

Addendum to Minutes

Written responses and answer to supplementary question

John Edwards - submitted a question, stating that there is no scientific proof that carbon dioxide is responsible for any of the warming of the global climate and asked if the Committee could explain how taxation to the point of poverty, cameras, road-blocks and restrictions can help the economy of the Wirral and impact on temperatures. The Chair explained that the Committee has no intention of taxing someone to the point of poverty nor is anyone in the council proposing this.

Julie Armitage submitted a question relating to funding that was given to the Hoylake Beacon Arts project. It was funded by the coastal communities' fund and was supposed to be used for a cinema and restaurants but noted that the only change was the addition of 40 flats built behind the Town Hall. The Chair responded to say she was not aware of this funding and will ask officers for an update.

Neal Smith submitted a question regarding the tree planting strategy and queried if there was asking if there was a tree watering schedule in place, and if this was being carried out. The Chair outlined the watering schedule for larger trees and explained how smaller saplings are supported using woodchip and mulch. The Chair confirmed that whilst it was not possible to water the thousands of saplings the Council Plants, but to combat the drier conditions we now experience each year due to climate change, we do over stock our trees accepting that will we experience greater losses.

Submitted a question on regarding traffic congestion in Higher Bebington, especially around schools and asked if traffic management could be considered, especially around Teehey Lane. The Chair responded to confirm she would ask officers to consider this and noted that officers had been working with local people to co-design Low Traffic Neighbourhoods in the area.

Clare Rafferty submitted a question regarding sand removal from Hoylake Beach and noted that the information on the Council's website stated that the council will continue to move sand from the sea wall to allow highway drains to work properly and remove litter by hand from the beach. The chair explained that Assent from Natural England for the removal of sand from the sea wall at Hoylake has expired and this operation has been ceased. Work is carried out on periodical basis, mostly recently in November, to maintain the adjacent highway drainage system. A member of Parks & Countryside Services is deployed to remove litter from the beach and service litter bins through the week. In addition to this, the area manager makes a weekly visit to check the beach for litter.

Beverley Aspinall submitted a question regarding a post by the Wirral Globe in May 2023 asking readers "If you could bring one thing back to Wirral, what would it be? And noted that a large number of respondents asked for a cleared Hoylake Beach and asked if these comments would be taken into consideration. The Chair advised that the Council does not base policy on the comments sections of local press

articles but will base it on the results of the consultation and what is scientifically possible and legal.

Verity Smith supplied a question regarding New Committee Members, and how they are brought up to speed on subjects such as Hoylake Beach, the consultation process and compromise options being taken for consideration to Natural England. The Chair explained the terms of reference for the Committee and training provided to Members on committee decision making, also referencing the requirement for Members to read the background information on Committee reports and related information. The Chair also highlighted Carbon Literacy Training for Members.

Wayne Verkade submitted a question, asking Committee to consider photographic evidence of contaminated water and effluence and queried the number of reports to this effect and queried software faults. The Chair responded to say that the issue of highways drainage onto the beach needs investigating with a view to resolving the problem and has asked that it is part of the planning for the final Beach Management Plan.

Dr. Francis McArdle submitted a question querying various organisations holding group events on the beach without any producing Habitat Risk Assessments, and asked that the council clearly state their protocols that must be adhered to before using any part of Hoylake beach, including when WBC needs to be informed (what activity and what numbers), when would an HSA be required (what activity and what numbers), and when would an activity be prohibited. The chair advised that, In relation to Hoylake Beach specifically, the event proposed would also be considered against the 'operations requiring Natural England's Consent', the ORNEC List, This sets out the types of operation where consent would be required from Natural England. If the event proposes an activity on this list, the event organisers would be advised that an HRA would be required, and that consent would also need to be received from Natural England before the event could approved.

Supplementary

Charlotte Smith

Question Was the environmental committee/Chair aware of pre-existing legislation and agreements regarding the beach, including the need to address blue health and human activities, which would negate the decision of the environmental chair and public consultation process, and if so why was this ignored? As someone who is disabled and recently diagnosed with cancer, I am angered that my access to the beach has been taken away from me and the mess that is there now is damaging my blue health needs.

Response

There is access to the beach at various points along North Parade. Blue health is an emerging concept through which studies claim to suggest outdoor spaces have

potential benefits achieved by spending time on or near water. The concept of being around water can be achieved either via the several access points at North Parade or from the promenade itself. The Committee would be grateful to receive any signposting to existing legislation which includes the blue health concept as legal officers are unable to find any statutory basis upon which the concept has been taken into account or considered/