

# **Friends of Meols Park**

**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2007**

## **Minutes of Meeting**

**Held at St Andrew's Church  
10am – 11am**

### **Present:**

Committee: Esther McVey, Roy Shuttleworth, Tony Roberts  
Carol Pover, Tom Southern  
Roger Calvert: Principal Officer of Parks and Countryside  
Gerry Ellis: Local Ward Councillor

Over 50 Local Residents and Children

### **Welcome and introductions:**

Roger Calvert Principal Officer of Parks and Countryside came to meet local residents and local families to discuss the future of Meols Park and Play area.

It was a lively, forthright meeting displaying the strength of feeling and support from the local residents for the Park.

### **Questions sent in advance to Roger Calvert**

- 1) After our last meeting we were left believing the council will be responsible for maintenance of the park and play area – is this true?  
And what does that maintenance entail?
- 2) How much money will the council be giving to the play area project? Is this a one off amount? Will there be further yearly amounts? When will the next amount of money be if not next year?
- 3) How much will it realistically cost to replace the climbing frame that was removed? If there is a discrepancy in the amount, why? And where will that amount be funded from?
- 4) Liability cover for the play area – is that covered by the council?
- 5) Please can we have a copy of the brochure for the equipment for the play area
- 6) Who else can we apply to for funding – particularly re environmental projects
- 7) Can we apply to the Community Safety? Will you back our application to them for a grant?
- 8) What are the amounts of money spent on parks and play areas across Wirral?  
**Approx £40K per year across 74 parks and play areas across Wirral**

## Answers

- 1) Roger Calvert gave a firm commitment that the Council is responsible for maintenance of the Park – and will do the maintenance of the park
- 2) He expressed shock and concern that it is not being maintained at the moment – residents complained at the poor state of the park/play area, broken bottles / fencing poor state of repair / bushes on the road side at the side of the play area overgrown and teenagers therefore loiter and drink there, they'd be better cut right back or removed – Football pitch needs to be maintained – part of the hedge around the perimeter of the park has been cut (after pressure from local councillor Gerry Ellis) but still waiting for the rest to be completed particularly around the entrance ways.
- 3) Mr Calvert assured us he'd look into the lack of maintenance as there is meant to be a weekly maintenance programme –
- 4) Mr Calvert said he would provide the Friends of Meols Park with a maintenance schedule.
- 5) Residents were disappointed with the manner in which the council removed equipment from the park 'Dead of night' was the term used – concerns were also raised that there was 'no prior consultation with the local residents'
- 6) A resident asked what had happened to the equipment – had it been sold on? Mr Calvert informed us it had been 'scrapped'.
- 7) Mr Calvert explained the play area equipment failed the ROSPA safety test and had to be removed. ROSPA carried out an independent inspection. The first of these inspections happened last year, this was the second and the findings were that the climbing frame was unsafe and needed to be removed.
- 8) A copy of that report will be sent to the Friends of Meols Park
- 9) The equipment taken from the park 2 months ago was worth approx £9K
- 10) Mr Calvert gave a commitment on behalf of the council to give Meols Park £3K – from this year's budget – there is 5 months left to run on this year's budget however, if the £3K has not been spent within the next 5 months, Mr Calvert assured those gathered that the money will be protected and rolled into next year's financial budget to be spent on the park.
- 11) A lady in the audience asked could we have the money paid into a Friends of Meols Park account and use it to get match funding – Mr Calvert said not
- 12) The equipment removed cost £9K the amount to be given to the park £3K this leaves a shortfall of £6K
- 13) However many local residents expressed their concern that Meols Park and Play area had been overlooked for many years.
- 14) Mr Calvert told us the council has applied for approx £200K of lottery money under the Children's' Play allocation and that Meols Park and Play area is one of the 4 areas designated parks to get funds from this should the council be successful and receive this money. Meols Park will be entitled to ¼ share of the money the council receive.

- 15) A decision regarding this money will be made in Dec 2007 and Mr Calvert will keep us informed as to what that decision is.
- 16) Local residents have set up a Friends of Meols Park Group – there are 100 members.
- 17) The Friends of the Park decided it was best to view the approved council play equipment brochure so they could purchase suitable equipment for the play area with a view to getting modular equipment so more play equipment could be added as and when. This would be done in accord with the council to adhere to any health and safety requirement and insurance requirement the council might have.
- 18) Jacky Smallwood – from the council will come and meet with residents to go through the play area equipment brochure.
- 19) Those gathered were assured there is no hidden agenda to close the park – the removal of the equipment was purely for safety reasons and not to dismantle the park bit by bit.
- 20) A gentleman in the audience requested the park should go for Village Green Status – for further protection of the park

End of Meeting