

Brickhill Borough Councillors Update April 2022 From Wendy Rider and Charles Royden

Report to Brickhill Parish Council AGM



Nobody could have failed to be impressed by the way in which our community has worked together over the past two years to tackle the challenges presented to us by Covid. We have seen support given to the most vulnerable members and this is ongoing with many people now facing huge challenges as a consequence of rising costs of living. Speaking to people at our surgeries we are conscious that many people in Brickhill are reliant upon the Foodbank and struggling to cope. It is therefore remarkable that there has been so much generosity shown over the past year, first to those refugees from Afghanistan and more recently the humanitarian aid provided to Ukraine and the welcoming of guests displaced from their homes. As local councillors we spend time trying to help those people who face these huge challenges, ensuring that they do not feel isolated and alone and making sure that where the council can offer help they have access to compassionate services.

The day to day work of a councillor also involves dealing with issues which affect all our lives and which make an impact on the quality of life which we all seek to enjoy. The consequences of Covid has meant that the council has been hard pressed to deliver services which are essential for all for us. Ensuring that the bins are emptied, roads gritted and all of the other things which take for granted has been a real challenge. As we emerge from this pandemic and hopefully we reach good numbers of available staff we are supporting residents by seeking investment in road and pavement repairs, ensuring that the grass is cut and all of the other things which improve our environment.

The coming year will see an announcement from East West Rail as to their chosen route from Oxfords to Cambridge. We remain committed to ensuring that this route takes the railway north away from residential areas of Brickhill. Since this would take the railway north of our country park we will seek an extension of the country park and improved access to the countryside through footpaths and bridleways. Early planting and use of landscaping will be important to mitigate noise as will be a commitment for the line to be electrified from the outset and we have already started with the planting of 5,000 trees on council land of Ashmead road which we have always feared might be used for further housing development.

Public transport is a serious concern for us and residents have seen a decline in the provision of bus services with routes changed and less frequency. We have asked for further meetings with operators to discuss the concerns of residents. It is important to remember that about one fifth of households in Brickhill do not own a car and this number is likely to increase with ongoing

increases in the cost of car ownership. Together with the higher proportion of Brickhill residents who are elderly, public transport is of significant importance.

In the coming year we will continue to work to see delivered many of the things which have been delayed and in which we have invested ward funds. Average speed cameras for Brickhill Drive and the pond pump in Rooksmead have met with considerable difficulty importing parts from Europe. We have invested ward funds in speed reduction devices on our major roads in Brickhill but we are still aware of the difficulties many of our families face getting to and from school. We are campaigning for two new pedestrian crossings on Waveney Avenue which we believe will make school journeys much safer.

There were 36 trees planted on Brickhill streets and we will be helping fund more this coming planting season. It was a pleasure to support the Christmas celebration on Waveney Green and we will again fund the Christmas decorations to support our shopping parades which we are delighted have full occupancy.

The decline in Covid restrictions has meant that we have been able to meet more residents at out surgeries. We have been delighted to be joined on many occasions by our local police team and we are grateful to Officer ASHIQ Junaid 441 who has spent time with us discussing Brickhill priorities. It has been insightful for us to go out on patrol with him and we are grateful for his willingness to listen and tackle issues which residents have raised with us. If you would like to meet with us then please do come to our next surgeries. As your local Brickhill councillors we will continue to work hard in the coming year and also keep you informed through regular deliveries of FOCUS and our website where you can sign up for our Brickhill newsletter.

www.puttingbrickhillfirst.com

Come and see us at our surgeries

Avon Drive Shops Saturday 30 April 10.00am
Brickhill Drive Shops Saturday 14 May 10.00am
Avon Drive Shops Saturday 28 May 10.00am
Brickhill Drive Shops Saturday 11 June 10.00am

You can also speak with us or another Lib Dem Councillor
every Saturday morning 11.00am - 12 noon at Bedford Central Library

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