

Northampton Borough Council - Northampton Pensioners' Forum

The Jeffery Room, The Guildhall, Northampton.

Thursday, 28 March 2019.

1. WELCOMES, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

ATTENDANCE: Roger Rumsey (RR, Chair), Brian Oldham (Cllr, co-chair), Ann Timpson (AT, Individual) Tony Mallard (TM, ERA and Veterans), Christiana Owusu-Akuffo (COA, Individual), Brian Nicholas (BN, Individual), F Nelson (FN, individual), Ruth Austen (RA, NBC), Mike Hallam (MH, Cllr), Laura Graham (LG, Age UK Northampton), Norman Sharp (NS, Individual), Dean Morgan (DM, NFRS), Jamie Wells (JW, NBC)

APPOLOGIES: Geoff Simms, Dave Hewitt.

2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

AT updated that her flats were having barriers put into her car park. Was FOB entry only. All residents have now received the FOB.

3. CLLR MIKE HALLAM - ENVIRONMENTAL UPDATE

Thank you for inviting me. Since the waste and grounds maintenance contract has changed, the works to improve the cleanliness of the town has improved a lot. Since the start of the contract, the back log of work has now been caught up. Grass cutting has begun, we are now two weeks in. There is a four-week plan for the whole borough, that repeats throughout the cutting season. The feedback from the public so far has mainly been positive, any issues and complaints have been dealt with very well since the changeover.

One change that is being implemented in the new contract is the way we now recycle. Instead of three open boxes for waste, each property will now have one big bin, or will be given a supply of clear sacks to put their recycled waste in. Far cotton will be trailing the clear bags first. Areas that have the capacity for a recycling bin, but never had one in the past, are now looked to be given a bin.

One major issue in the town is still fly tipping and we are looking at a number of ways we can help reduce this. From the start of April, the bulky waste charge will be reduced from £25 for 3 items to £15. This is a trail period to see if this reduces the number of fly tips across the town. If this change has a positive effect on fly tipping, we will be looking to keep the bulky waste cost down. If it doesn't, the project will be looked at again and re-evaluated.

Another way we are looking to help reduce fly tip is the possibility of holding kangaroo runs across the town. This is where containers or vans will be placed in set areas, so that public can then have their house waste removed free of charge. Only areas selected for the kangaroo run will be notified. Each area will only have this done as a one off.

Wardens have now achieved their highest number of fines for fly tips across the town. The enforcement team in the town centre, Kingdom, have now moved into other areas of the town to do enforcement around litter. Fines have now been raised to really help get the message across.

Overall it's been a very busy first year bedding in the new contract but MH feels it is now in a stable place. If anyone has any questions, please feel free to ask.

TM - There is definitely been an improvement across the town. There is still a noticeable issues around fly tipping. Issues come from the whether the land is owned by NPH or NBC. This seems to cause a delay in clearly the waste.

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NS - I am concerned about the fix penalties. Who is funding them?

RA - The contracts fund themselves through the fine money they receive.

NS - In the first for months there was near 2000, 4 months after that there was reported to be only 880. All this money is going to the business and now back into the town centre.

MH - Money doesn't just go into the business. Some offensives get raised to court level where the fine will increase and the money will then go back into the local economy

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CO - since the change in the recycling and the way it is now done, the street cleanliness is much better and the communication from the waste team with residents have been good in the area I live. We are now able to put more waste into one back, ready to take away. Everyone on my street is very please.

MK - Thank you for the positive feedback

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BN - Will there been more small plastic bags for food waste be given out?

MK - I'm not sure, they contractor is looking at how they change the way the remove food waste. For now, it can be put in the normal waste bin.

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BO - on the mowing side, in the council properties, there is a different contractor from NPH. On property sheltered housing, they have stopped cutting the front of these garden. Does the contract for NPH not include the front garden?

MH - I'm not familiar with their contract, apologies. You will have to check with NPH.

BO - if there's fly tipping in Communal land, would it fall under environmental health?

MH - No, if its NPH land it's their job to clear.

BO - This is where there is an issue, people are unaware of who is responsible. Also, going back to the clear recycling bags, will that be introduced to Parson's Mead?

MH - I'm not sure right now, we are trailing in far cotton first.

BO - in some of the parks, people have already started having BBQs and parties in the park and leaving rubbish everywhere. Our problem is that there's no ranger or warden working on the weekend. Can the ranger's number be shared so we can contact the working ranger in case we have an issue?

RA - I will speak to Pete and see if it can be shared.

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RR - I understand NPH is owned by NBC, why can't we work together and agree a set fee for fly tipping in Northampton.

MH - NPH have decide they will run under their own regulations for how they deal with this. We do try to work with them as much as we can though.

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LG - I'm from age UK Northampton and would like to thank you for letting me come to today's meeting. I have a question for MH, is there a fee for assisted collection?

MH - No, all of the bin men will be supplied the information of what properties need the assisted collection and will do so.

LG - Is that open for everyone?

MH - No, there is a criteria that must be met.

BO - As user of this system I can say it works very well.

4. RUTH AUSTEN - ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

RA - I'm here to give you an oversight of what my team covers and what we deal with in summary. I'm the manager of environmental health and licencing team here in NBC. In licencing we deal everything from taxi, retail etc., the list is long. Our team works with the Police, DVLA, and Trading Standards etc. around licencing issues. Another part of my team is the food safety department. We have over 200 shops registered for food hygiene in the town. Inspections occur depending on the type of property, this can be anything from 3 months to 2 years. This team also deals with food disease and infections. We work with the business to help them ensure that they are keeping under the set legislation standards.

Another part of my team is the Environmental Engagement Team. We deal with public requests/complaints around noise, smoke, smells/air quality. We also work with other partners to help improve the air quality in Northampton etc. The team also deals with contaminated land. My team works closely with the Neighbourhood Wardens team, should there be any enforcement needed around these issues. The

council also is responsible for dealing with stray dogs. We have contractor to collect and home dogs in kennels until the owner comes to collect them. We work with the traveller unit to help reduce issues of traveller encampment on NBC public land. Going back to noise complaints, we deal with noise complaints from neighbours and commercial properties. All these complaints and inspection requests have a set procedure to run through. We ask people to create a diary around the issues they are suffering from. This helps us with the build-up of evidence for when our officer go to do inspections.

We work under various pieces of legislation which helps up with the enforcement around the range of issues we deal with. Our enforcement ranges from warning notices and FPN's to full prosecutions.

We have 20 people who work in my team and all the above is the briefest way I can sum up what we do. Any questions?

AT - have you got any information that can be shared/leaflets?

RA - I will give some to JW to share

BN - With all your multi-tasking can you sort out Brexit! On a seriously note, what's the process if the neighbour has a noisy dog persistently barking?

RA - The EVN officer will be in touch to get further information before sending out a diary sheet to help build evidence. The next steps all depend on the situation and will be explained by the offer as work progresses.

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NS - Do you do anything around pest control?

RA - We don't have anything specific in our teams, but we have contacts with other agencies to help with these issues.

BO - when you touched up on the keeping of a diary, for noise etc. time factor, how long should they be kept for?

RA - 2 to 3 weeks or a set number of incidents. Depending on the problem.

BO - at that stage though it's their word against yours?

RA - True, but this information's helps our officer when it comes to recorded monitoring. Recorded monitoring can be done by the officer or through recorded equipment.

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BO - Can you confirm, when it comes to barking from a dog, it's only when it's perpetual barking, and it can be reported?

RA - Yes, if it is consistent, that when it can be an issue.

RA - Thank you for having me

5. COMMUNITY NEWS EXCHANGE

AT - issues have been sorted on our estate thanks to the police and NPH. Issues were around drugs/cuckooing

TM - I have a meeting tonight regarding the town council becoming a parish council so will update on a future agenda. I would like to congratulate and thank Roger as he got us funding for our veterans social club. We provide entertainment for members including days out. This group was put together as there was a need in the area. It was found a lot of people were lonely and had nowhere to go. This group help provide a place for them.

RR - I'm happy that I was able to get this funding. I went to this meeting that helped show me where we can get funding from to support community groups and project. Was a very friendly atmosphere and the whole meeting was very helpful.

LG - The whole project sound like a brilliant idea and it's a great job you're doing (TM and RR)

BN - I would like to make people aware that Cllr Jane Hollis has recently passed away. Not sure who was aware. She used to be a member of this forum. Also, Can Brian update us from the unitary meeting the other night?

BO - On Tuesday the meeting was to organise the individual groups/committees to help with the set-up of the unitary. There is uncertainty over when this will take effect as we are still waiting for conformation on our plans going forward from central government. Unfortunately, Brexit is slowing the process down. Election will be delayed 2020.

NS - Brian, didn't the south west have their own unitary up until 2010, then the government take it back and gave it to the parish?

BO - I'm not aware of that.

TM - I'm chair of a resident's association, I have a small amount of committee of members. The way I'm looking at it, we have enough to become a parish council, but why should we become one? I'm not sure it helps by make more parish councils.

DM - introduced himself and thanks the chairs for letting him come along. I work for Northants fire service. We have a goal where we go around houses that are highlighted as a high risk of fire in Northampton to do fire safety checks. I would like to know if anyone here has any questions regarding the extra services, like this, we do. Please let me know and I can come talk/do a presentation regarding fire safety.

AT - Can we have you do a presentation at a future meeting?

DM - Yes, happy too. I will share my details with JW to get that booked in.

RR - To let you know, the prescription system is changing. You cannot get your doctor to write you a prescription for some medicines that used to need a prescription. I would like **Jeanette Pidgen** to come along from the health service to explain why this has changed.

ACTION JW to contact Janette Pidgen to attend the next forum.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

AT - Can we look into changing the forum so it's not the last Thursday of every month?

ACTION JW to speak with MM to look into the possibility

7. SUGGESTIONS FOR ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Janette Pidgen regarding issues around getting prescriptions.

Dean Morgan regarding fire safety services.

Ask for PCC or a representative from the police to give updates on crime and stats in the town.

8. DATE AND VENUES OF FUTURE FORUM MEETINGS

23rd May - Jeffery Room

The meeting concluded at Time Not Specified