

Annual Report: Cllr. Lisa J Holmes 2012/13

Introduction

The past year has been a very busy and difficult one in many ways. Significant financial challenges for the council have meant that it has become increasingly more difficult to provide all the services I would have liked Kirklees to provide to our residents. This is just as frustrating for Councillors as it is to residents. But myself and Cllr David Hall will continue to fight for the best services possible for Liversedge & Gomersal.

Participation at Council Meeting Committees

Children's Services - I have personally had a very busy year. I became Shadow Cabinet Member for Children's Services. This is a role which is particularly close to my heart as I have a great belief that a good start in life is what every single child deserves, as it is this start which often determines the path their lives will take. Every child should enjoy living in a loving home where they are well cared for and where they are safe. Every child should have a good education and be given the opportunity to have choices when they leave school. Not all children will excel in exams but all children have skills somewhere. These skills need to be nurtured so that our young people become rounded and confident adults who are able to look after themselves and who have ambition to always try to be the best they can be.

I also sat on the Heavy Woollen Planning Committee and will continue this for next year.

Participation on Outside Bodies

West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service - I also became a member of West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority. I served on the Finance & Human Resources committees and this coming year I will serve on the Community Safety, Audit and Human Resources committees. The Fire and Rescue Service have seen financial challenges just as Kirklees has done. These challenges have been managed incredibly well and we remain as one of the top performing services in the country.

I continue to fight to preserve our green belt land. I will never vote in favour of digging up vast swathes countryside when there are so many brownfield sites that could be regenerated.

I am totally and utterly opposed to destroying 42 acres of beautiful green belt at Cooper Bridge and will continue to fight against anyone who wishes to do so.

Friends of Red House Museum, Gomersal - I was very proud to be asked to become The President of the Friends of Red House Museum, Gomersal. Everyone, has worked very hard during the past year under guidance of our Chair, Gordon Connor, to establish the friends group and we have now have a fabulously strong committee and have had a number of very successful events. The Friends of Oakwell Hall have supported us enormously and I can not thank them enough, particularly Nigel and Roger and also Deborah Marsland, Eric Brown and Mandy Tyas for the incredible support they have given us.

I organised a children's Valentine Craft Workshop and I am now starting to plan a similar event for Christmas as my contribution to help raise more funds for the group.

The Friends of Red House Museum is a fabulous example of a community coming together to save a cherished building and preserve it's heritage. I have enjoyed working with everyone enormously.

BBG Academy, Gomersal - I continue my work as a Director of BBG Academy as Chair of the Finance Committee. We are now only a matter of weeks away from opening our new building when we become a high school in September. After nearly 6 years of very hard work by a lot of

very dedicated people, we will finally have the community high school our area always needed and very much wanted.

Ward Work

Of course the past year has also involved a great deal of ward work and helping residents with problems is, and I am sure, always will be, my favourite part of being a Councillor.

Just as Kirklees is under increased financial pressures, so too are all of us living in Kirklees. I have noticed a significant increase in residents who need help with benefit claims and housing issues which I think shows this. Of course other areas such as pot holes, which seem to be on every road now, are something I am regularly asked for help with. Sadly we are unable to resurface all the roads but we are trying to fix as many pot holes as we possibly can as quickly as we can.

I wish to speak about the retirement of my very dear friend Cllr Margaret Bates.

Margaret served Kirklees for so many years and just about everyone seems to know her or know of her. I have lost count of all the times someone has told me about the time Margaret helped them. I have lost count of all messages of thanks and best wishes people have asked me to pass on. I think that these things alone are testament to what a loss Margaret's retirement will be to us in Kirklees. But Margaret's health has made this decision for her, and I am sure it was the right thing for her to do for herself and her family. I was fortunate enough to have two years working alongside Margaret on council and I could not have possibly had a better mentor after I was elected. I will miss working with Margaret very much and although we will keep in touch as friends, Liversedge & Gomersal and indeed the whole of Kirklees Council, will never be quite the same again.

I go into the new council year looking forward to meeting many more of the residents of Liversedge & Gomersal Ward.

I am also looking forward to another year of working hard for the ward for which I am still incredibly proud and grateful to have been elected to serve.