

Cllr Bernard McGuin – Annual Report 2016-17

This is my first year as a Councillor.

Meetings (Council)

I have only missed one meeting this year. I have attended every full meeting of the council. I have spoken in several debates. I spoke against the Proposed Local Plan because of the way the green belt around Lepton and Fenay Bridge would be developed. I also opposed the budget which has cut the library expenditure and will hit small libraries like Almondbury hard.

I have been and will continue this year to be a member of the Huddersfield Area Planning Sub-Committee. I have tried to defend areas from intrusive development.

The Huddersfield District Committee gave access to funding for groups in the area. I helped Lepton Scouts get a grant to repair their floor. I supported money going to repair the pavement around the library. The pond area, in Almondbury Community School grounds will be transformed thanks to all Almondbury councillors supporting this.

I have not missed a meeting of Neighbourhood Management in Almondbury. This is vital to attend as you get to know from council officers what is going on in areas of the ward.

Meetings (Other)

I attend meetings of Lepton Link, a community action group. I am Secretary of Friends of Lepton Library which supports a voluntary library that has been set up since the council closed the council funded library.

I have attended every meeting of Almondbury Library Friends Association monthly meetings and have supported them in their organising volunteers to help run the library since the council cut a member of staff. I helped them with problems over insurance for gardening activities. I support, and attend, the fundraising functions whenever possible.

The Tenants and Residents Associations have had me in attendance when I can make it. Unfortunately Highlands Tenants Association handed back their building because the committee could not get more people to join in. The Pop in Centre thrives and I was pleased to see a job club open in the Aldonley building.

I am also a member of Kirkburton Parish Council representing Lepton, and was pleased to help gain funding for the volunteer library.

The Lepton area is setting up a group called Lepton Vision to try to control what future development there will be in the area. I attend their meetings.

Case Work

Residents have contacted me on a range of problems regarding trees, parking, penalty notices, potholes, pavements, planning, funding issues, groups threatened

with closure., bin collections, noise etc. There are a lot of times when I have stepped in to try to support people having problems with Kirklees Services.

Campaigns

I have supported the town centre action group who have complained about the bus gates in Huddersfield town centre. With other colleagues we have managed to get the reasons for their introduction scrutinised. I feel it has been used to raise revenue for the council and it has had the effect of forcing some businesses to think about closing or moving elsewhere.

I am a long-time supporter of keeping our local hospital open. I have used my position as a councillor to support the groups campaigning for retention of services in Huddersfield. I am willing to help colleagues from all political groups in this. The successful appeal to overturn the decision to prevent the expansion of All Hallows School, at Longcroft, Almondbury, was a vindication of my effort to support them. I spoke at a Cabinet meeting of the council when they voted to stop their plans. The school's success in appealing against that means they will have a viable future.

I still believe that we should retain as many libraries as possible because of the therapeutic effect they have for local people. I have tried to encourage businesses to think about how they could use space in a library and provide funding to keep library buildings open.

Lastly the Police box in Almondbury has been taken away to be repaired. I am looking for local people to give it tender loving care! Thank you for all the letters of support for that campaign.

Coming Year

The council have decided to give each councillor an allowance of £3,333 to support community groups in Almondbury ward. Applications have to be filled in by the councillors. It is not a lot but if you need a small amount of money to support a community activity, please contact me.

Finally I share a surgery (we take it in turns) at Ambry's Café, in Northgate, on the last Thursday of the month, with my Liberal colleague whom, I am glad to say, has co-operated on several things with myself.