38,000
- % Faulty Streetlights: 4.6%
- Total number of reported faults: 3705

- Total number of streetlight repairs undertaken: 4285
- Streetlight – first time fix rate: 96%

Neat streets

More than 120 tonnes of fly-tipped waste were removed from streets and alleyways as Wirral Council and partner organisations including Biffa, Magenta Living and Community Payback teams, carried out a comprehensive clean up on areas of Birkenhead that have been most blighted by environmental problems.

As well as fly-tipping and alleyway dumping, contaminated bins, graffiti and untidy gardens and pavements were addressed as part of the 'Neat Streets' campaign, which started at the end of May and continued until the end of the summer.

23 'blocks' across eight distinct areas of Birkenhead where environmental issues have been a cause for concern were cleaned-up during the campaign.

As part of the campaign, 708 contaminated bins – which ordinarily would not be emptied as part of regular domestic waste collections – were dealt with, with information stickers then placed on them as a reminder of bin collection days and the fact that they can register for text messaging bin collection alerts. 434 bins which had been abandoned on the streets were removed over the course of the campaign.

Other headlines from the Neat Streets activity included:

- Continental removed 94 areas of graffiti and flyposting.
- Fly posting and graffiti removed from phone boxes and cable boxes by BT, who also scheduled in some identified repair works
- Letters sent by the council to homeowners about cutting back overhanging trees and branches on their property
- 114 items of damaged street furniture reported for repair
- Residents written to, to address untidy gardens on their property
- Business waste advice given
- Reports have been logged for faulty entry gate repairs
- Nine new bins provided to residents
- 2.7 tonnes of weeds removed from entries
- 97 bin repairs carried out free of charge
- 8,851 residents engaged with over the course of the campaign