

Brickhill Borough Councillors Report February 2012

Woodlands Estate

We continue to be asked for assistance by residents of the Woodlands Estate with a variety of matters. However we must always explain that this is not our ward and we must refer residents to Councillors Ellis and Moon. The activities on the estate are nevertheless of particular interest to Brickhill residents and we are pleased that football pitches are well under way and the planting has taken place of many trees. The Borough Bus service operates from Anjulita Court to take residents shopping each day. This is not being well used and a meeting is arranged with residents to discuss the service. The Number 6 bus is now being terminated at the roundabout on the entrance road due to safety reasons concerning penetrating the estate. Stagecoach have been asked to allow passengers to alight on the opposite side of the road where there is a pavement. Discussions are taking place to discover whether a roundabout can be built to allow the bus to return to entering the estate, since buses are not allowed to reverse under current regulations. Comments made relating to a service in sandy where the bus does reverse have been addressed by Stagecoach in that this service was registered before current regulations. If it is not possible to enter the estate using the Number 6 then we will be looking to involve a smaller vehicle on a different route. Until all of this is resolved we are not asking for bus shelters on Tyne Crescent to be moved.

Dearne Walk

We have allocated ward fund to have improvements made in Dearne Walk. We are advised that these will start soon. Some of the large areas of paving will be laid to grass.

Street Clutter

More posts on Tyne Crescent and Avon Drive have been removed, there are just two remaining on Tyne Crescent, there will then be no more clutter in the ward.

Parking

A new CCTV vehicle has been ordered by the Borough Council which should mean twice as much enforcement as currently. We have been asked to consider yellow lines in Tyne Crescent in the region of Moriston Road to help alleviate parking issues from Thomas More.

Tesco

Concern has been raised about the failure of the Borough to enforce a restrictive covenant. This was discussed at Borough Council and objections were made that some councillors had not seen the legal advice. After consideration and meeting with the Borough legal officers the decision was subsequently endorsed by councillors at a later meeting of the Council. It gives us no pleasure that there is nothing which can be done to deter Tesco from opening their store but we are reassured that the decision received full support across the political parties.

Anti-Social Behaviour

We believe that this has been much better recently and we recognise the good work taking place by Karen from BPHA.

Trees

We have been asked to have trees trimmed at the rear of Francis Groves Close. There is a dispute with the Borough over who owns what. We have used ward fund to have trees allocated

around the ward and these can be seen planted in roads such as Windrush, Curlew and Kimbolton Road. Some trees were planted by the Borough outside homes where the residents objected, we have therefore asked for these to be removed.

Road Marking

We have requested that the road markings on the uphill approach to the roundabout junction of Brickhill Drive and Linnett way be re painted following requests from residents.

Places for People & BPHA

We have attended the walkabout on the Carron Road Estate and reported several issues subsequently including, fly tipping and graffiti.

BPHA Garages

There have been burglaries and damage caused at these garages in Mallard Hill and we have worked with BPHA and Police to gain proper attention for the residents over what has caused considerable distress.

Roads and Footpaths.

The condition of roads and footpaths is not up to the standards which we would like to see, however there is a serious funding issue for the Borough Council as it seeks to address years of neglect with a shrinking budget. We are continuing to work with the Pot Hole Hit Squad to identify areas which are dangerous. Bedford Borough Council's Pothole Hit Squad service is celebrating its first birthday this month as new figures show they filled more than 5,000 potholes during 2011 – nearly three times the number repaired in 2010. The Pothole Hit Squad service was launched in January 2011 to provide a quick response service which was able to carry out permanent repairs to potholes in the borough. Residents can report a pothole by contacting the Highways Helpdesk on 01234 718003. All potholes will be assessed on a priority basis. We appreciate hearing comments about which are the worst affected areas are for inclusion in the repair programme. We have been asked to consider Clyde Crescent, Merlin Gardens and Windrush/ Severn Way junction, Curlew Crescent among others

Petrol Price Campaign

We are supporting Mayor Dave Hodgson and his campaign to fight for fairer petrol and diesel prices for Bedford Borough. Mayor Dave has tabled a motion for next week's Full Council meeting which is set to put further pressure on fuel retailers to address the shocking disparity in prices between Bedford and nearby towns. The motion highlights the large gap in prices, which are commonly around 5 pence per litre of unleaded petrol, and calls on the retailers to take action to stop forcing local residents to pay more for fuel.

Cars for Sale on the highway

We are pleased at the successful prosecution of an individual for selling cars on the highway. Last week saw a conviction in court and fines and costs totalling £4,000

Parishing in the Borough

Only the Liberal Democrats support allowing residents the opportunity to decide whether they would like to have a parish council like Brickhill. Liberal Democrats were defeated by the other

parties last week, meaning that the proposals will not now proceed as hoped for.

Bin Collections

Mayor Dave Hodgson has confirmed that weekly black bin collections will be saved in Bedford Borough, after agreeing a new waste deal saving hundreds of thousands of pounds and retaining current collection arrangements. Mayor Dave has successfully campaigned over many years to keep weekly collections, including fighting off attempts by the former County Council to impose them on local households. After consulting residents on waste collections Mayor Dave has agreed a new green waste disposal deal which saves half a million pounds over five years and treats the waste locally, while retaining the existing collection arrangements popular with local residents. Residents tell us how highly they value the weekly collection of the black bin, and we are one of the minority of Councils still providing the weekly collection. At the same time, we are making major savings for the local taxpayer and treating waste locally. We are rejecting the approach seen elsewhere across the country of abandoning weekly bin collections and not collecting green waste free of charge. We are now delivering one of the best collection systems in the country while making savings, and we will continue to work with residents to improve it and to drive up recycling rates locally. The deal with Envar Ltd, agreed after a tender process, will see garden waste from Bedford composted locally at Growing Beds in Ravensden as part of a five year contract to 2017.

Waste Bins

The Borough is investing in more bins which provide opportunities for recycling. In Brickhill these are located at the shops and a new one has been fitted in Brickhill Drive near Pilgrims School.

Winter Gritting

We are pleased that Curlew Crescent is now routinely being gritted for the first time. It is important for residents to ensure that they park so as to allow the vehicles to pass. A new service which allows local residents to track the exact location of gritting lorries in Bedford Borough is now available on the Council website. The technology uses GPS to track the vehicles location and relays this to the Council website. The location of the lorries as they make their way around the borough is then shown in real time. This is the latest addition to the Council's efforts to keep the borough informed and moving during the cold weather and joins the popular Gritter Twitter and Winter Maintenance webpage. The new service, launched in conjunction with Highways Services contractor Amey, can be viewed at any time on the Council's Winter Maintenance webpage. Just under half of the borough's roads are salted, including all A and B roads as well as other important local roads. We have worked extremely hard in recent years to make sure the borough is well prepared for a harsh winter. We have expanded the gritting network, pledged to plough additional roads in heavy snowfall, purchased a specially adapted quad bike to treat footpaths and sourced salt from around the world to bypass national shortages.

In addition, we have also taken extra steps to make sure our residents can keep in touch with us. Our 24 hour Gritter Twitter service and regularly updated Winter Maintenance webpage are continuing to prove popular. We have now added to this with the option for residents to track our gritting lorries across the borough. The map will be a novelty for many people but the technology also allows anyone to see the gritting routes taken by the lorries. This can help residents to plan their journeys during very harsh weather as well as demonstrating all the Council's efforts to keep the borough moving. The gritting lorries can be viewed from here: <http://apps.bedford.gov.uk/winterupdates/>

Report in Parish Magazine

We recognise that other parishes have a regular feature from Borough Councillors in which they are able to give feedback to residents. we would value this and ask the Parish Council to allocate a regular space for a Borough Councillors Feedback.

Street Lights

Bedford Borough Council will not turn off street lights unless specifically requested by parish councils. As Borough Councillors we believe that street lights are an important part of safety and deter crime. We regularly tour the ward spotting lights which are inoperative. We are pleased that this now normally results in single figure reports across the ward as more lights are fixed and new columns provided. Please help us by always reporting failed street lights quoting the columns number or exact location.

Speeding

There is a serious problem concerning lack of adherence to the existing 30mph speed limit across Brickhill. It is our long term intention to work for the deployment of average speed cameras and these could be used to enforce a 20mph limit on Tyne Crescent which we would like to see as a matter of urgency. The cameras are wireless and mobile and motorists will not be able to detect where they are employed as they fit discreetly onto street furniture. The Mayor has given backing to place the deployment of these devices as a priority for the Borough and funding has already been allocated.

Verges and Parking

We have been assured that the verges in Linnett Way and Falcon Avenue will be repaired in the next week. Soil will be supplied and seeded later in the season.

Please do not hesitate to contact us directly if you have any further questions



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