

REPORT FROM COUNTY – from Valerie Metcalfe

First, thank you to those residents who voted to re-elect me in the County Elections last month. I will continue to do my best to represent all interests within my Division.

Hopefully, you will have seen that the Highways Department is continuing to fill in a lot of our potholes and certainly those on the main roads. I need to let you know the link to the new pothole page where you can report potholes which you think need attention:
<http://www.essexhighways.org/Potholes.aspx>

Also, it is looking likely that Roding Road will be re-surfaced next year, together with the section of the A121, down the hill from Buckhurst Hill into Loughton High Road. I shall keep pressing for this.

Following the recent success of a Residents Parking Zone in Meadow Road, Loughton, I now have my sights on more of these zones where residents are badly affected by commuter parking to the point where there is no room for residents cars in their own roads. This particularly applies to areas near all our three tube stations in Loughton, Buckhurst Hill and Roding Valley. I am grateful to those residents who are assessing for me the views of fellow householders as to the best way forward. This will inform what decisions need to be made and will only solve problems rather than create different ones, if it is what the majority of residents want.

Some schemes may be incorporated into the Buckhurst Hill Parking Review which is allegedly due to go out to consultation in affected roads quite soon. I am attempting to see if Local Highways Panel monies can be used for the purpose of Controlled Parking Zones which would speed up their progress both in Loughton and Buckhurst Hill.

I know that the bridge repairs in Roding Lane are causing extreme frustration and delays at certain times of the day and I have been urging Highways to bring forward the completion date.

I have been told that the current anticipated date for completion is the autumn and I am continuing to badger ECC Highways on the importance of this being treated as very urgent.

One exciting bit of news is that the parents' consultation evenings have now been held for our secondary schools to form a consortium of sixth form provision. The vast majority of parents have told me they are keen for this to happen, and our local head teachers are working in co-operation to ensure this can be up and running for September next year. I continue to be deputy to the County Cabinet Member for Education, and I am doing all I can to make this happen.

An issue that I have heard residents complain about is the speed of traffic in some residential roads. This is a safety matter and Essex County Council has revised its highway regulations so that where it is thought appropriate, 20mph zones can be implemented. This might, for example, be in side roads where children are walking to school, or where motorists generally go too fast. If you think this applies to your road, please contact me as I have raised this at the Local Highways Panel and reserved some limited funds to implement necessary schemes.



DISTRICT COUNCIL

Local Plan

The local plan will set out where development may take place in the district in the next thirty years. Your local Conservative councillors continue to play an active role in this. Since your parish councillors attended the EFDC drop-in session at the Roding Valley Hall last September the Parish Council held its own surgery for residents and subsequently your local district and parish councillors and a parish councillor have taken part in three workshops. The Parish Council submitted its own response to the Issues and Options Consultation. Buckhurst Hill Cllr Sylvia was one of the district councillors who called in EFDC's decision to hold the consultation period during the school holidays and had it extended so that you were not deprived of the opportunity to respond. Subsequently she has challenged EFDC officers for not including the council's own "opportunity sites" in the consultation.



*District Councillor
Sylvia Watson*

Licensing Committee

We share the concerns of residents about the extension of licences to serve alcohol in premises in residential areas. Previously it was very difficult for ward councillors with day jobs and similarly residents to oppose these because the hearings were held during office working hours. In the last year Cllr Sylvia Watson supported Cllr James Hart in having this reviewed and now evening meetings of the licensing sub-committee are being trialled.

EFDC House Building

The district council's housing directorate proposes to build 23 houses in Buckhurst Hill to be let at affordable rents. They intend to build on six sites where the existing garages, generally unused, will be demolished. Four of the sites are behind Hornbeam Road and adjacent to the allotments. The fifth site is behind the shops in Loughton Way and the sixth one is behind the flats at the junction of Loughton Way and Pentlow Way.

Your local Conservative councillors are concerned about intensification of development in an area where there is already pressure on transport, school places and parking. We will be seeking the views of residents near the proposed development sites and welcome your comments.

PARISH COUNCIL

Halls consultation

Your local Conservatives had promised that if we gained control of Buckhurst Hill Parish Council we would consult residents about the future of the Roding Valley Hall and the Woollard Centre. The Parish Council will be keeping that promise in the next few months when it will include a survey with the summer edition of the parish magazine distributed to every resident. Please look out for this and respond to make sure your voice is heard.



*Parish Councillor
Aniket Patel*

Library Move

Buckhurst Hill Parish Council will be moving from its offices near the bottom of Queens Road to the library near the top of the road in the middle of August. The existing offices are being offered for sale or rent with a view to paying off the associated borrowings - keeping another promise made by your local Conservatives. Not only will the Parish Council's costs be reduced, but the library's opening hours will also be extended.

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