

Brickhill Borough Councillors Report

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Safety at our schools

Parents continue to be a danger to themselves and their children by inconsiderate and dangerous parking at our schools. In Hawk Drive we have arranged for bollards to be installed to stop parents driving over the pavements. In Moriston Road we are also asking for no verge parking to deter parents who again drive over the verges and pavements. Residents in Dove Road are also concerned about dangerous parking and we will continue to ensure that Council Enforcement Officers visit. It is regrettable that Mr Pickles removed the powers of the council to use mobile enforcement since foot patrols usually just cause drivers to drive off and then return when the officer has gone.

Roads and Pavements

Mayor Dave Hodgson has announced that an extra £1million will be put towards road and pavement resurfacing across the Borough. In spite of government cuts we will try to ensure that any money which can be found will be directed towards frontline services. Our roads and pavements in Brickhill need this investment and we fully support the priority given which will help keep drivers and pedestrians safe.

Street Lighting

The Borough Council were successful in applying for funding to transform street lighting across the Borough. Brickhill has already seen new LED street lamps being fitted and more and more are fitted each day across the Borough. Already hundreds of thousands of pounds are being saved in energy costs from the new lamps which require less energy and less maintenance.

Investment in the elderly

Many of you will have seen the transformation which is taking place at Highfield Residential Home in Avon Drive. The Borough Council has taken over the management from BUPA and millions of pounds are being spent on refurbishing accommodation for the elderly.

Riverside Development and Town Centre Cinema

The amazing new Riverside development has restaurants and cinema opening this month. It is a great place to visit and it has already created over 200 new jobs. The transformation of a derelict part of town has been quite breathtaking and we encourage you to go and see if you have not done so already. Many of those who were once critical of the plans have now changed their minds and recognised the public benefit which has come from an investment of over £30million by businesses. The remaining criticism seems to be focussed on the bridge and calls for a more delicate glass bridge to replace the existing structure. The bridge was entirely funded by the developers and has been designed in response to public consultation. People wanted a bridge that spanned the 24 metres to be able to take bicycles and wheelchairs in addition to pedestrians and river users did not want a column supporting the bridge in the middle of the river. This bridge is therefore the one the public asked for, a glass bridge would have collapsed into the river ! The bridge provides a welcome addition to the cycle network and will carry thousands of pedestrians every week. Just for the record we actually like it !

Bedford Hospital

Mayor Dave Hodgson has been leading the fight to keep essential services here in Bedford. It is absurd to have to travel to Luton whilst having a baby or needing urgent Accident and Emergency treatment. This battle is far from over and we must continue to support the Mayor in his efforts to keep our essential hospital services in Bedford.

Local Plan

We all know and have seen the huge problems which we face as a country with a housing shortage. Bedford Borough has to meet challenging government expectation for housing and the Local Plan will set out how this is going to be achieved. There are major plans for large scale developments and we encourage you to be fully informed on what is proposed. Mayor Dave Hodgson's Executive took action to remove Freemans Common on Cleat Hill from council plans for housing development following our request. The move was supported unanimously but attracted fierce criticism and was brought to a council

scrutiny committee. Thankfully the committee saw sense and supported the decision to protect these lovely fields to the north of Brickhill.

An independent government planning inspector specifically excluded this land for development and it was removed last time round when we made this point to the previous Mayor Frank Branston. We have been long standing campaigners against the development of Freemans Common in Brickhill and will continue to fight to see this land kept as a green open space stretching from Hamble Road up Cleat Hill.

Woodlands Park

The Borough Council is working hard to try and ensure that Persimmon bring the public areas and country park up to an acceptable standard. It is our hope that this can be adopted soon, as the standard delivered by Persimmon is not acceptable with especially poor management of footpaths through the country park. The tarmac footpath which has broken up close to Browney Path and Aire Walk will be replaced with an aggregate surface.

20 MPH in Brickhill

We continue to work for 20mph speed limits and hope to soon be able to progress a scheme which will cover Brickhill Lower School and surrounding roads to Brickhill Drive, Linnet Way and Kimbolton Road. In roads like these 20 mph really is plenty. In Windrush the flashing 20mph speed sign is permanently illuminated and we have asked for this to be fixed.

Government Cuts to Councils

The Borough Council is now managing on a fraction of the budget which it once had and far fewer staff. The council now needs to save an additional £24 million every year by 2020. Government cuts are taking their toll so please understand that hard pressed council staff are working extremely hard to continue to deliver frontline services and protect the most vulnerable members of our community. The Council has been criticised for investing in new technology and systems to cope with the massive cuts in government funding. However only by cutting back office functions can the council manage to continue to provide essential services. The one off investment which the council is making will then save taxpayers the same amount every year.

For more information on what is happening in and around Brickhill and to keep in touch please visit our website www.puttingbrickhillfirst.com You can also sign up for our newsletter.

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