



Brickhill Borough Councillor Report

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Trees

At present there is tree felling which is necessary on some trees in Brickhill.. When residents see trees being felled they are rightly concerned and we want to reassure you that we only agree to tree felling when we are satisfied that it is absolutely necessary because trees are causing damage and there is no way that alternative action can be taken. For many years unsuitable trees were planted across the Borough including Brickhill and this can sometimes cause damage to garages, garden walls, driveways and houses. As a result of this, occasionally the Borough Council is required to remove trees by our insurance company to prevent costly claims being made for subsidence. In some cases heavy pruning/ pollarding can take place, however this will disfigure the tree which will then require ongoing costly maintenance and damage may continue unabated. Root barriers can be installed however the cost for this is many thousands of pounds per tree. When trees are felled in Brickhill we seek to ensure that replacement trees are planted in suitable locations in open space to mitigate for the loss and we have recently funded trees across Brickhill from our ward funds.

However we have spent our wards funds on planting suitable trees this year only to see good quality specimens broken and damaged beyond repair. This is very disappointing and we would like to encourage residents to inform us if they see trees vandalised and especially if they know who is responsible. One tree in Linnet Way was totally destroyed and has been removed, we will be seeking a replacement in the autumn or spring planting season.



Weeds

Across Brickhill we have noticed a real problem with weeds this year. Mayor Dave Hodgson, has declared war on weeds in Bedford Borough and arranged for extra work to clear the weeds which have shot up in the unusual spring and summer weather significantly disrupting the usual annual herbicide treatment programme.

Late spring and early summer saw the wettest recorded period in history which led to weeds growing extremely fast across the borough. Now the wet weather has settled down, the Council is fighting back and working harder than ever to clear weeds across the borough. The Council has adapted the road gritting quad bike to put down pesticide as well as using trained officers armed with backpacks

and spraying lances. Officers are also working overtime at weekends to deal with the problem areas.

Mayor of Bedford Borough, Dave Hodgson, said: "We are declaring war on weeds across the borough. Many have shot up through pavements and alongside roads following the wet and unsettled weather we experienced during the spring and early summer. "This has been a problem across the country but we are fighting back and pursuing the most extensive programme ever to remove weeds from our streets.



"We have already treated significant parts of the borough but the work is ongoing as we continue to tackle this unprecedented weed growth."

Littering and dog fouling

The zero tolerance approach to littering is continuing across the Borough with more people being taken to court who have failed to pay fixed penalty fines for littering. The most recent case saw a woman fined £300 for disposing of her takeaway containers. There is still far too much dog fouling on our pavements in Brickhill and we would welcome reports of people seen allowing their dogs to foul the public areas and not cleaning up.

What's happening to your waste?



Mayor Dave Hodgson has announced new contracts for dealing with black and orange bin waste which will save £6.9 million over a 5 year contract. Each year the Council collects over 70,000 tonnes of household waste, equating to just over one tonne of rubbish per household.

Bedford Borough Council inherited contracts from the former County Council which involved black bin waste being sent for landfill and incineration. The new contracts will see this waste treated via the environmentally sustainable mechanical and biological treatment (MBT) process, at the MBT plant operated by Shanks Waste Management Limited at Frog Island in London. This process maximises diversion from landfill by extracting recyclable material from the waste. A natural drying process with minimal emissions is used, reducing the waste by around 30%, followed by mechanical refinement to help extract as much recyclable material as possible. There is an end product of Solid Recovered Fuel, a fossil fuel alternative used in energy generation and cement production.

Orange bin waste will be processed at Viridor Waste Management Limited's facility in Milton Keynes for recycling. This is a state of the art waste management facility which diverts as much recyclable material as possible from landfill. The current recovery rate is approximately 96%.

Both tenders submitted by the contractors represented the best options in terms of quality, price and best value to the Council. Combined, the contracts deliver savings of a massive £6.9 million over the period to September 2018, in addition to the major environmental benefits.

Commenting, Mayor Dave Hodgson said: "I am delighted that after years of hard work we have managed to secure contracts which save Borough residents nearly seven million pounds. I have always made clear

my opposition to mass burn incineration and we will now see our waste being recycled and processed in a way which will deliver an immediate increase in our recycling rates of up to 4%. Rather than all the waste just being thrown in the ground or burnt, mechanical and biological treatment of our black bin waste will see more recyclable material extracted from the waste stream."

The new contracts deliver outstanding savings and are great news for the environment."

Verge Parking in Brickhill



Consultation on No Verge Parking Zone

We have been contacted by residents who wish to see an extension of the no verge parking scheme currently in operation in Linnet Way. This has been requested by residents at the Community Safety Forum meetings and is supported by Brickhill Parish Council. The Borough Council is now introducing no verge parking zones such as in Barkers Lane and Longholme Way. However before any scheme is implemented the ward councillors must be in agreement and we are therefore seeking your views. If the majority of residents are in favour then we will support the

proposal. The areas affected would include Falcon Avenue (both sides), Kestrel Road, Curlew Crescent, Plover Way, Brickhill Drive, Starling Way, Swift Close, Linnet Way (already covered). We have received many requests to prosecute those who park vehicles on verges and pavements. As local councillors we believe that verge parking causes damage to the grass and it also damages cables in the verges, sometimes leading to costly repairs of telephone and fibre optic cables.

We are taking action against verge parking by installing trees, bollards and implementing restrictions.

It is worthwhile outlining what the current legal position is. If a vehicle is parked on the pavement then this is often an offence of obstruction which is enforceable only by the police, not the Borough Council. If a vehicle is parked on a verge, then the Borough Council can take action using a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) which prohibits the parking on verges. This enables the Parking Shop to take enforcement action. However, the TRO is only enacted when signs are erected. These signs can be erected where there is a problem with verge parking and the TRO comes into effect immediately, once we have erected signs. The Borough Council has a policy in relation to designating areas.



Brickhill Parish Council has made clear that they regard verge parking as something which should attract enforcement action, due to the damage which is caused. For this reason we have erected signs when requested by residents in Tyne Crescent and Linnet Way. The Parking Shop can then take enforcement action and issue fixed penalty notices. This offence is enforced with Borough Council Camera Vans meaning that prosecutions are more frequent.

New Legislation We have recently received many more requests for no verge parking signs to be erected. The cost of the signs has been problematic with Brickhill Drive alone being quoted as £5,000. We are therefore looking at new legislation which would allow the Borough Council to designate a wider area without the frequent erection of signs. We are now hopeful that we might be able to designate a much wider of Brickhill, avoiding the huge costs involved. Once designated it will become illegal for any person to park on the grass verge and owners of cars which do so will be issued with fixed penalty tickets. We believe that we have received a clear consensus from residents to take this forward and it is important that we hear your views. Please take the time to advise us of any issues of concern to you, your family or anybody else who might visit your home and consider parking on the verge.

Speeding



We receive ongoing complaints from members of the public about speeding which we pass on to the police. There is limited action which we can take. We have arranged for Tyne Crescent to become a 20mph zone and we are seeking action to have 20mph signs located outside our three school. However what is needed is enforcement. In due course we will be looking to introduce average speed cameras such as those allocated by Mayor Dave Hodgson to the A6 at Milton Ernest. These are expensive although the cost is reducing

dramatically every year and parish councils will be able to pay towards having them installed. It is early days but this may be a way of Brickhill Parish Council having cameras placed in Brickhill in the future.

In the meantime we encourage residents to become involved in being trained by the Police to operate speed activated signs such as the one shown opposite. Residents can use these to record numbers of speeding vehicles which are then passed on to the Police.

We are always pleased to hear from residents with any concern which you may have. Please also visit our website www.puttingbrickhillfirst.com for the latest information on Brickhill issues.