

FOCUS



Summer
2021
Thelwall

Thank You!



www.warringtonlibdems.org.uk

Planning reforms undemocratic

The Government is set to bring forward proposals for planning reforms later this year.

Cllr Bob Hignett, says, "The reforms would remove requirements on



affordable homes, take power from local communities and hand it to wealthy property developers instead. That means more homes for the wealthy to maximise developer profits, and fewer homes people can actually afford.

Liberal Democrats want a community-led approach to planning, not a developer-led approach. That is the only way we can deliver the homes people need and want. A recent poll by the Local Government Association found that 8 out of 10 residents say it is important to have a say on all new homes in their area."

Grappenhall Heys

The controversial scheme for the last stage of the Grappenhall Heys development has been given the go-ahead by the Labour controlled Borough Council despite local opposition. Grappenhall Councillor Ryan



Bate says, "There were many objections from local residents who feel the design is ugly, too dense and out of keeping with the local character of the area. Parish Councils also objected. Residents who attended the meeting were concerned that they had not been given enough time to make the case for refusal."

Need for pause on Western Link Plan

Liberal Democrats are calling for a pause to the £212 million Western Link by-pass. This would link the A56 Chester Road to the A57 Sankey Way. Cllr Sally Chisholm says, "I question whether the benefits outweigh the huge cost. In a post-COVID world, is it needed? The Council says it will ease congestion and unlock land for development. The final business case still needs submitting to the Government."

Thank you very much for your support at the Local Elections in May. The Liberal Democrats won all 3 Lymm North & Thelwall seats on Warrington Borough Council and held all the 8 Thelwall seats on the Parish Council. We also held both Grappenhall seats at the Town Hall. In the Lymm part of the Lymm North and Thelwall ward, we won all 6 Parish seats.

Boundary Commission proposals

The national Boundary Commission is proposing that two Borough Council wards move out of the Warrington South

Parliamentary Constituency into

Tatton. We would still be serviced by Warrington Council but have a different MP. This is to make the number of electors in each area more equal. Cllr Mark Browne says, "We oppose



this because it lacks commonsense. Grappenhall would remain in Warrington South but Thelwall would move to Tatton. If you travel south down Knutsford Road, the right side would be in one constituency and the left side in another.

The problem is that the variation in the numbers allowed in each constituency is too tight. We will fight this but are not optimistic of victory."

'Bus Back Better'

Liberal Democrats welcome proposals to increase bus usage.

The Council has just completed a month's consultation 'Warrington Bus Back Better'. This links in with the Government's national bus strategy.

Cllr Bob Barr says, "We need to find ways of reversing the trend away from public transport. There is the potential to gain grants to help improve services. The national strategy stresses the need for cross-border co-operation. This is very important because of the current difficulties of travelling out of Warrington to Manchester and Cheshire."



Revisions to Local Plan

A revised version of the Local Plan for Warrington is being prepared. This will

replace the first version that went out for consultation in 2019 receiving over 3000 representations.

Cllr Cliff Taylor who is Chairman of the South Warrington Parishes' Planning Group says, "We welcome this major review which recognises all the changes that have taken place in the last two years. It is good that Fiddlers Ferry is now being considered for brownfield development. We hope this takes pressure off the Green Belt but we must wait and see."



Cllr Ian Marks who is the Deputy Chairman adds, "The likely timetable is:

- Sept / Oct 2021 new proposal to Council
- Late 2021 public consultation
- Early 2022 submission to Planning Inspectorate
- Late 2022 Examination in Public
- Adoption in 2023"



Six year extension for Stockton Heath Recycling Centre

Warrington Council will keep the Sandy Lane Recycling Centre open for at least another 6 years.

Cllr Wendy Johnson says, "This is a relief and it is good that the Council has listened to residents. The site is not satisfactory but we need a site somewhere in the south of the town. We will be pushing for the Local Plan to identify a better location."



Opposition to toll increase

Liberal Democrats are opposed to the proposal to increase the toll on Warburton Bridge to £1. The Ship Canal Company (Peel) plans £6.5m of improvements to approach roads, footpaths and the tolling system.

Cllr Bob Barr says, "Improvements are welcome but it is outrageous that motorists should be asked to pay all these costs. The bridge was built across the River Mersey to allow trade and the toll was approved in 1863 by an Act of Parliament. When the Canal was built, the Mersey was re-routed so the toll is now over a dry ditch. The charge is obsolete and we are calling on all neighbouring MPs to mount a campaign to have the toll removed completely.

The public consultation ends on 20 August and I urge residents to visit the Warburton Toll Bridge website and voice their objections or mail warburtonollbridge@peelports.com."



ITV interviewing Lymm Councillor Graham Gowland at a protest by the bridge

Action on Speeding

One of the most frequent concerns raised by residents is speeding on our roads. Cllr Sally Chisholm says,

"The Parish Council has been working with the police and has now identified twenty places across Thelwall and Grappenhall where the Speed Indicator



Device will be placed on a regular basis. Our Parish Warden will move SID around these hotspot areas. The aim is to prompt people to keep to the speed limits and improve safety on our roads. Sites include several points on Stockport Road, Thelwall New Road, Stanton Road, Knutsford Road and Weaste Lane."

ACTION

Device will be placed on a regular basis. Our Parish Warden will move SID around these hotspot areas. The aim is to prompt people to keep to the speed limits and improve safety on our roads. Sites include several points on Stockport Road, Thelwall New Road, Stanton Road, Knutsford Road and Weaste Lane."

Campaign for Bridge painting

There is still no action by Peel on painting the three swing bridges over the Ship Canal.

Cllr Helen Speed says, "As a member of the public, I asked a question at the June Warrington Council Meeting. After many missed dates, I wanted to know the latest proposals for carrying out painting and any upkeep that needs doing. I was told the Council is still waiting for Peel to tell them about the plan for traffic disruption when work is underway. Stockton Heath bridge is the first one on the list. As well as asking for pressure on Peel, I asked officers to find out about the possibility of a new bridge. I won't be holding my breath!"



Improving our Environment

Hedges and Shrubs



Cllr Ray Fisher says, "Hedges and shrubs overhanging footpaths remain a problem. Warrington Council's policy is to 'prioritise shrubberies that are overgrowing and obstructing a pathway.' We must hold them to this if owners do not prune them back."

Gulleys

Cllr Mark Browne says, "Warrington Council only have two gully cleaning machines. Before the autumn leaves, they need to acquire another one!"

The wider campaign

Cllr Louise Fernyhough adds, "It is vital we do something now on green issues. We are working locally to support the Liberal Democrats national 'Green Recovery Plan' to save our countryside, green every home, clean up our air, revolutionise transport and kickstart the switch to green energy.



The Climate Summit in the autumn is a chance for the UK to show leadership in tackling the climate crisis. The record this year is poor. The Government scrapped the Green Homes Grant making heating our homes more costly and fuel poverty a greater risk. They have also slashed grants for electric vehicles."

Trail needs upgrading

The Trans Pennine Trail has surface problems and suffers from poor drainage making it impassable on many days. Cllr Wendy Johnson says,

"We urge Warrington Council to invest in this important asset which is used for leisure or a route to work or school. People use it for walking, running, cycling and in places horse-riding. The Council must search for grants to help fund the cost. £££



One bad section is between Bradshaw Lane and Stockport Road. There is banking on either side which prevents water from getting away and results in pools of water."

Tory Government fails the elderly

Yet again, Social care has been kicked into the long grass by the Tory Government.



Cllr Helen Speed says, "When he took office, the Prime Minister promised he would fix the crisis in social care once and for all. Yet in the Queen's Speech there was only a nine word statement that 'proposals would be brought forward'. During the Coalition Government, Liberal Democrats forced this issue onto the agenda. The Dilnot Commission was set up but work abandoned when the Tories took control in 2015. Cross-party talks are needed to provide care and security for the elderly."

SAD NEWS

Your Councillors were extremely sad to hear about the death of Janet Richards who was Clerk of the Parish Council until her early retirement on ill-health grounds. Janet was a dedicated public servant and a good friend. She will be sorely missed. Our condolences go out to her family.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Thelwall New Road shop

Progress is being made with the redevelopment of the old shop on the corner of Alderley Road. Three of your councillors are pictured in front of the old eyesore.



Pooh Bin

Cliff Taylor reports that Ferry Lane is getting a new pooh bin supplied and serviced by the Parish Council.

GP Consultations

Many patients are concerned that even when COVID is less of a problem, it will still be very difficult to return to face-to-face appointments with your GP. We have checked this out with the NHS and been assured that physical appointments will take place although there will still be a place for the 'E-Consult' system.

New Hospital

Liberal Democrats strongly support the proposal to submit a bid to Government for a new Hospital in the town. A working group has been set up to prepare the business case. Last autumn the Government announced there would be 40 new hospitals and named 32 of them. We are competing to be one of the remaining 8. A final decision is expected in the spring.



Accounts not signed off yet

Warrington Borough Council's accounts for 2017/18 have still not been signed off by the

External Auditor. Cllr Ian Marks says, "I have lost count of the number of promised sign-off dates that have been missed. There are several areas of disagreement taking far too long to resolve. It is costing council tax payers a large sum to pay for experts and is not doing the reputation of the Council any good."



Your FOCUS Team – can we help you?

Warrington Borough Councillors		
Bob Barr	2A Dane Bank Road	750910
	CllrBob.Barr@warrington.gov.uk	
Wendy Johnson	37 Clearwater Quays	637398
	CllrWendy.Johnson@warrington.gov.uk	
Ian Marks	80A Whitbarrow Road	753051
	CllrIan.Marks@warrington.gov.uk	
Thelwall Parish Councillors		
Mark Browne		07711 886644
Sally Chisholm		269047
Louise Fernyhough		860128
Ray Fisher		602591
Bob Hignett		07850 979992
Wendy Johnson		637398
Helen Speed		07788 437524
Cliff Taylor		265636