
Query 1: Higham Hill Ward Fund 2008/09

Clarification required from the previous Minutes, page 8 dated Monday 6 October 2008: "Cllr P Woollcott asked for clarification regarding the money allocated to the Mornington Trust by Highams Hill Ward."

Response: Dawn Polis, Community Council Manager

£800 has been awarded to 5 Schools in the Higham Hill ward from the Spend 2008/09 fund, which totals £4,000.

Query 2: Football Project funded by Chapel End Fund 2008/09

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M Keegan asked how long it would take to have the name "Asianos" changed."

Response: Dawn Polis, Community Council Manager

The Club's Treasurer confirmed that Mr Keegan's proposal will be discussed in September/October at the club's AGM, at which point a decision will be made as per the constitution.

Queries 3: Management of Community Forum

K Lord was disappointed that the Councillors used the time allocated to the Community Forum to make their decision on the spend allocation.

Response: Philip Herlihy, Community Chair

A lot of debate goes into choosing the items for each Agenda. We tend to choose "newsworthy" items which we think will have the widest immediate interest for local people. Of course, we can't include everything we'd want to, so the "News round" was devised as one way of encompassing more topics. Residents can raise issues themselves in the Community Forum, and a "Help Form" was introduced to prevent inevitable time pressures squeezing out important questions and comments. You can download a Help Form in advance from my (unofficial) website at <http://wwcc.walthamsoft.com>. We're conscious that the new budget process has taken time away from the Community Forum in recent meetings and we'll be looking at ways of rectifying that in the future."

Query 4: Annual Health Authority Report – absence of mention of prostate cancer

K Lord (Greenleaf Road) submitted the following question: “The Annual Health Authority Report was distributed door to door recently but there is no item on the agenda, representative or statement available at this Community Council meeting. Why not? Why is no-one available to reply to questions?”

The Annual report states that the Health Authority provides routine breast screening and cervical tests for women. However, why does the Health Authority not provide routine screening on men for prostate cancer: i.e. PSA screenings via blood testing, for example for men over 45/50 years old? Prostate cancer is a big killer of men but I have seen very little about tests and symptoms which are easy to miss in either Health Authority or Council’s material. What action has a) the Health Authority and b) the Council taken in the last two years to raise awareness about prostate cancer, symptoms and treatments, and what action is planned in the next twelve months?”

Response: Tim Carter, Senior Press Officer (Interim) - NHS Waltham Forest

There are a variety of reasons why the NHS has not decided to adopt a national prostate cancer screening programme. The following extract from the NHS Cancer Screening Programme website helps explain why.

"All screening programmes cause some harm. This could include false alarms, inducing anxiety, and the treatment of early disease which would not otherwise have become a problem. When considering population screening programmes the benefits and harms must be carefully assessed, and the benefits should always outweigh the harms. Until there is clear evidence to show that a national screening programme will bring more benefit than harm, the NHS will not be inviting men who have no symptoms for prostate cancer screening."

In 1968, Wilson and Jungner of the World Health Organisation developed ten principles which should govern a national screening programme. These are:

- * The condition is an important health problem
- * Its natural history is well understood
- * It is recognisable at an early stage
- * Treatment is better at an early stage
- * A suitable test exists
- * An acceptable test exists
- * Adequate facilities exist to cope with abnormalities detected
- * Screening is done at repeated intervals when the onset is insidious
- * The chance of harm is less than the chance of benefit
- * The cost is balanced against benefit

To date, prostate cancer screening fulfils only the first condition. The UK National Screening Committee has recommended that a prostate cancer screening programme should not be introduced in England at this time".

In terms of raising awareness of prostate cancer, the Government has introduced a PSA Informed Choice Programme, Prostate Cancer Risk Management (see <http://www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk/prostate/pcrm-aim.html>) (hard copies are available at this meeting). The key elements are the provision of high quality information for men requesting the test. This should enable men to decide whether or not to have the test based on the available evidence about risks and benefits. Improvements to the PSA test will also be made. The office of the NHS Cancer Screening Programmes manages this work.

NHS Waltham Forest will be developing their 2009/10 action plan for cancer over the next few months and activities surrounding prostate cancer will be considered then. It should be noted that it is difficult to raise awareness of the symptoms of prostate cancer as these do not emerge until the advanced stages of the disease. Even then, the symptoms are varied and are not necessarily indicative of cancer.

On the wider issues you raise, NHS Waltham Forest already uses a number of vehicles to ensure that our health messages reach the community we serve one of which is LBWF's own newspaper WFM. **For further information contact Helpline: 0800 226237.**