

FOCUS



**June
2022
Thelwall**

www.warringtonlibdems.org.uk

LOCAL ELECTION SUCCESS

In the Local Elections, the Liberal Democrats gained over 220 new councillors in England, Scotland and Wales - the biggest net gain of any party. There was also success for the Alliance Party in Northern Ireland. Party Leader, Sir Ed Davey said, "Millions of people are fed up with being let down and taken for granted by the Government. They have had enough of seeing their energy bills go up and their standard of living go down." 'Partygate' and the totally unacceptable behaviour of some Conservative MPs gave an additional boost for people to turn to the Liberal Democrats as their local champions." The next local elections here will be in May 2024.



Parish Council 2022/23



Cllr John McQuilliam has been elected as Chairman of the Parish Council for the next year. Cllr Mark Browne was chosen as the new Deputy.

Council approves Local Plan

Warrington Council has voted in favour of submitting the Local Plan for consideration by an Inspector at an 'Examination in Public'. This will take place later this year. Liberal Democrat Councillors voted against this and were annoyed that the Labour Council had ignored all the comments from the public made during the consultation.



Cllr Cliff Taylor who is Chairman of the South Warrington Parish Councils' Planning Group said, "We oppose the current Plan because the housing targets are still too high and exceptional circumstances have not been demonstrated to justify Green Belt release. There is little to compel developers to use brownfield sites before Green Belt is released, and there is a lack of social and physical infrastructure. There is greater dependency on road travel generating congestion and pollution and insufficient concern for meeting climate change aspirations.

Developers were unhappy that the housing requirement had been reduced. They will be there at the 'Examination' with their well-paid consultants and lawyers. The South Warrington Parishes plan to be there with our planning consultant and barrister to fight for local residents who oppose the proposals."

Six56 decision opposed

There was uproar at the decision by Warrington's Labour Council planning committee to give premature permission for the vast Six56 logistics site on the Green Belt next to the motorway.

Cllr Sally Chisholm says, "There is no rail access to this site and the low skilled jobs created there will steadily disappear with increased automation. We asked the Government to 'call it in' to review this decision.



Now we learn that the Government has refused to call in the application and are laying the blame on the Labour Council. This makes us very angry because this is a decision of regional importance on which the Government should decide. The Eddie Stobart decision was turned down by the Government and we strongly believe this one should have been turned down following this precedent.

Only the Liberal Democrats can be relied on to fight for the Green Belt."



Ryan Bate to step down from Council

Grappenhall Councillor Ryan Bate will be stepping down this summer to take on a new job in the USA. He will be joining the British International School in Washington.



Ryan says, "The opportunity to develop my teaching career in the political capital of the world was too good an opportunity to miss. Having to resign from my role as a Borough Councillor after six years and after ten years on the Parish Council made it a tough decision. I've relished the chance to campaign on some really important challenges like protecting the Green Belt and getting the right Local Plan for Warrington. I've worked with some fantastic people and organisations and I will miss this."

HS2 link to be scrapped?

We are hopeful that the 'Golborne Spur' to link HS2 to Scotland will be scrapped.

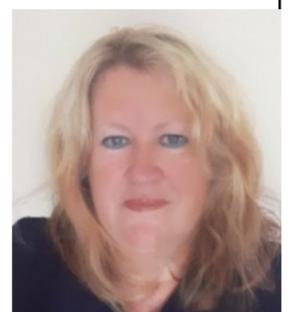
Cllr Ian Marks says, "This would have gone through Lymm and most people think it is a waste of money. We understand that the Secretary of State for Transport has given 'categorical verbal assurances' to local MP Sir Graham Brady that it will be scrubbed from the HS2 Bill. Let's hope he is right."



Work on swing bridges

Peel Ports has finally set a date of next April to start refurbishment work on the swing bridges. The first one is Stockton Heath.

Cllr Wendy Johnson says, "We have spent years campaigning for this. The bridge will be closed for up to nine months when the work is carried out which will cause much disruption. Residents of Thelwall are more affected by the Latchford bridge and we will be pressing for this next."



Anger at Thelwall Heys proposal

Local residents and councillors are angry at the proposal to build 310 houses at Thelwall Heys.



Cllr Bob Hignett says, "This has been proposed in the Local Plan. It was not part of the 2019 version of the Plan. A 2004 Public Inquiry found that it should not be developed because it functions well as Green Belt.

The area is much valued by local residents for its peace and quiet and environmental value. It should not be lost. Access to open space is beneficial to mental health. Local knowledge confirms that the area is prone to flooding during periods of heavy rainfall."

Thelwall Book Swap

A book swap started during the pandemic has now been made permanent.

Cllr Helen Speed says, "Many liked the scheme at 'Inches' in Barley Road. I took the idea to Chaigley School and the Head Teacher kindly offered to provide one. Matthew, one of the pupils made it, helped by the woodwork teacher. It is now erected at the entrance to Diamond Park off Barley Road and proving very popular. Chaigley has offered to make more Book Swaps. Please let me know if you would like one near to you one?"



ACTION

Tackling Potholes

At Warrington Council's Budget Meeting, Cllr Ian Marks asked the Council to do a trial with a new pothole repair machine.

It can be leased for short periods and repairs a pothole in eight minutes which speeds up the fixing process by 700%. It has good green credentials because fewer heavy duty vehicles are required. Ian comments, "I am delighted to say the Council has agreed to a trial and I look forward to hearing the results."



Warburton Bridge Toll

Peel is still intent on increasing the toll on the Warburton Bridge from 12p to £1. Warrington Council and Lymm Parish Council have strongly objected. Cllr Bob Barr says, "We are waiting for a hearing date for the Toll Order. Lymm South Councillor Graham Gowland will be there to present the Parish Council's objection to the increase."

Urban Splash Joint venture goes bust



The Urban Splash joint venture to build 228 eco-friendly homes on a greenfield site at Grappenhall Heys has gone into administration. Cllr Mark Browne says, "The plan was approved by the Labour Council's planning committee last June despite massive opposition from residents.

The design is completely out of character for the area. Fencing went up at Christmas but no work has started on the site. The joint venture with a Japanese company with Homes England having a 4% involvement too, has now called in the administrators. The future of the development is now uncertain."

Air Quality

Air quality is of increasing concern as knowledge about its effect on health becomes clearer. Cllr Wendy Johnson says, "There are three main causes. Fine particulates PM2.5 which include road brake and tyre dust and ash from burning wood, PM10 larger particulates found in dust and smoke and Nitrogen Dioxide from burning fuel.

If you visit www.addresspollution.org and put in your postcode, it will give you a free air quality report for your address. We must stress we are not at all sure about the accuracy of the results but it gives exposure to the problem."

Climate & Ecology Group

Several months ago the Parish Council passed a motion declaring a Climate and Ecology emergency. Cllr Louise Fernyhough says, "We set up a Working Group led by Cllr Mark Browne to explore ways to take actions to reduce carbon emissions, protect the environment, and encourage active travel. Let us know if you would like to get involved or come and visit our stall at the Rose Queen on 18 June."



Platinum Jubilee bench

As part of the Platinum Jubilee, there is to be a commemorative bench. Cllr Ray Fisher asks, "Please let us know if you have any ideas where you would like this to be located?"



Verdict on Warrington Council

The Borough Council has seen some contentious debates and arguments since the Conservatives became the official opposition following the May elections.

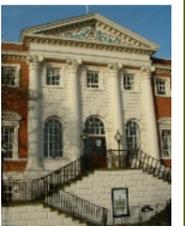


Lib Dem Group Leader Cllr Bob Barr comments, "Arguments over the Council Budget, borrowing, the Local Plan and who should be Mayor have all caused some anger with the Labour group.

They have used their majority to push through decisions and ignore all the opposition groups.

The Liberal Democrats have been asking for a more consensual approach to many issues and have sought to find common ground between groups, for what are generally long term decisions. However on almost every occasion the Labour Leader has refused to compromise.

One request from the Liberal Democrat group has been actioned with cross-party agreement. That is to take £1 million from reserves in this financial year to assist those suffering most from the cost of living crisis."



HELP NEEDED!

We have a team of volunteers who deliver FOCUS to you. Every now or then we lose someone due to age, health, job / family commitments or moving out of the area. Please can you help out by delivering our FOCUS community newsletters to an area near where you live?

Your FOCUS Team – can we help you?

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