

## **Cllr Karen Allison – Annual Report 2015-16**

**Year Elected: 2014**

**Ward: Newsome**

The past 12 months has been as busy as ever with no two days being the same, you never know what is coming your way until the phone rings. This past year has provided me with the opportunity to meet and support some of the fantastic people who live and work in the Newsome Ward. The decision's that we make affect so many are now made harder by Central Government cuts and budget restraints imposed on not just the Council but on the wider community. The Council has seen some of its worst cuts in services in years but by working together we can still help those who need it most.

### **Council Meetings**

As well as attending Full Council I am also an active member of:

Child Sexual Exploitation and Safeguarding Panel

Corporate Parenting Board

Huddersfield District Committee

Licensing Panel

Licensing and Safety Committee

Newsome/Almondbury Advisory Board

Regulatory Panel

### **External Groups**

I am on the Governing Body at Hillside Infants and Junior School, Newsome. Our school has gone through quite a few changes within the past 12 months. We now have a wonderful new Head Teacher and Deputy Head, both of which are dealing with day to day challenges head on. We are very fortunate to have such fantastic hard working staff and a great bunch of pupils.

### **Council**

**Neighbourhood Management Group** – it is important that different agencies dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour are working together to give a co-ordinated response to problems in our area. By its nature these meetings are held in private to ensure intelligence can be provided and acted upon.

**Tenants and Residents Association** – I work closely with the Edale Ave TRA as well as the newly organised TRA at Holme Park/Bishops Court flats, Berry Brow.

**Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing** - I feel that I work closely with the staff at KNH and attend Estate Inspections whenever requested, by attending the Estate Inspections you get a better feel for what is happening on what can be challenging areas of our community.

### **Casework/Community**

Much of my time is taken up with helping local people with issues on a personal and individual basis. This can range from problems with benefits to pot holes, pigeons and rats. I have a wonderful gentleman who loves to ring me up to tell me where all the new pot holes are in Newsome and then takes great pleasure in ringing me back to tell me the pot holes have been filled!

#### **Casework highlights have included:**

**Newsome Mills** – constant problems with vandalism and security of fencing that I am reporting and monitoring

**Skip Hire** – issues are environmental and pollution related. We are working closely with Kirklees Environmental Health and the Environment Agency on this issue.

**Local plan** – residents of Newsome are under threat from developers wanting to build on areas such as gardens and allotments. We are making strong representation on this issue.

**Newsome Bowling Green** – We are constantly battling with the developer on this matter and are keeping members of the Bowling Club informed of progress.

And as ever we have our fair share of fly tipping, overgrown vegetation, noise nuisance, street lighting, parking issues to deal with – the list is endless!

#### **Other Voluntary activity**

During the school holidays I enjoy helping out at the KFTRA breakfast club and the Lowerhouses Lunch Club. It isn't about going in with your 'Councillor hat' on, it's about mucking in and doing what is needed from serving food to washing up.

In Newsome we have a wealth of talented people especially the younger people. I am lucky enough to help with the Newsome Scouts Panto, to see those children sing and act and just basically have a fantastic time on stage is heart-warming, for many of our children this is the one and only time they will step foot on a stage. It's not just the youngsters who have immense talent but people of all ages as I found out in October when I had the honour of officially opening the flower festival at Hall Bower Chapel and I have to say that was spectacular.

### **Surgeries**

I have joined Cllr Andrew Cooper at the regular Advice Surgery held on the first Sunday of the month at the Monkey Club, Armitage Bridge.

## **Training**

I have attended a variety of training and Member development sessions including:

Illegal Money Lending Awareness Training

Licensing Training

Online Exploitation and Safeguarding

Safeguarding Training

Because the law changes so frequently and new issues are popping up all the time it is vital that Councillors are trained about these matters and how best they can be addressed.

## **Something you might not know about me:**

I do have a life outside Kirklees Council, I am proud to be a part of the Wardrobe Team for Huddersfield Light Opera as well as being Wardrobe Mistress for Longwood Amateurs and the Chairperson for my own society, the Spot On Musical Theatre Company, I recently costumed 42<sup>nd</sup> Street followed by the Yorkshire premiere of Betty Blue Eyes. I am currently working on Annie Get Your Gun. I would like to say that I still have an allotment but sadly that was one casualty of 2015.

One of the highlights of 2015 was opening the new Bee Apiary at the Kirklees Colleges Animal Centre at Taylor Hill, I realise that been up close and personal to 1000s of bees is not liked by many but to me it was a great honour as I find bees to be both fascinating and interesting.

And one final quote to leave you with that represents my philosophy on life.

“You must be the change you wish to see in the world”

Mahatma Gandhi

1869 - 1948