

Meeting of BLTC 07 August 2018

Cllrs' Written Reports to BLTC

Borough Council Matters of Interest Written Reports

Cllr Currall

I have answered many emails from local residents.

As a town councillor I have helped with The duck race and put notices around the town.

Cllr R. Groome

Other Town Cllrs' Reports

Cllr Davies

Meetings etc.:

July 1st – 14th: On holiday; apologies sent for meetings missed.

July 25th: Attended residents meeting about heavy lorry traffic

I attended out of interest, having previously received complaints about traffic along Kettering Road, High Street and Finedon Road.

Also present were the local County Councillor, the County Council Cabinet Member for Transport Highways and Environment along with an officer and members of the Burton Latimer community.

There are clearly some very strong feelings on this matter and the organisers showed photographs of very large vehicles in the area. The meeting was held outside Palmichael and traffic was busy throughout the meeting, with several large vehicles passing through. The point was made that traffic is normally heavier at this time of day when schools are in operation.

The Portfolio Holder was understanding but made it plain that, given the County Council's current problems, no funding would be available for surveys or actions. There was a discussion of possible ways ahead.

July 26th: Planning Committee

Cllr C. Groome

1. I have put a lot of effort into securing a decent train service for this part of Northamptonshire, both from December or May on the present franchise or in a new franchise starting later in 2019. As part of this campaign I caught a train to Leicester on a Saturday when the service is particularly poor. The once hourly train from Kettering was as usual full and standing. On the return journey the southbound platform at Leicester was crowded, a large number being for Kettering. Immediately before the 5 car Kettering departure is a 7 car non-stop St Pancras service. It left

Leicester with lots of empty seats. Needless to say the stopping service was full and standing. The DfT and the railway fraternity still see the main purpose of the railway to get large numbers of people to London and back as quickly as possible. We now have an opportunity to get over the message that there are people who live, work and play in places outside London.

2. I represented BLTC at the CPRE committee meeting. The main topic of interest to us was the proposed change to local government in the county where the consensus was that on balance it would be of benefit to the rural interest.
3. I have been following the NCC budget saga and attended the new budget meeting last week. The leadership still doesn't seem to recognise the hole it is in. The prospect of other counties joining them in being able to fund adult and children's social services confirms my view that a funding model heavily dependent on diminishing grants from central government is unsustainable, however well local management performs, and in the case of NCC that was and is badly. I shall attend another meeting this week to set a new budget.
4. My fear for the Burton library was that it was still vulnerable in the new environment but library campaigners have won their judicial review and all libraries are staying open for the foreseeable futureif they can find the staff!
5. I attended the KBC meeting to hear the debate on the motion to get KBC to buy the Rothwell and Desborough Libraries on which Ruth has reported.
6. I have taken part in 3 Community Speedwatch events with favourable responses.

Town Mayor's Report (Cllrs Macdonald)

I attended the meeting in respect of the Unitary Authorities proposal of approx. 65 attendees the vast majority voted for the two authority proposal It was explained how this was arrived at and also how the projected savings of £12 million per annum was calculated and the one off cost of £23 million arrived at the majority of this was down to redundancy payments. We were advised that once a final decision had been made by the Government then further meetings would be held to gather views on the ensuing organisation

I was privileged to attend the awards evening at Latimer Arts College which was truly outstanding There are now over 700 pupils from Burton Latimer this is in excess of 50% of the school I believe that it would be appropriate to sponsor one of the awards for next year the cost is in the region of £250 and I think that it would help cement relationships with the college as well as demonstrating to our townspeople that we are supporting their children's educational efforts

REPORT ON THE NEW P/A SYSTEM FOR DISCUSSION (Cllr Jerram)

A new P/A system was bought out of the KBC grant (public money). Luckily we decided to check it before the Duck Race and found it was a tannoy system not a P/A system. A volunteer (non Councillor) has had to spend a considerable amount of time and approximately £45.00 so we could use it for the Duck Race. However it was deemed not fit for purpose and it is very unlikely it will be of any use for the Xmas Light Switch On or any other events,

The purchase was agreed by the Town Council although there was no indication at the time that this was a tannoy system rather than a P/A system and wouldn't be suitable. Originally it was agreed by the T/C that Cllr John Currall and a highly experienced volunteer (who's son is a professional singer) to provide a specification and quote. Due to criticism of their capabilities Cllr MacDonald subsequently took this over

Report from the volunteer who is very knowledgeable about P/A systems – his son is a professional singer: The system is really designed as a permanent outdoor installation for ‘announcements and background music’ as it states in the manual. With this in mind the wiring is not really plug and play but has to be wired up on each installation as I discovered on set up for the Duck Race.

I have tried to make it as plug and play as possible but I am concerned that it may well not be easy for someone to set up at each outing.

The speakers provided reasonable volume and worked well where we used them to extend the sound over a wider area however the quality of sound on a main stage was not as good or powerful as a band style PA system would provide.

My main concern is that it is not really a portable system and if it is to be used by the Council for smaller events it may require a disproportional amount of setting up. I have provided some bags to make it a bit more portable and wired everything up to try and make it a bit more plug and play. I have also provided an additional pair of wireless microphones.

The two microphones and stands that came with the system are of good quality and having 50m cables provides great event capabilities .

I would say that a more portable and higher wattage system would have made for a better solution. It will be a major problem finding someone with the skills needed to set it up for each event.

Highways Report (Cllr F. Macdonald)

- 1) There are now only a very few potholes left but we must await the latest information from the County to know whether their repair will be affected by the latest lot of cuts
- 2) The double yellow lines requested last year have been installed but again we have no one to act as a parking controller I therefor suggest that a sitable letter is sent to the Managing Director of Kettering and a copy to Tony at County
- 3) An initial scheme has been received from David Wilson Homes re the drainage issues in Harvest Close . Kettering are responding
- 4) The feasibility of providing a footpath from the Football club along the back of the Crescents to the cricket club has been agreed in principal by Morrisons
- 5) The County are trying to get agreement for the linking of a new footpath at Dearlove Dr to the existing UA4
- 6) The doors in the Civic Centre have had the self closure eased
- 7) A budget price of £1300 per set of drop kerbs has been obtained and I would wish to progress this with the County and seek a grant to cover all the costs the proposal would be for 10 sets along Churchill Way and also Station Rd so that those with mobility problems and also mothers with prams/pushchairs can access the town centre more easely
- 8) I am still awaiting the final verdict as to when the fiasco of speed limit signs on Higham Rd will be resolved

NCC - Cllr Smith-Haynes

Last month began with the Duck Race, which I didn’t actually see as I was manning the ‘Hook a Duck’ game!

There was a Scrutiny Management meeting to look at a call in regarding the potential sale of County Hall. This meeting was to consider if the correct process was followed, not to question the decision. It was agreed due process was followed, but a number of recommendations were made for process going forward. I have also attended various scrutiny meetings and briefings, including as vice chair of Health Adult Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

I attended the Local Plan Consultation event held at the Civic Centre. Only there for about an hour, and saw / spoke with a handful of MOTP who came in to look at the display and ask questions.

I attended the Police and Crime panel and a pre-meeting with the Chief Constable. I met the new Chief Constable (Nick Adderley), and was happy to support the PCCs recommendation to recruit him. He is very experienced. I also attended a PCP workshop in London, looking at national policy and strategy, and how it impacts locally.

There have been various NHFT Governance and sub-group meetings.

I also attended a couple of Meadowside Governors meetings, as well as preparing for and attending the Summer Fayre. The input of the Mayor since his meeting with the new head is much appreciated.

I did the Speedwatch Training, but have not yet had any dates for sessions. I see some have already happened. Perhaps Ruth could let me know when I can put my training into practice.

The Cabinet member for Transport came to meet with Mrs Murphy re- the High St traffic issues. This took some considerable time to arrange because, as a cabinet member, his diary has been very full over recent months. Several members of BLAG were in attendance, and it was agreed the Deputy Mayor would speak to the Mayor, to see if there is any Wind Farm money that can be used for a traffic survey. Sarah Barnwell has sent Cllr Davies some rough guide costings for doing this.

I attended Corporate Parenting Board, where we were informed of possible ways forward for Childrens' Services (fostering and adoption) following our LG reform. We have 1091 Looked After Children in the county atm, and we are still receiving Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children. Sadly, the financial situation at County has impacted on the number of people applying to become foster carers.

We now have a new CEO, Theresa Grant, who presents as very experienced and capable. She has paused processes such as library closures, while she takes time to look at ways of achieving more positive outcomes. Full Council has met to discuss priorities, and we meet again tomorrow to consider the new s114. August is going to be unusually busy at County Hall, with meetings to consider Unitary as well as financial matters. No holiday for me!