

Annual Report: Cllr. Kath Pinnock 2013/14

Introduction

I continue to enjoy the privilege of being one of the 3 elected Liberal Democrat councillors for the Cleckheaton ward. As part of the councillor team, I am committed to doing my best to stand up for local people and the town so that we get a fair share of Kirklees Council services.

Participation at Council Meeting Committees

I have attended all meetings of Full Council. I attended meetings of the Personnel Committee; Budget Implementation Group; Leading Members' Meetings; Spen Valley Area Committee; Oakenshaw Forum; Neighbourhood Management Group; Spen Valley Housing Forum; North Kirklees Countryside Forum.

Participation on Outside Bodies

I continue to be Chair of Governors at Whitcliffe Mount School. As Chair I have helped to appoint a new Head Teacher and to support the school through the challenge of the transition to an 11-16 school as well as being closely involved with the planning for a new school building on the site. The school continues to provide very good outcomes for all students and it is very rewarding to be able to contribute to such a successful school which has served the local community for over 100 years.

I am Chair of the Cleckheaton First Community Trust which decides on applications to the Community First Fund. Cleckheaton Ward has around £7,000 for each of the next 3 years for local groups who want to improve local amenities or services to the community.

I am a trustee at the Scholes Village Shelter which has continued to improve the facilities and is attracting an increasing number of users to this local community hall.

I attend local Tenants and Residents Association meetings to support and provide help and advice on local housing matters.

Ward Work

The Cleckheaton Ward Liberal Democrat team keeps residents informed and involved all the year round. We produce and deliver a FOCUS news leaflet which we deliver to the 8,000 homes in our ward at least 5 times during the year.

I use Twitter to advertise local events, record some of the activities undertaken and to comment on some political decisions of local and national importance. You can follow me @kathpinnock and I use #cleckheaton for local issues and events. I have a blog at www.kathpinnock.org.uk which I have used to let residents know what is happening locally.

With my colleagues, I have campaigned on several major issues affecting local people which are a consequence of the significant reductions by Government in funding for local government:

- Our Save Spen Pool campaign was organised and led by Ward colleagues Cllr John Lawson and Cllr Andrew Pinnock, and with Spen Valley Liberal Democrats including Richard Farnhill. Spenborough Pool was opened in 1969 and is built of concrete and is coming to the end of its life due to the quality of concrete used at the time. The Pool is on the Council's at risk register. There is an estimated need for between £8 million and £10 million to replace the pool with a modern facility. Over 4,500 people signed the petition which was submitted to the Council in July 2013. The

Liberal Democrats followed this up by proposing that £4.8m be set aside in the Council's capital plan to fund a replacement. This was successful. So, currently, that sum is allocated for that purpose and will remain so unless the Council decides otherwise.

- I led a strong campaign in early 2013 to ensure that the Council uses the office space in Cleckheaton Town Hall. This has had a very positive outcome with Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing staff moving into the offices in Cleckheaton Town Hall in May 2013. Virtually the whole office space is now in use which benefits both the future of the town and the future of our Town Hall.

- I have continued to work closely with the local Chamber of Trade to get improvements to our town. The Chamber are very active and have done a huge amount to promote our town. So it was great to be able to allocate funding to the Chamber for flower barrels which the Chamber then planted. The result is a fantastic flower display.

- Westgate derelict site was cleared in 2012 and a planning application approved for 217 housing units. However, the manufacturing business in the centre of the site has to be re-located before development can start. There have been protracted negotiations about this but so far no solution found to which both parties can agree.

- Tesco announced in 2012 that they were not going ahead with the building of a new store for Cleckheaton. Obviously that left derelict buildings in Tesco's ownership on the site off Serpentine Road. As ward councillors we had a meeting with senior Tesco property managers along with an officer from the Council and the Chamber of Trade. We were unanimous in asking the Tesco representatives to get their site cleared and developed. Since then the derelict mills have been demolished and the site secured. The site is on the market for over £2m. My hope is for an early development on the site for houses and some retail which may then become a spur for the development of the other town centre derelict site off Horncastle Street.

- I have continued to help the Scholes village Shelter and Wobbly Tots to improve their facilities.

- With my ward colleagues, I have helped residents in the Pyenot Hall Lane and Marsh area to find a solution to a difficult traffic problem. The work to prevent main road volumes of traffic using these narrow Victorian residential streets has been done and the overwhelming majority of residents are delighted with the result.

- With my ward colleagues we have prioritised the re-surfacing of Wyke Lane in Oakenshaw which was in a poor state and identified by council officers as being one of the worst road surfaces in our ward. The work has been done and is a big improvement.

- The lack of gulleys on part of Bradford Road in Oakenshaw has been a constant problem. Work has been done to improve the problem of standing water in wet weather but has not resolved it.

- In Hunsworth large parts the Recreation Ground were permanently flooded and unusable. We worked with the Council to have new land drains installed. We have then worked with residents in Hunsworth to set up a Friends of Hunsworth Rec to get further improvements. We have held initial and enthusiastic meetings.

- We have initiated and then helped to form a Friends of Scholes Rec. Working with the residents, the Church, the school, and the TRA we have commissioned Groundwork to draw up

plans for a major improvement to the area. The initial response in the village has been overwhelmingly positive. Over 100 new trees have been planted and plans submitted for the funding of a circular path;

- I have continued to campaign with local residents against the plans by Redrow to build houses on virgin green fields round Lower Blacup farm which is one of the oldest buildings in Cleckheaton dating back to the early 16th century. All three ward councillors attended the planning appeal to make the case for residents. Unfortunately, the Planning Inspector has given Redrow permission to build. We will remain vigilant on this issue.
- With my ward colleagues I have ensured that we tackle speeding traffic in Oakenshaw and Moorside / Moorbottom by the use of a Speed Indicator Device.
- I have continued to work with the Governors, staff and students at Whitcliffe Mount School.
- Mann Dam and the viaduct - with ward colleagues and the area committee we are pursuing an aim of creating a countryside park and restoration of the viaduct. As a small part of the project, a community artist was commissioned to engage with interested local people. The artist did so and has then created a leaf trail round town and leading to Mann Dam.
- Currently, though not strictly in last year's activity, we are campaigning hard to keep our Library. So far we have had nearly 2,000 signatures on our petition within 3 weeks!
- I have helped hundreds of local residents over the last year.

This is just a snap shot of the work Cleckheaton Ward Liberal Democrat councillors have done over the past year. Please get in contact if you would like more information.

Members Surgeries

Cleckheaton Ward councillors hold drop-in surgeries at the Town Hall and Scholes Church Hall every Saturday morning; at Oakenshaw Church Hall once a month; and at Turnsteads Community Centre.

It is always good to meet residents of Cleckheaton and other wards who come seeking advice and support. We are always pleased to be of help.

Training and Development

On use of social media; planning; communicating with residents.