

Hello Alex

I am the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group on Brentwood Borough Council. Whilst I understand you are a non-political organisation that deals in figures and the balance of residents vs. Councillors there is, however, a fundamental difference between the philosophy and culture that we, the Lib Dems in Brentwood, follow in representing our residents to that of most other parties. Our approach to our residents in keeping them informed of what is happening is far more hands-on than others.

To that end, I attach two leaflets recently put out (by hand) in the area of Pilgrims Hatch I represent as an illustration of the point we are making.

We would highlight that:

- In every ward we represent we visit, personally, our residents. Not all the time, probably once or twice a month, but we do knock on every door and if people are not in we leave a card explaining the purpose of our call and our contact details. In one calendar year we aim to complete each entire ward.
- We put out information leaflets reporting back what we are doing on behalf of our residents and decisions made by the local authority, along with any other agencies, that will impact their current and possibly future lives. These communications are delivered once a season (quarterly). Again, we have our contact details on them for reference.
- On receipt of a request for assistance we respond in a laid down, well established way. We report the issue to the relevant council officers and inform our resident, either by telephone or email, of our actions. Once the relevant department has responded, if it is a positive outcome that we know our residents will welcome that's fine, we can then go back to our resident. If the response is a negative and the council is adopting a position that either the resident and / or ourselves disagree with we then challenge that decision and offer an alternative view / way of resolution and often the outcome is then altered to accommodate our residents' wishes, or at least some of them. This approach is time-consuming but has the maximum effect of myself and my members representing our residents to the very best of our ability in the knowledge that the outcome is the best that can be achieved.
- Social Media. Email exchanges are, of course, a quicker way of contacting residents than physically visiting them but unfortunately, a substantial number of our elderly residents in the year 2022 still do not have the benefit of home

computers or, in many cases, the knowledge of how to operate one, let alone what may seem to many, the complexities of using a smart phone.

However, when we do receive emails from our residents we do then ask if we can use that email address for information exchange going forwards. In this way we can build up an e-mail bank of residents that we can contact more easily. The ultimate position would be that everybody was contactable by email and it certainly would make our elected responsibilities much easier, but I still believe that personal contact goes a long way in establishing a relationship of trust and understanding between the elected member and the resident.

- Commitment by elected members to residents. I currently lead a group of eleven Councillors and of them, nine work full-time. This necessitates a lot of out of hours and weekend work to be undertaken by members to ensure our commitment to our electorate is fulfilled.

The above functions are in addition to our responsibilities in attending Council Meetings, where our knowledge must be sufficiently proficient to provide challenge / scrutiny of decisions taken in order that we can be satisfied our residents are receiving the best value possible. Attending planning site visits, Civic functions, Councillor briefing sessions and, where necessary, on-site meetings pertaining to specific issues, are also a regular requirement.

Our Local Development Plan is on the threshold of approval by the Government Inspectors and will see great expansion of our Borough through the building of a further 8,000 homes. However, due to the lateness of the LDP submission the Government are now insisting that preparation of a new plan be entered into immediately, requiring a very intense working group programme to put forward a fresh set of plans with due regard to the new environmental pressures, climate change, renewable energies, coastal defence, drainage, etc., not to mention the lobbying of Government departments for infrastructure improvements and the many meetings that this will inevitably demand.

There are also Government White Paper demands on local authorities to re-organise. In our case, being located in the southern part of Essex, this may well introduce another level of bureaucracy by assembling local authorities (up to six in our case) to lobby together for Government funding. This takes officer and member time to operate and staff. There are also Government and County Council demands upon our authority to reduce congestion and monitor air quality. Once again, these efforts are time-consuming.

The above statement is one submitted in the hope that it will satisfy those making the decisions on Councillor numbers that there is already a substantial amount of time and effort put in to serving existing residents within our borough and with the upcoming introduction of 8,000 more homes this will place an intolerable strain on existing councillors. Therefore, we offer this paper as evidence to support our

proposal of the need for 39 councillors to be considered in the 2024 Boundary Review.

If you have any questions or queries you wish to raise, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Cllr Barry Aspinell.

Attachments : Information Leaflet for residents in Orchard Lane area.
Information Leaflet for residents in Ashwells Road area

Councillor Barry Aspinell
Leader, Brentwood Liberal Democrats
Ward Member for Pilgrims Hatch
County Councillor, Brentwood North Division
(Brentwood North, Pilgrims Hatch & Shenfield wards)

Tel: 07958 623233

Email: barry.aspinell@brentwood.gov.uk

ORCHARD LANE



Including Ash Close, Vale Close, Pilgrims Close & Hulletts Lane

How many problems can one road have?

That would be :

ROAD CLOSURE CHAOS

DEER SHOOTING

TELEPHONE MAST APPLICATIONS

SPEEDING TRAFFIC

So what have your local councillors done on your behalf?

Road Closures. Councillor Barry Aspinell took action through the County Council to inform Cadent that (1), no notice was given for these works that impacted so heavily on local residents, (2) that no notice was given to himself, as your County Councillor and (3) that he was not advised of further road closures by utility companies planned to take place at the same time.

He immediately contacted the Head of Highways to point out that this situation would be intolerable as he had discovered other works planned for the same period closing Ashwells Road in both directions, closures in Crow Green Road and the Ongar Road would have caused total chaos. Thankfully, Highways agreed and these other works were postponed until a later date. Cllr Aspinell has asked for closer monitoring of planned maintenance work by these stat companies to be co-ordinated in the future so that it reduces inconvenience placed upon local

You can contact your Pilgrims Hatch Lib Dem Councillors on :

Cllr David Kendall

07768 667824

david.kendall@

brentwoodlibdems.org.uk

Cllr Barry Aspinell

07958 623233

barry.aspinell@

brentwoodlibdems.org.uk

Cllr Vicky Davies

07885 332512

vicky.davies@

brentwoodlibdems.org.uk



www.brentwoodlibdems.org.uk



Brentwood Liberal Democrats

If you contact the Liberal Democrats and their elected representatives they may use the information you've given to contact you. By providing your data to us, you are consenting to us making contact with you in the future by mail, email, telephone, text, website and apps, even though you may be registered with the Telephone Preference Service. You can always opt out of communications at any time by contacting us or visiting www.libdems.org.uk/optout for more information go to www.libdems.org.uk/privacy.

Deer Shooting. Councillor Barry Aspinell was contacted by residents of Hulletts and Orchard Lanes to say that people with rifles were shooting deer in a field near their homes. Obviously, this was of great concern and those residents were quite rightly fearful. He contacted County Council and the Police and the deer stalking was curtailed.

Whilst deer shooting is a legal pursuit there are strict rules on where and when this can take place and the field that was being used was far too small and far too close to residents not to mention the horses in the adjoining field. Councillor Aspinell said "I believe the people concerned have been advised that this should not happen again."



Telecommunications Mast. Most of you, we are sure, will have been informed by Jennifer, our local resident planning guru, that the application for a communications mast on the corner of Orchard Lane / Hulletts Lane and the Ongar Road has been refused. Both Councillors Vicky Davies and Barry Aspinell spoke out against this at the Planning meeting.

Barry has contacted the telecommunications company concerned to suggest alternative siting in the near vicinity but has been informed that they no longer have an interest in this area and will not be appealing the Council's decision. Well done all concerned.



Speeding. Your councillors have been contacted by concerned residents regarding regular speeding along Orchard Lane. This is far above the 30 mph limit. Cllr Barry Aspinell has applied to the County Council for a speed survey to be carried out in your road so that we can gather some data for Highways to take appropriate action.

Bus Service

The infrequency of our once excellent bus service has caused much consternation to our local residents that rely on this service to access the Town and the station.



Following suggestions by residents, who have patiently stood in the cold and rain for up to an hour for a bus that does not arrive, Barry has contacted the County Council suggesting a change to the timetable if the service cannot be restored to its former reliability.

The excuse of Covid restrictions and lack of drivers is regularly given for the break in service but it does not help when, after waiting an hour or so, two buses arrive at the same time!

At a recent Council meeting, your Liberal Democrat councillors put forward a proposal for reinstatement of our Police Station, with cells, but this was turned down by the Tories. We have an on-line petition running explaining in detail our proposals. If you feel inclined to support this idea, please sign.

Please sign our petition today calling for the reinstatement of Brentwood Police Station by going to our website :

www.brentwoodlibdems.org.uk

ASHWELLS Road CROW GREEN Road DAYS Lane

How many problems can one area have?

Unlicensed Scrap Yard

Road Blocked due to Rugby Matches

Speeding Traffic

Lakes drained

Stream Diverted (Allegedly)

Blocking of Public Footpaths (across fields)

So, what have your local councillors done about this?



Dozens of frustrated and angered residents of these roads contacted their local councillors regarding the issues highlighted above. Councillors Vicky Davies and Barry Aspinell were contacted over burning of plastic and rubber causing noxious fumes to local homes affecting local livestock and youngsters playing rugby locally.

Also, Vicky and Barry were informed that large grab lorries were frequently entering the site in Ashwells Road and dumping off all sorts of scrap and old domestic appliances. They were also informed that large holes were being dug into the site and materials of unknown origin were being buried.

Vicky and Barry contacted various officers between them and put pressure upon them to visit the site to see for themselves what was happening. Environmental Health made a visit and the Licensing Department at Brentwood confirmed there was no license to tip or to store scrap had been applied for. Planning Officers from both Brentwood and County Council have visited the site and all have spoken

to the landowner of the consequences of continuing with these actions.

Hopefully, commonsense will prevail and the use of this site as some form of scrap yard will cease.

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Rugby Club visitors block road. Again, very angry residents contacted Vicky, David and Barry regarding Ashwells Road being completely blocked to through traffic by irresponsible visitors to Old Brentwood's who decided to park on both sides of the road, creating mayhem.

The verges have sustained extensive damage due to this parking. Vicky and Barry contacted both Brentwood and Essex Councils and the threat of a possible loss of license to Old Brentwood's was put to them if this irresponsible parking was to continue. Essex Highways are contacting the club regarding the destruction to the verges and Barry has also suggested that the club should approach Ashwells, who at the moment have an empty car park for them to use until any development of Ashwells takes place.



Success Old Brentwood's obviously took to heart what was being suggested and a similar event at the Club resulted in a full car park at Ashwells and not a single vehicle parked on the road. As a temporary measure this is fine, but a long term solution must be sought by them.

Speeding Traffic. Concerned residents in all three roads have contacted ward councillors regarding speeding traffic. Our County Councillor, Barry Aspinell, has requested a speed survey be carried out in the roads to gain the evidence required to take appropriate action to reduce this obvious menace. We cannot forget that three lives were lost in Ashwells Road a few years back due to a speeding vehicle.

Drained Lakes. Last year the fishing lake was being dredged by heavy machinery which caused a lot of environmental damage, including verges surrounding the green triangle. The resident concerned was visited by members of the Planning Enforcement team, Environment Agency, County Council enforcement and was asked to make all appropriate reparations to the site, including the planting of trees and other enhancements. This followed pressure from your local councillors to the appropriate authorities. Now Councillor Aspinell has been approached by residents in the area that a lake has been drained and the stream feeding it has been diverted on private land in the Beads Hall Lane area. Again, we have asked for County Officers and the Environment Agency to inspect and advise. Also, local planning enforcement officers have visited and advised the landowner of existing planning prohibitions on the site. We will keep you apprised of any actions they recommend.

Blocking of Public Footpath (across fields). Local residents have also informed us that the footpath travelling from Crow Green Lane to Beads Hall Lane has been fenced off. Barry has informed County Council and our Public Rights of Way team are visiting the site. We will inform you of any progress once we receive it.

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