

Earlestown Ward Committee

At a meeting of this Committee held on 24 January 2011
at the Cross Lane United Church Hall, Newton-le-Willows

- (Present)**
- Councillor Dave Banks**
 - Councillor Keith Deakin**
 - Councillor Leon McGuire**
 - Pat Collier, CEN**
 - Don Crook, Tenants and Residents Association**
 - Alex Whamond, Tenants and Residents Association**
 - Nigel Yates, Helena Partnerships**
- (Also Present)**
- Lynn Clarke, St. Helens Council**
 - Bob Hepworth, St. Helens Council**
- (Not Present)**
- Ann Dixon, Tenants and Residents Association**
 - Inspector Steve Lowe, Merseyside Police**
 - David Smith, SHINE**

6 Earlestown Residents were also in attendance.

43. Apologies for Absence

No Apologies for absence were received.

44. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

45. Declaration of Interest from Members

There were no Declarations of Interest from members.

46. Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting

(a) Minute 36 (a) Alleygates - Haydock Street

Mr Ward enquired about progress with the Alleygates for the even side of Haydock Street and was informed that no further updates have been received. He was advised to continue to report incidents of Anti Social Behaviour and to telephone Inspector Lowe to follow up a previous issue raised regarding the dumping of building materials in the alleyway.

(b) Minute 36 (c) (i) Belvedere Road and Queens Drive

Mr Hepworth responded to the query raised by Alex Whamond regarding the status of Belvedere and Queens Drive in the resurfacing Programme.

In view of the financial cuts of 70% to the Capital Programme, it would not be possible to introduce a 20-mile per hour speed limit, although this would be a worthy inclusion. It may be considered in the future should the economic situation improve.

(c) Minute 36 (c) (ii) Park Barriers

Councillor McGuire reported that the replacement Park Barriers had now been installed.

(d) Minute 38 (c) Earlestown Market

Mr Hepworth reported that the issue raised at the previous meeting regarding the sale of new goods at the Saturday Market had now been investigated and appropriate action taken.

(e) Minute 38 (d) Market Street Benches

Mr Garrity thanked the Ward Committee for their support regarding the improvements and return of the benches at Market Street.

(f) Minute 38 (e) Yellow Bags

Mr Whamond informed the Committee that the situation regarding the collection of Yellow Litter Picker Bags had not improved and requested that this be reported to the appropriate officer. Mr Hepworth agreed to progress this action.

Action: Mr Hepworth to report the sporadic collection of Yellow Bags

(g) Minute 38 (f) Derby Street/Hotel Street – Little Alley

Mr Holding raised the issue of the 'little alley' at Derby Street and Hotel Street, adding that he would like to propose the installation of bollards as a new environmental fund project. The resurfacing of the alley was also discussed as it is often waterlogged.

The Committee agreed to consider this under Agenda Item 8 - Environmental Fund Project Report.

(h) Minute 38 (g) Lights off in Market Square

Mr Whamond sought clarification on the Lights being off in Market Square. Mr Hepworth responded that the Council had switched off the lights each day (apart from Fridays and Saturdays) for financial reasons.

47. Public Question Time - Earlestown Town Hall

- a)** Mr O'Leary asked about the Council's adherence to a strict 'Duty of Care' in regards to Earlestown Town Hall.

Mr Hepworth responded that a problem has been raised regarding the structure of the balcony in the Town Hall. This is currently the subject of on-going discussions. He also reported that the building is being inspected on a regular basis and is visited regularly by the Council's Security Force.

- b)** Mrs Forshaw enquired about the cost to the Council of keeping the Town Hall closed, particularly in respect to rates, utilities, insurances etc.

Mr Hepworth responded that the information would be available at the next Ward Committee meeting.

- c) Mr Holding asked whether it would be possible, in order to reassure the public about the security of the Town Hall, for a local Councillor to be allowed in to the building to check it and report back to the meeting.

Councillor Banks agreed to be the designated Councillor in this regard.

- d) Councillor McGuire reported that he had received an email from NADOS regarding the storage of their equipment at Newton High School. NADOS had been informed that they must find alternative storage space as the School is due to close. Councillor McGuire asked if anyone had received a request to store the equipment at Earlestown Town Hall.

Mr Hepworth responded that he had not received any request and NADOS should be advised to put any request to him in writing at St. Helens Council.

- e) Mrs Collier reported that she had been contacted one evening by Police and Fire Officers, wishing to gain entry into the building following a suspected fire. She asked if the contact details of the key holders could be displayed at the front of the building in case of emergency in the future. (The report of the suspected fire proved inaccurate in this case)

Mr Hepworth responded that there is a coherent emergency plan in place for this occasion and the Police and other Agencies are aware of the information it contains, which includes the contact details for the Security Force.

48. Local Issues

There were no matters of Local Interest raised for discussion.

49. Update on Environmental Protection Planned Schemes

Mr Hepworth referred the Committee to the update report on the Environmental Protection Planned Schemes, which was duly noted.

50. Environmental Fund

Councillor McGuire asked if any decisions had been made regarding the future of the Environmental Fund. Mr Hepworth responded that it had been agreed that the Fund could only be spent on Engineering works, lighting, footpaths and potholes.

Mr Crook asked if there had been any progress with the works identified for the driveway up to St. Patrick's at Marian Avenue. Mr Hepworth agreed to discuss this issue with John Sheward, Asset Manager, St. Helens Council.

ACTION: Mr Hepworth to liaise with John Sheward re progress of works

(a) Progress Report

The Report was noted by the Committee. Unfortunately a number of projects could no longer progress due to the newly issued instructions on future spend.

Mrs Collier asked if it were possible for the project EAL-3-2010-46 Rubbish Bins at Walkway to the Dingle to still proceed. She had been consulted by the

Principal Parks and Open Spaces Officer recently regarding the project and was keen to see it implemented.

Mr Hepworth agreed to check on this particular project but considered that it would not fit with the new criteria.

ACTION: Mr Hepworth to check on the viability of progressing the Project.

(b) New Proposals

i) Bollards in Derby Street/Hotel Street Alleyway

The Committee agreed to progress this project to Technical Appraisal, considering that the provision of Bollards would prevent vehicle access in the Derby Street Alleyway. The project proposal to include resurfacing costs to combat water logging.

ACTION: Mrs Clarke agreed to add the Project to Environmental Fund Database.

ii) Alleyway at Legh Street

Mr Garrity reported, on behalf of a resident at 114 Legh Street, that the recent resurfacing of the alleyway had left him unable to access his garage, due to the height of the ground resurfacing. He asked if the Committee could consider a project to rectify the situation or report it to the appropriate Officer.

51. Community Safety Report

In Inspector Lowe's absence, Mr Hepworth referred the Committee to the Community Safety Report, highlighting key statistical information. A significant reduction in crime and anti social behaviour across the Borough was noted. However, Earlestown had seen increases in Nuisance Vehicles (up 95%) and Drug Offences.

Following a brief discussion on the impact on the Police Force as a result of the Government cuts, the Committee noted the Report.

52. Council Budget Consultation 2011/2012

Mr Hepworth commented on the arrangements to consult with members of the public on the Council Budget 2011/2012. He encouraged all present to 'have their say' on the proposals and confirmed that the budget had been set against the worst reductions in Government Grant support ever for Local Government. St. Helens had a grant reduction totalling £28m in 2011/12 and a further £8m reduction in 2012/13.

Mrs Clarke circulated Council Budget information to the Ward Committee and members of the public present.

53. Date of Next Meeting

21 March 2011, at Cross Lane United Church Hall.

The meeting closed at 7.45