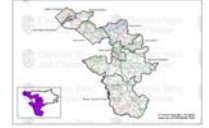


Rural West Area Partnership Board



Quarterly Report – April 2010

Welcome to **Rural West Area Partnership Board's** (APB) April update. This report outlines some of the APB's key activities that have been undertaken across Rural West and future activities being planned over the coming months.

FAMILIES, CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Neston MC/DJ Project

In March a group of young people hosted a dance night in Neston Civic Hall, after undertaking a 12 week course learning DJ and MCing skills at Neston Youth Zone. The project gave them an opportunity to learn new skills and they put them into practice at the dance event. The sessions were funded by Rural West Area Team. The next step for the APB will be to look at the possibility of rolling out this initiative to other areas of Rural West.



Joining Things Up

To ensure a co-ordinated response to supporting families, children and young people across Rural West, the APB is setting up a "Children and Young Persons Steering Group". Immediate priorities for the group will be focussing on positive activities for young people living in rural areas and improving facilities for children and families. Access to children's centres such as those in Tarvin, Neston and the Elton development will be a key priority for the group. Isolation and limited transport are often barriers to accessing key services and the group will be looking at how agencies can work more closely to respond to identified gaps in services.



Easter Youth Activities

During Easter, Connexions offered a range of activities for Rural West's young people. Sports activities were provided for **Elton's** young people and, a trip to Manley Mere, and ice skating for those from **Tarvin**. In addition, Connexions' staff provided training for youth club organisers at Malpas and Saughall. The Children and Young Persons Steering Group will now build on the Easter activities to consider how it can support a summer programme of activities.

Safer Driving

Safer driving awareness is being planned in Rural West high schools. The programme consists of sessions for year 8 through to year 10 and will be offered to students at **Malpas, Christleton,** and **Neston**. The aim is to explain why speed limits are needed and what can happen as a result of speeding. It is hoped that students will get a better understanding of the consequences of driving at inappropriate speeds and how to look after themselves and others. The initiative is being commissioned by the Rural West Area Team and delivered by the council's Road Safety Team.



ACCESS TO SERVICES

Customer Insight



The "Customer Insight" programme has been set up to ensure the council can target information and services in a more effective way. Data has been collected about which information and services different residents like to use and how they prefer to access them.

The APB is using this data to examine the ways people living in Rural West prefer to receive information and access services. This will provide an opportunity to improve our understanding of the rural populations needs and influence how information and services are delivered. It is expected that this work will be completed by the Autumn.

Prevention Is Better Than Cure

Three health promotion events in **Neston** (9th July), **Malpas** (26th June) and **Elton** (date to be confirmed) are being planned. Working with Western Cheshire PCT, these events will promote health and provide information and sign posting to other services. They also provide an opportunity to capture and understand community issues relating to accessing health care. Further information about these events will be published shortly.

Strength & Balance Sessions in Malpas



Continuing on the theme of access to services and health, Rural West Area Team has commissioned a 10 week course of "strength and balance" sessions in **Malpas** at a cost of £1,500. These weekly sessions are being offered free of charge, to older people helping to prevent slips, trips and falls and improve general health. If successful the APB will look at commissioning further "strength and balance" sessions in other parts of Rural West. Depending on the popularity of the sessions, follow-on courses could be provided at a small charge to participants, ensuring activities are sustainable through self funding.

For further information contact: helen.thorniley-jones@nhs.net

TRANSPORT

Neston Transport

In March, the first meeting of a new transport group was held to consider transport needs in **Neston** and surrounding areas. The group is made up of local stakeholders including Neston Town Council, transport providers, community representatives and the council's Integrated Transport Service. The aim of the group is to identify key transport issues and develop a plan to address gaps in provision. Another key role is to influence council's transport services, including, co-ordination, integration and changing demands.



If this approach proves to be successful, it is hoped that this could be developed in other areas of Rural West.

For further information contact:

Gerard.Rhodes@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Rural Transport Review

To understand community transport needs and gaps in services the APB is commencing a review of rural transport provision. The review will focus not only on public transport, but schemes such as Dial-A-Ride, Women's Safe Transport, Rural Rider, Respite Scheme and Community Car Schemes.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION

Community Forums



Since January, six community forums have been held across Rural West. Forums have taken place in, **Neston, Tattenhall, Farndon, Mollington, Barrow and Burton**. Forum meetings have varied from focused themes on planning and emergency services, to informal "drop in" style surgeries. Attendance is improving and approximately 140 people have attended the last 6 community forums.

For further information about community forums contact: Debra.Brown@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk



Giving Young People a Voice

Young people from **Broxtown Rural Youth Council** have agreed to help set up a community forum for young people living in the Broxtown ward. The group are looking at ways to gather views from young people about relevant issues for discussion and how the forum should be run. One idea being considered is to encourage young people to give their ideas through their BRYC website forum.

New Gowy Community Forum

From June this year a new Gowy Community Forum will be set up. A decision has been made to split the current Gowy and Eddisbury Community Forum into two separate community forums. The new Gowy forum will be co-terminus with the both the Gowy ward boundary and the Rural West Area Partnership Board.

Participatory Budget Challenge

A "Participatory Budget Challenge" is being launched by the APB. Participatory budgeting involves inviting community groups to apply for small grants to help deliver local projects. Applicants will present to the community who then vote for the projects that they want to support. Cheshire Community Action will be organising the event and over the coming weeks details of how community groups can apply will be published. A total fund of £4,000 has been set aside by the Rural West Area Team, however, it is hoped that further contributions from partners will be given to increase the overall grant pot. Presentations of successful bids and voting will be held in an event in early July.



Ruralwest@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

A new email address has been set up for the Rural West area. By providing a single point of contact, we aim to ensure a timely response for all residents' communications. Information about Rural West APB, local community forums and latest news can also be accessed on the West Cheshire Together website www.westcheshiretogether.org.uk

Ashton Hayes Recreation Ground

Ashton Hayes Sports and Recreation Association (ASHRA), has received £45,000 through Cheshire West and Chester Council's Rural Support Grant. They wanted to buy and develop a plot of land to provide a general open space with trees, benches, a full size football pitch and a play area. ASHRA had already secured funding from the Parish Council, local ward councillors and community donations, however, there still remained a financial shortfall. Rural West Area Team and Rural Economic Regeneration Service worked closely with the group to identify a solution to the groups funding challenge. ASHRA were encouraged to apply to the rural support grant which has been set up to support rural communities deliver projects such as this, and were successful in their bid.



Learning Together

A number of workshops for parish councils, community groups and residents will be held to bring people together to discuss common issues affecting communities living in Rural West. The APB will be initially holding 2 events looking at:

a) Parish Planning and Village Design Statements

Encouraging and supporting communities to develop their own parish, or town plans and village design statements, is an important way to ensure people influence what services are provided in their neighbourhood, and any future developments. This workshop will look at best practice in developing parish plans and village design statements, and detail the support available to help communities get started.

b) Managing Play Areas

This workshop will focus on play areas which are managed by parish councils and community groups. Funding insurance, maintenance and annual inspections are often a struggle and this session will focus on how parish councils and community groups can work together to reduce costs and find solutions to common concerns.

Information about dates of these workshops will be available soon. If community groups or parish councils are interested in other subjects for future workshops the APB would be pleased to consider all ideas. Suggestions can be made by emailing ruralwest@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Rural Proofing

Rural proofing is the process of assessing the different impacts a policy might have in rural areas, compared with urban areas and making adjustments or compensations where necessary, to reflect rural needs and circumstances. Rural issues are one of a range of policy considerations that have to be taken into account by public agencies such as councils, health services and emergency services.



Understanding how local services acknowledge rural needs when making decisions is important to the APB. Therefore, it is undertaking a review of what considerations are currently given, and what improvements could be made, to ensure the needs of rural communities are fully taken on board. The review will initially look at the Cheshire West and Chester Council, but, will be shared with other key partners to encourage other agencies to adopt rural proofing as part of their policy making processes.

For further information about community forums contact Lauren.Kelly@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Rural Support Programme

Cheshire West and Chester Council has launched the second round of its Rural Support Programme. A £300,000 fund has been set aside to support improvements in rural areas across the borough. Local groups, charities and small organisations can apply for funding between £5,000 and £50,000 although applicants must be able to match-fund from another source. The Rural Funding Programme will provide support for community groups and improve opportunities within rural communities. Applications must meet at least one of the following priorities:

- Community Safety
- Healthier Communities
- Rural Economy
- Environment
- Children and Young People
- Village Halls and Community buildings
- Services for Older People

For information and an application form please email: ruralsupport@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
or Telephone: Chris Capes, 01244 973164



Neston Together

Neston is the focus for police, fire and council services during the Neston Together week in April. A range of activities have been set up to tackle environmental issues such as graffiti, dog fouling and parking nuisance. Interventions will include high visibility patrols by police and community safety wardens, litter picking involving local school children and chewing gum removal from pavements.

For more information contact

Jane.makin@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk



Dates For the Diary

Community Forums

Broxton Community Forum

Thursday 10th June – Tilston War Memorial Hall

Mickle Trafford Community Forum

Wednesday 21st July – Vernon Institute, Saughall

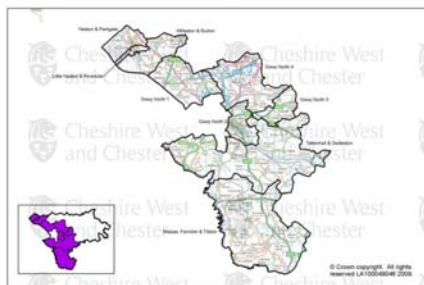
Goway Community Forum

Tuesday 1st June – Tarvin Community Centre

Health Promotion Events

Saturday 27th June, High Street Church, **Malpas**

Friday 9th July, **Neston** Town Hall



Contact:

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Rural West Area Team Contacts

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