

COUNCIL MEETING 14 OCTOBER 2003

REPORT OF COUNCILLOR EDWARDS – ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

In the last few months I have started to appreciate fully the tasks that are ahead. The Environmental Policy and Services portfolio is quite diverse but I am starting to better understand the portfolio and feel that I am developing a strong working relationship with the departments. I thank them for their time and effort and their prompt response to my requests.

Environmental Health

The best value review took place in the summer and was concluded in September. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved in particular Gill Knellar as the work involved was immense and the time given should be commended. The whole department should be congratulated on the result.

Waste Management

Recycling for flats is being progressed and I thank all those Councillors who responded to my call for assistance in highlighting flats that could use this service.

In addition consideration is being given to increasing glass collection across the Deane and the financial implications of this are presently under consideration.

We do need to make sure we maximise all opportunities to remind people about the recycling service. I am conscious that not as many bins are being put out for collection now and would encourage all Councillors with this service in their area to encourage use within their wards.

Litter/Street Scene

The Litter Hotline will be implemented soon and the extra funds will also lead to an additional member of staff for the street-cleaning programme.

I have also requested that a report is prepared to introduce Litter fines in Taunton Deane and this report will be progressed in due course. This needs careful consideration and we need to look carefully at the towns and cities where it has been successfully implemented already so we can best assess the results and cost. I would hope that those that litter our environment would take heed of the warning and therefore the need would not arise for this scheme however increasingly I doubt that.

We are also giving consideration to an Environmental Warden scheme to operate within the Deane using volunteers to be our eyes so that we need to properly maximise our

cleaning resources and find the areas of real concern this is all part of our aim to keep Taunton Deane Crisp and Clean. This idea will be progressed in due course but initial discussions have been very positive and I am convinced there are already sufficient individuals that care about their community enough to become a warden.

River Tone

I wish to go on record at Full Council and thank Mike Rigby at Cheddon Recycling and waste for his assistance in cleaning the River Tone. However this was only a short-term measure and I am working with the Environment agency and others to try and realign funding and introduce a specialist firm which will clean the tone on behalf of the River Tone partnership. Very much a working group not a talking shop, action being the aim. This is being progressed

Public Toilets

I have request a review take place of all Public Toilets in the Deane so I can better assess the needs of the communities these facilities are in. The North Street Toilets in Wellington are a priority and it is my aim to either refurbish or probably rebuild this facility. It is difficult to imagine how they could have ever have been left for so long and allowed to get into such a state.

Out of Hours Noise

This is an area, which needs careful consideration. I have asked for a report to be prepared and this will better assess the options that are open to us. I am fully aware from correspondence that this needs addressing. We will however take action against any individual who is creating a true nuisance.

Flooding

The single property flood fund is now in place and we have had a number of applications for grants which are being assessed at the moment.

Councillor Mark J Edwards