

Mayors Diary Boroughbridge Oct 2nd 2017

Just reflecting on the past two weeks and how quickly they have flown by, not to mention the hours of council work put in recently. This week once again dominated by proposed developments that threatens to blight our community.

Thanks to the hard work of some of our parish councillors a public meeting was organised at Boroughbridge Primary School last week to hear firsthand about the proposals to build a huge sugar beet refinery plant on the edge of the town. I was asked to chair the meeting which saw the two presenters from Al Khaleej Sugar struggle to give plausible answers to the public's questions. I hope I was fair by allowing as many people to speak as possible. In my opinion the environmental impact would be a disaster, the visual impact would be catastrophic, the HGV traffic would be horrendous and their business plan was floored at every level, as one member of the public pointed out had it been on Dragons Den it would have been swiftly dismissed. I am sure they got a very clear message. I cannot see how North Yorkshire County Council can morally sell this company the land and Harrogate Borough Council can pass plans for this monster following such a show of objection from the public.

Another concern to me that came from the meeting was that people are not clear about the different levels of local government. Parish, Borough, and County Council. Unfortunately, the council closest to the people in the community have the least authority, and that is the Town (Parish) Council. That said we all work very hard to make our voices heard and support all our residents as fairly and democratically as possible. As part of a wider community of parish councils we all met a couple of weeks ago to discuss and support each other in all local issues.

Another major concern that is blighting our community at the moment is the rise in anti-social behaviour. This small number of young people appears to be growing in confidence and becoming more offensive than ever. I have been in close contact with our police force over the past few weeks and last week I met with them to discuss ways in which this can be tackled. A plan is being put together but for obvious reasons I cannot divulge. However, one immediate outcome is a series of police open surgeries. This will be an opportunity for the public to meet with local Police on Friday 27th October 10-12 am and on Wednesday 8th November 6-8pm. They will be held in the rear of the tourist information centre on Hall Square, Boroughbridge. This will be a great opportunity for public to seek crime prevention advice and discuss local issues. Just to note a large number of the police resources are deployed East of the county dealing with demonstrators. We also discussed the very poor service from the dedicated 101 phone service to which I have made strong comments to the Police Crime and Commissioners office. Whilst on police matters I would like to quell a couple of myths. Firstly, the police station is not now scheduled for closure until later next year, and early next year we have another PCSO joining the team, so greater coverage than over recent years. Also, the towns CCTV cameras are still fully operational.

I was delighted to welcome Y5 pupils from Boroughbridge Primary School to our council office last week as part of a project on persuasive writing. They also took the opportunity to ask me lots of questions about the council. I hope I answered all their questions and they were not too bored.

Pauline and I ended the week @ Ripon Cathedral. Kind invitation of the Yorkshire Agricultural Society for their Harvest Festival service. A lovely way to end a very busy week. And lastly the fair will be back in the Back Lane car park from Thursday 5th of October till Sunday the 8th of October