

SEPTEMBER REPORT FROM CLLR CHRISTINE FORD NFDC
FOR RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

The month of August is traditionally a quiet one for local authorities, NFDC included, accordingly a large number of officers and staff are encouraged to take annual leave. This means that business doesn't usually pick up until the beginning of September, although constituents continue to ask for advice, which can be delayed and leads to frustration for both constituents and councillors !

Meetings however continue and I summarise my activities during the past few weeks.

Wed 5th Aug. Cabinet: Attended meeting of Cabinet to which were presented two reports in particular 1) A strategic review of sheltered housing accommodation, which will result in a greater emphasis on helping people to remain in their own homes, with help as required. Then phasing out, or making more adaptable, the majority of sheltered housing schemes currently with resident wardens. Report 2) concerned provision for Gypsies, Travelling people and Travelling showpeople. The conclusion was that NFDC provides adequate sites for their needs as assessed.

Tues 18th Aug. Refuse and Recycling Working Party. It was accepted that due to changed circumstances in the collection and processing of glass (from the bring sites) it will now be possible to collect mixed colours and it will no longer be necessary to sort jars and bottles according to colour. This will not affect the revenue received from the processor, and will cut down the number of journeys the laden collection vehicles have to take to Southampton.

Food waste collection was also discussed and put on the back burner until further information from other authorities, who currently offer this service, has been collated.

Thurs 20 Aug. Cabinet Briefing. Attended the confidential briefing this afternoon.

Fri 21st Aug. Environment Portfolio Briefing. Attended this to hear proposals under the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act (2005) (CNEA) which are to be brought to my Panel at the next meeting.

Wed 2 Sept. Cabinet. The Cabinet approved the Waste Management Strategy 2009 - 2013. An excellent report and well worth reading.

Thurs 3 Sept. Tour of NFDC Public Conveniences. This was a mixed experience !! The object was to assess the condition and view the various designs of old and new loos ie. What works and what turned out to be unsatisfactory. I always talk to officers and the long suffering Cllr Edward Heron, Portfolio Holder for the Environment, (who agrees with me wholeheartedly) that Ringwood is an urgent priority for a rebuild. The other members of the visiting party took minimal persuasion needless to say when they had carried out their inspection. Fordingbridge loos came out on top of the quality assessment.

Thurs 10th Sept. Environment Review Panel. Morning. A very meaty agenda today. Starting with a representation of Romany Gypsies who have had issues with the NFDC about the graves in council cemeteries. There have been some serious problems on both sides, but now after several meetings with the Romany community, the Panel was asked to look at revising some of the cemetery regulations and to provide a separate section of Eling cemetery for their sole use. There was a long discussion and amical compromises were reached to satisfy both NFDC and the Gypsies. The amendments will now go before Cabinet..... as will....

Proposals regarding abandoned supermarket trolleys (another of my campaigns) After discussion it was unanimously agreed that the CNEA (2005) should be adopted in respect of this problem. If after a given period of notice to the supermarkets that one/several of their trolleys appeared to be abandoned, but was still not retrieved, then the NFDC would round it/them up and charge a release fee, similar to the scheme operated at Eastleigh Borough Council.

The Panel also received an update on what progress had been made on the implementation of plans, following the NFDC Green Audit undertaken during the past 18 months.

Coastal matters were also discussed and reports submitted. These concern the North Solent Shoreline Management Plan and the Poole and Christchurch Bay Shoreline Management Plan.

Evening: Group meeting. To discuss policy matters.

Sat 12th Sept. Monthly Surgery. Cllr Thierry, Cllr Rippon-Swaine and I were delighted to be joined by Desmond Swayne MP for this month's surgery. There was a fair number of people who came along with items for discussion. Mr Swayne said how much he had enjoyed the session and hoped to repeat visits in the future.

Mon 14th Sept. Full Council. A short meeting this time with nothing very controversial to report. The main excitement, which caused a flurry on the opposition benches, was the announcement that sun beds are to be gradually withdrawn from the District's leisure centres. This has been a controversial subject for a few years now with some members from both sides of the chamber holding similar views. The opposition has been campaigning against them for a long while, due to the data and publicity about skin cancer.

Thurs 17th Sep. Corporate Overview Panel. Attended this meeting which reviewed among other things: IT Strategy for 2009/13, Workforce Strategy 2009/2012, and Alternative catering arrangements at Appletree Court.

Christine Ford
30 September 2009

My colleague Cllr Treleaven has important news regarding the Inspector's report on the District's Core Strategy. This will be brought before a meeting of Council Members this morning at 0930 at Lyndhurst.