Blackbrook Ward Committee
At a meeting of this Committee held on 23rd July 2007
at St Paul’s Church, Blackbrook

(Present) Councillors Maloney & McQuade
Constable Chris Townley (Merseyside Police)
Reverend Janet Roberts (St Paul’s)
Janet Ruse (Helena Housing)
Freda Barr (Ashurst TRA)

(Not Present) Councillor Bowden
Tom Glynn (CEN Rep)
Susan Richardson (St Helens Council)

(Also Present) Joyce Berry (St Helens Council)
Chris Williams (St Helens Council)
Dave Boocock (St Helens Council)

Welcome and Introduction
Councillor Maloney welcomed Mrs Nichols, member of the Public in attendance.

14. Apologies for Absence
Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bowden and Susan Richardson.

15. Minutes of the Meeting held on 21st May 2007
The Minutes of the meeting held on 21st May 2007 were accepted as a true record.
It was noted that Freda Barr has resigned from Ashurst TRA and a replacement representative needs to be identified. It was further noted that Freda has been a valued member of the committee and it would be beneficial if she could remain as a representative.

Action:- Joyce Berry to write to the Ashurst TRA and request a representative to replace Freda Barr.

16. Declaration of Interest
No interests were declared

17. Matters arising from the previous Meeting
a) May Issues
Garage Site
The Council is looking to lease the land at the back of Link Avenue for garden extensions. Secure fencing may be erected around the site. There are still problems with youths congregating in the area and the condition of this site presents a danger to them. Mrs Nicholls did acknowledge that a great deal of work has already been done to improve the area.
Black Boxes
Mrs Barr commented that the black boxes have not been delivered and on enquiry she was informed that all residents need to ring up individually if they want to receive a black box.

b) **Environmental Project Fund – Progress Report**

**BLA – 01 Blackbrook Scouts HQ Road Repairs**
Statutory approval has been received for this scheme.

**BLA - 04 Bosworth Road Field Sports Facility**
Work scheduled for completion by July Committee, however the goal posts are not in place as yet.

*Action:* Joyce Berry to request updated information.

**BLA - 05 Bosworth Road Field – Soft Play Surface Area**
This item was deferred as it links with item BLA 12

**BLA - 06 Youth Centre and Litter Bins**
The Committee agreed a site opposite St Catherine’s on the grassed area near to the canal and the road. This scheme has been approved and the work will now be programmed.

**BLA - 09 Mosquito Buzzers**
Three buzzers were approved by the Committee in May, in Park St, Chain Lane and in the lane behind the Co-op. The Park St site can go ahead but Con Townley reported that the other properties identified have recently changed hands which has delayed progress.

Alternative properties were discussed and residents who would be willing to co-operate were identified.

The Committee approved the purchase of a fourth buzzer.

The Committee received re-assurance that the buzzer could be turned on and off so as not to impact upon young children in the playground during the day in the Park Street area.

*Action:* Con Townley to make enquiries with residents and agree locations for the buzzers and inform the Council so work can progress.

**New Requests at the May meeting**

**BLA – 10 Ashurst Primary School Perimeter Fencing**
A meeting will take place with the Head Teacher to progress this further and to identify the exact area for the fencing and the cost implications.
**BLA – 11 Three Dog Bins on the Millennium Green**

The cost of the 3 dog bins will be £1,050. The Committee approved this scheme.

*Action – Joyce Berry to ascertain that the Council will empty the bins. Ashurst TRA and The Millennium Green Trust to agree the exact locations.*

**BLA – 12 Playground Equipment / BLA – 05 Soft Play Surface**

The Council had reported that they were unable to locate the play equipment and expressed concern that it is unlikely to be fit for purpose after a lengthy period in storage.

Janet Ruse was able to confirm that the equipment is in a container in the car park of Helena’s Derbyshire Hill Office. It was agreed that the equipment should be checked to find out if any of it is safe for use before a decision could be taken.

If the equipment is safe for use then the £15,000 that has been committed to the scheme can be used to lay a new soft play area and install the equipment.

Consideration was given to a range of options presented before the committee for soft play areas ranging from basic flat surface areas to larger areas with matching play equipment. The cost implications of these varied from £35,000 to £50,000 +. The Committee re-affirmed its intention that this would be a simple low cost area for parents to use with young children. A L.A.P. 2 (Local Area for Play) was the best match.

*Summary of actions agreed*

(i) If the stored equipment is fit for purpose it should be installed on the soft play surface already costed.
(ii) If some items are OK, then a LAP 1 could be upgraded with our equipment.
(iii) If none of the stored equipment can be used then a LAP 2 would be preferred providing the costs were close to the £15,000 already committed.

18. **Public Question Time**

| Further discussion on the garage site, however substantial improvements are in hand. A request for a mosquito buzzer to be placed there. It was noted that previously the buzzers have only been sited in shops rather than in | Mrs Nicholls | Mrs Nicholls felt that Mr Makin would support this and agreed to discuss further with him. It was agreed that the matter of the buzzers would be looked into. |
She raised further concerns around the telephone kiosk in the area and an empty house which has a massively overgrown hedge. Mrs Nicholls This is a private property so it is unlikely that the Council will be able to take any action to resolve this.

Mrs Nicholls was thanked for her questions by Councillor Maloney.

19. Local Issues – Youth Provision
Dave Boocock provided the committee with a brief update regarding the expansion of the youth service across the borough. In order to facilitate the expansion of the youth service they are currently undertaking a recruitment campaign. There is more youth service provision within the Blackbrook ward than in some other wards with a similar youth population. The Youth Service has supported the development of provision already being made in the ward eg the youth group at St Catherine’s. Blackbrook will not be a priority at the present time for further expansion of youth services.

Within the ward there are a number of activities for example Tuesdays – provision from St Catherine’s, Wednesdays at Chain Lane, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from Grange Valley. In addition the Parr swimming pool will be open for free swimming on a Friday evening and that will be for an initial period of 12 months. There is also football being provided from the St Augustine site. Members of the Committee commented that they hadn’t realised that there was so much being made available in the ward.

Questions were raised about whether this information is made known to people in the area. Dave Boocock promoted new information leaflets and the recent booklet which describes over 600 activities that are available during the summer which has been widely distributed. He also pointed out that the B & G card provides free access over the summer for leisure activities for young people aged 8 – 18. The keycard scheme is also available providing a 50% discount for leisure activities. This is a means-tested service.

Mrs Berry pointed out that the Children & Young Peoples’ Partnership Area (North East) has been tasked to map out provision from local knowledge and to consider what the gaps are. There will be some support in order to complete this task through the recruitment of two community partnership workers. Once this piece of work has been completed it was agreed that it should be presented at the ward committee for consideration.

Mr Boocock advised the committee that following a youth consultation exercise the young people had said that they had preferred delivery of youth services from the High School site. This is a change in opinion from a previous consultation exercise that had been undertaken.

20. Environmental Protection Planned Schemes
Councillor McQuade advised the committee that the new road at Stanley Bank Way came in under budget.

West End Road – Councillor McQuade advised that new dropped kerbs on the left-hand side and pavement reconstruction is being undertaken.
Street lighting – Councillor Maloney is seeking further clarification regarding this issue. It had been agreed that there would be a refurbishment of some of the blackspots on the Ashurst and O’Sullivan estates which has not taken place. Disappointment was expressed that Langridge Ave, which was not really a problem, is listed for refurbishment.

**Action – Joyce Berry to log a complaint on the Contact Centre.**

Rev Roberts asked if there was provision to replace the dead trees along the New Road area. She was re-assured that monitoring this was part of the planning contract.

She also noted that the steel fencing has been removed just leaving the metal uprights on the roadside behind Link Avenue.

Concerns were also raised relating to the back of Link Avenue and Ashurst Drive where rubbish appears to collect. The grounds maintenance team have responsibility for keeping this area tidy but it was noted that they do not collect the rubbish it just gets mowed along with the grass in that area.

**Action – Joyce Berry to process a request for information through the Contact Centre regarding the missing steel fencing.**

Recycling – it was noted that there is a provision for recycling in Blackbrook, located behind the Rugby Club.

21. **Environmental Fund New Proposals**

The Committee has already approved schemes to the value of £41,202, leaving a balance of approximately £20,000.

The following suggestions were made for committing the balance:

- A Christmas tree with lights in the ward area
- A fourth mosquito buzzer
- Litter bins placed outside of the school

**Action – Joyce Berry to submit an application for the Christmas tree and the litter bins and add the extra Mosquito Buzzer.**

22. **Community Safety Update**

Con Townley presented the report. There has been an increase in drug-related offences and burglaries in the ward. 20 burglaries were committed by one offender who is now in prison. Drugs offences have increased by 700%. The Police have a target to issue two warrants a week focussing on drug dealers in order to have a positive impact on the problem.

Borough-wide no drinking policy.

Since the no smoking ban has been in place there has been an increase in drinkers standing on the pavements outside pubs. Constable Townley assured the Committee that this will be a challenge for the police and fixed penalty notices for drinking in the street will be issued.
23. **Services for Older People**
Councillor Maloney proposed that services for older people should be the local issue at the September meeting of the Committee within the ward. It was agreed that external speakers would be helpful.

*Actions: Janet Ruse to invite Nichola Wilkinson to present on recent successful “Grey Matters” events.*

*Joyce Berry to request a representative from Adult Social Care and Health to give an update on what is available for older people in the ward.*

24. **Any Other Business**
The committee was reminded of the current review being undertaken relating to polling districts and places within the borough. More information is available on the Council's website. The committee however did agree that schools should not be closed to support the venue for polling and that alternatives were easily available in localities, for example St Paul's Church Hall in Blackbrook could be used as an alternative polling station.

25. **Date of Next Meeting**
3rd September 2007