

Welcome to Rural West Area Partnership Board's (APB) July update. This report outlines some of the key work that has taken place across Rural West and future activities being planned over the coming months.

Wellbeing in Malpas



A wellbeing event in June held at the High Street Church, Malpas was very well attended with over 150 adults and children visiting the various stands and displays.

It was a glorious summer's day with lots of activities taking place in the town as part of the Malpas Family Weekend. NHS Western Cheshire's Health Promotion Team offered residents sporting games on the Wii Fit, health promotion and taster sessions of head and neck massages. Other stalls and displays provided a mixture of advice and free gifts!

Students from Bishop Heber High school dressed up in apple and banana costumes and encouraged residents to come in and see what was taking place. Tarvin Children's Centre provided face painting which was a big hit for the younger children with butterflies and dalmatians being the preference of the day.

The wellbeing events are aimed at supporting Rural West APB's objectives of improving access to services and community engagement.



Going from Strength to Strength

Weekly "strength and balance" sessions funded by Cheshire West and Chester Council and delivered by Western Cheshire PCT have proved to be a great success. The classes offered free of charge are designed to prevent slips, trips and falls and improve general health for older people. The sessions were held in Malpas however Cheshire West and Chester Council is now considering commissioning the sessions in other areas within Rural West.



These classes complement the existing courses run by Western Cheshire PCT but were open to everyone without the need of a referral from the health service. Follow-on courses are now being organised in Malpas provided at a small charge to participants ensuring activities are sustainable through self funding.

On the Buses

Residents living in rural areas often get frustrated at the lack of adequate public transport. However knowing what transport is available, the gaps in transport services and identifying practical solutions is not easy. Rural West Area Team is preparing a step by step guide that can be used to help review transport needs in any area and assist in identifying gaps in provision. This approach has been piloted in Neston and looks at the level of community and public transport, where it goes and if routes run close to main services such as GPs surgeries.

The guide also encourages the use of case studies which give a realistic picture of the impact limited public transport can have when trying to access services such as employment. Using this approach has allowed the Neston Transport Group to target areas for improvement such as increasing the availability of timetables in the town and the identification of key transport priorities. The group have agreed to look at access to employment, education and leisure. It is felt that by focusing on these issues they will get a better understanding of the needs of the community and be in a better position to find solutions.

The best practice guide will be available over the coming months.



Case Study

An aspiring chef, Sam, lives along Woodlands Road in Neston and works in the Grosvenor Hotel and Spa in Chester. On a normal day Sam works a day shift of 08:30 until 17:30. There are a variety of transport combinations available but the following option is the only one in the morning that means Sam is not late for work:

“If I leave the house at 06:25 and walk to Brook Street I can then get the number 22 Bus to Chester which arrives at the stop about 06:39. This bus takes 41 minutes arriving at Chester Bus Station for 07:22. I can then walk for 5 minutes to get into work. It means I’m an hour early but, being 15 minutes late (or more depending on traffic) is not an option.”

It takes 27 minutes to drive the 10.2 miles; 1 hour 15 minutes to use a train and bus combination or just over 1 hour for the bus. These other options would make Sam late for work

To come home on Sam’s normal day there are a variety of options which take around 1 hour.

“I have to leave at exactly 17:30 rush to Chester Bus Station to catch the number 22 bus which leaves at 17:35. If I catch it I will be home for 18:40. If I am late out of work I can catch the number 23 bus which leaves at 18:10 and I get home for 19:00.”

Transport Barriers

- a) Sam would struggle to take on extra hours if needed for an evening shift as the buses and trains become irregular and buses stop.
- b) Sam could not cover a shift on a Sunday as there are no buses and limited trains available.
- c) Time taken to get to work in Chester encourages car use.

By using case studies such as these Neston Transport Group has been able to identify its main transport priorities and will now focus on working with residents and partners to identify improvements to public transport in Neston.



Community Forums

Community Forums provide opportunities for residents to raise local issues and concerns with ward councillors and partners. Since April forums have been held in Broxton, Gowy and Mickle Trafford wards. Subjects discussed have included the Council's new waste consultation, public transport and planning policy.

Attendance by the public is improving however more needs to be done to encourage people to participate in community forums. It has been recognised that forums need to be accessible to everyone, ensure they are relevant to local people and provide an environment for residents to feel they can influence decisions.



New ways are being taken in Rural West to encourage residents to participate in community forums. The Neston Parkgate, Ledsham and Willaston Forum recently held in July took an innovative approach by combining a Community Forum with a Wellbeing Event. It took place during the day rather than the traditional evening meetings and at the same time as the town's weekly market. This provided an opportunity to both promote the event and encourage people to see what was taking place. Residents were not required to sit through a formal meeting but could pop in and out as they wanted.

The event also added a strong sense of fun and enjoyment by offering a demonstration of belly dancing performed by a local group with a number of residents signing up for the classes. In total over 200 people came along to participate in the event!



For further information about community forums contact:

Debra.Brown@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Work starts on Recreation Ground

Residents of Ashton Hayes recently celebrated the start of the development of their football pitch and recreation ground in the village. After a great deal of lobbying and hard work Ashton Hayes Sports and Recreation Association (AHSRA) secured a combination of funds from the Parish Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council's Rural Support Grant, local ward councillors grants and community donations to turn this project into a reality.



Councillor's Grants making a difference

Across Rural West, ward councillors have been using their Councillor's Grants to help community groups improve the quality of life for residents.

Anyone for Tea?

Dunham and Hapsford Community Project's Tea Club meet weekly at in the former Dunham Hill School.

It gives people in the community the opportunity to get out and about for a couple of hours each week where they can chat with friends old and new and enjoy light refreshments which are at the moment provided by volunteers and donations.

Transport is provided by volunteers for anyone who is less mobile.



The additional funding from Councillors Grants will help the Tea Club undertake additional activities, the occasional trip out and of course a regular supply of refreshments for the group. The Tea Club has become a very important part of the community and provides a valuable meeting point for residents.



Support for netball club

Neston "Neons" Netball Club has been running for 4 years and consists of a squad of woman from ages 14 – 50. A key aim of the club is to encourage young and old back to netball. The group has grown from strength to strength from originally meeting on school playing fields to now playing in the Ellesmere Port League. They now aspire to join the Chester or Birkenhead League too. Support from Councillor's Grants will help the club pay for members to gain coaching qualifications, hire of training venues and netball kit.

For further information about Councillor's Grants contact
Helen.Davies@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

You Decide

In July Rural West APB held its first Participatory Budget event at Tarvin Community Centre. Voluntary and community groups were invited to apply for a grant of up to £750 towards a local project that supported the APB's priorities of children and young people, access to services and transport. 9 projects were short listed and applicants were asked to present their project to an audience made up of residents, parish councils and community groups. A total grant pot of £4000 was made available which meant not everyone would be successful. The audience voted for the projects they liked best with six projects being awarded a grant.



Winners

- Kelsall After School Klub
- Kelsall Youth Support Group
- Saughall Neighbourhood Management Team
- Saughall Uniformed Groups
- St John's Guilden Sutton and St Peter's Mickle Trafford Holiday Club
- Tilston Playing Field Association

The event received a very positive response particularly as it gave everyone the opportunity to hear about the work local residents were doing to support their community and to meet and share ideas with each other. The key benefit of this event however was that it handed the decision making about what projects should be funded back to the community. The APB will now look at the possibility of undertaking more events over the next year.

Community Forums

Broxton, 23rd September, High Street Church, Malpas

Gowy, 14th September, Christleton High School

Neston, Parkgate, Ledsham & Willaston, 22nd September, Neston Cricket Club

Mickle Trafford /Wellbeing Promotion, 30th September, Elton Community Centre

Please check our website or contact us for start times

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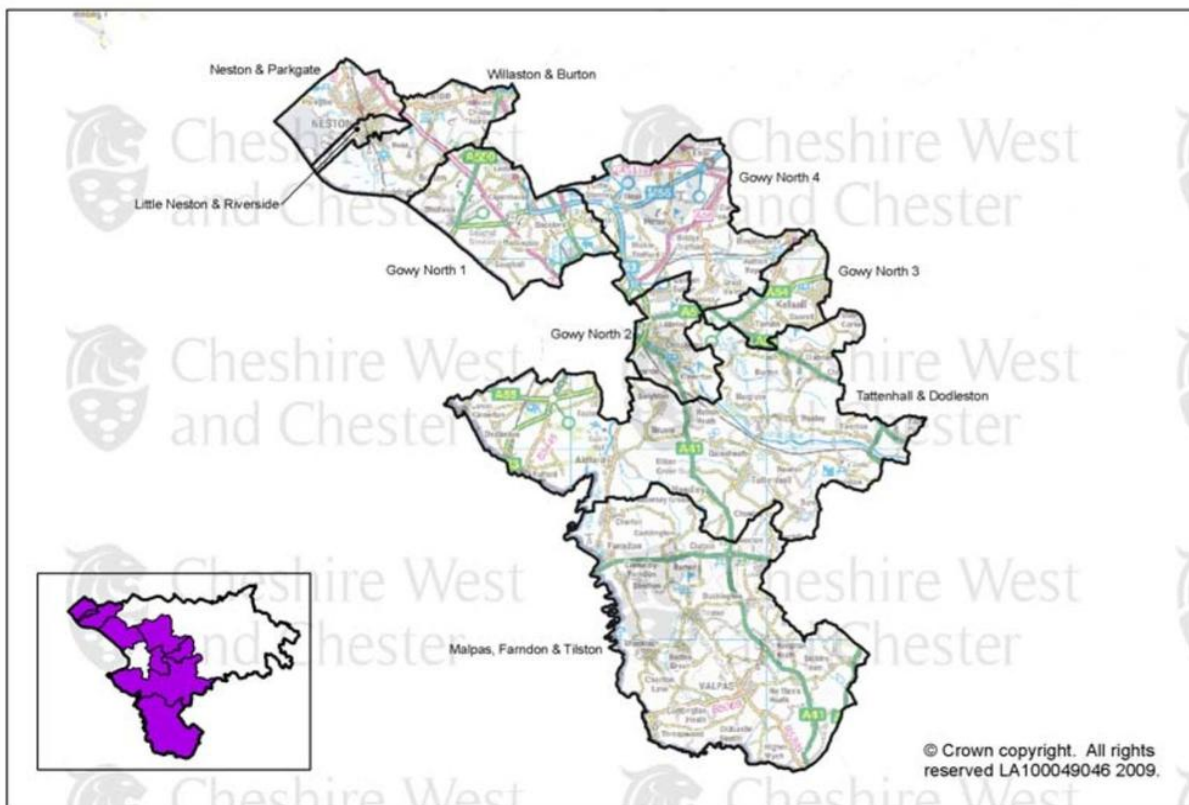
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