

Annual Report: Cllr. Andrew Cooper 2012/13

Introduction

Another busy year in my role as a local Councillor. What has dominated Kirklees is the impact of the draconian and disproportionate cuts being imposed on us by central government. There are no easy answers to dealing with these cuts without some serious impacts on local jobs and services.

Participation at Council Meeting Committees

I continue to enjoy Planning Committee meetings and have played a full part in the meetings and attended the site visits to enable me to make informed views on the decisions we take.

Ward Work

I was again a volunteer driver on the Green Party's Boxing Day Bus Service now in its 21st year. Thanks to Mr Andy Storey who also drove the minibus and Karen Allison who stewarded and helped put up the timetables on bus stops and also helped deliver thousands of bus timetables to local residents.

We have had another big push on the local clean ups of grot spots and this year have removed 3 skiploads of rubbish all with voluntary effort. We are also involving community payback in clean ups of some areas which is a positive thing.

I muck in and help with the community lead Growing Newsome events. I'm really impressed with the commitment of volunteers who obviously get a real buzz out of working together growing their own food and making new friends. The Potato Day and Seed Swaps were well attended with hundreds of people getting involved.

I have been a regular attender and contributor to Newsome Ward Community Forum which continues to go from strength to strength with well attended, informative and happy meetings.

Casework is the principal role for any busy Councillor and though I am not able to solve every person's problem it is often the fact that people have had their best shot at resolving an issue with their Councillors support which matters most to people.

In Armitage Bridge we have been able to help community efforts to build a flood barrier with funding from the Area Committee. This was an initiative that came out of the community which I am really pleased we have been able to contribute to.

In Springwood the traffic calming finally went in which was a relief after many years of trying to get this project off the ground.

Sorting out the parking issues on Dawson Road in Newsome was particularly satisfying with new parking bays on what was a constricted cul-de-sac. This issue had been hanging around for years and we needed to get 3 pots of funding together to get it sorted out. Thanks to Julie Stewart-Turner for her help with that.

Achievements During the Year

I was re-elected in 2012 for the 4th time and I am grateful to the electorate of the Newsome Ward for their continuing support for me and my colleagues. Elections are of course necessary and important for local democracy but can be unnerving when you have particularly well funded opponents. So when you're talking to someone on the doorstep and they give you a pat on the arm saying 'You'll be alright lad' it's very reassuring. Our share of the vote went up in the election and given the nature of the campaign against us this was particularly satisfying.

I am fortunate to be part of a good team in Newsome and Kirkburton Wards and my thanks as always goes to my colleagues in the Green Party team.

I continue to blog regularly on www.greeningkirklees.blogspot.com and tweet at @clrandrewcooper where I now have over 1200 followers