

## **2. DEPUTATIONS BY APPOINTMENT**

### **THOMSON PARK - TREE REPLACEMENT**

Sarah Beavan and Wendy Emerson were in attendance to address the Board on local residents' concerns over the proposed tree replacement and landscape works at Thomson Park. Wendy Emerson advised that she had been a resident in the area since 1943, and that her mother had been there for 83 years. In that time Ms Emerson had seen huge changes. She noted that in the early years of settlement at New Brighton the sand dunes were behind the homes on Marine Parade. The first row of trees was planted around 1917 as a gift to the community to stabilise the sand movements. Later, the name Thomsons Park was given to the reserve in recognition of the work of Mr and Mrs Thomson in the area. Ms Emerson had two main concerns regarding the proposed felling of trees in the park. Firstly, she believed there would be difficulty encountered in establishing plants in the harsh sea environment. She believed that it would take a long time and a reasonable amount of money for new plantings to become established. The second issue was that of the aesthetic value of the existing trees, they had a local identity and were an integral part of the North New Brighton community. Ms Emerson believed that there would need to be consensus if removal of the trees was to be undertaken for aesthetic reasons as the majority of trees still had many years of life left.

Sarah Beavan noted that a petition had been collated to which over 1,600 signatures had been collected. She believed that if the felling of trees in Thomson Park were to go ahead there would be much grief within the local community. She outlined the views of the group opposed to the tree felling. Ms Beavan noted that the group largely endorsed the Chairperson's recommendations in the Board Agenda. In regards to the first recommendation the group understood that there would need to be a compromise and that the removal of the 25 metres of trees by the sports field would be accepted as long as the area was used as a full scale test planting. The local residents also wanted to be involved in the replanting of trees. The group was against the felling of the group 3 trees as it felt that the Beaver Tree report had advised that the removal was not for safety reasons but for car parks. Ms Beavan summarised that the local community would reluctantly choose the Chairperson's recommendations if it came to a choice between them and the Parks Unit's recommendations. There was also concern that many young macrocarpa trees were not included in the plans, the local community hoped that these trees would be retained in the landscape plan.