

The Diary.

The local elections on 4th June were a great result for my party, the Conservatives but were they really so good in our County Council. We now have some 56 Councillors who are Conservative from a total of some 73 County Councillors, I am not sure how healthy that is particularly if we consider how Central Government has had absolute control for some 12 years and look at the mess the country is in now. From Wellingborough's point of view we have not had so many Tory councillors for many years so I will be badgering them on your behalf for an increase in the piece of the cake we get in our area. I expect more money on the roads in our rural areas and increase on educational funding.

On the subject of roads, together with our Ward Officers we have carried out the biannual "Ward walk" of the three villages. Not surprisingly the issue of potholes and road surfaces was the premier one, we will therefore be pressing our new County Councillors to get the repairs done as soon as possible. Ecton have requested that the High St has another chicane and a speed limit of 20mph! I know this has been discussed before but I think it is worth reviewing again. We also identified the issue of some graffiti in Ecton and we will get the graffiti team out to remove the offending trash. If anyone sees the people doing graffiti, please report it to the police, or to me.

In Sywell we noted that in Ecton Lane the road surface continues to deteriorate and as although it is the same as many in the villages, resurfacing is becoming a matter of urgency and safety, but this road will also need traffic calming measures as it is surely a rat run race track at peak times. Again I will press the County Councillors for action soon! In Sywell we also noted the excellent work on the Playing Field where the trees and shrubs purchased with some of the Borough Councillors Funds looked to be healthy, congratulations to the team of workers involved in the project.

Mears Ashby continues to get my great respect for everything we expect in rurality but the biggest issues continue to surround the arguments of the quality and relevance of developments in the village. In particular in regard to the partly completed house at the corner of North St, we will be discussing what action we can take to make the site safe but I am afraid it is going to remain an eyesore for the time being. Glebe Rd was also discussed at some length as the increase in traffic going to Beckworth's is substantial, we will need to be aware of this situation going forward.

Council Meetings

The Zero Base Budget groups of which I am a member of three different sectors continue to meet to strive to reduce costs to the Council and prevent very significant increases in Council Tax. The three groups I along with one other councillor are currently reviewing include Information Technology (IT), Planning with Development Control and Business Support Group (BSG). We are now on the second round of meetings and whilst I cannot disclose any details yet I am optimistic that we can achieve significant savings without making staff redundant. I always hated making people redundant during my business life and from my point of view I would consider it at least a partial failure on our behalf.

We also had annual meeting of the Wellingborough Partnership in the Tithe Barn, the Partnership comprises six discrete sections:

Better: Reviewing the environmental, cultural, transport and leisure issues.

Children and Young Persons: Addressing the needs of young people in the borough.

Healthier: Concerned with improving health.

Neighbourhoods: Working to improve the quality of life for all residents

Prosper: Economic development of the local economy.

Safer: Improving safety and reducing crime.

These are all laudable aims I am just a little concerned about the "nanny state" influence, at the end of the day are we as parents not responsible for many of these issues! Nevertheless if we as a Council can help improve each of the above, our community will thrive and I believe will become better place.

Public Inquiries

The Public Inquiry into the application at Wellingborough North is drawing to a close as I write. I made my statement to the enquiry following two of my Member colleagues on Tuesday 9th June. In the May Missive I mentioned that I had garnished financial details of applicant which were hardly favourable to a "partnership" in the current economic climate. It was interesting to see the reaction of the QC for the Appellant who had suggested that my colleagues had been "rehearsed", I was able to tell him that I had not been and that the comments I was about to make had only just been made public. He listened intently and when I had finished some ten minutes later requested an adjournment to "take instructions", after the recess he attempted to induce me to agree that the research I had done was not thorough or sufficiently "in depth". I was able to convince him that a loss in profit terms

did not really need much explaining providing the accounts met the proper tests. After a few more questions he retired, somewhat gracefully and I was excused.

CPRE Annual General Meeting.

I attended the above in the Great Houghton, Village Hall as usual with these type of meetings there was formal business to get done but once this was completed we had a very interesting presentation by Trevor Foss. Trevor is a farmer from Ravensthorpe, farming some 200 acres of land, he gave us most colourful picture of farming today. Most of us will be aware that the farmers have, over the past many years, suffered from major fluctuations in the selling price of just about every product they grow and significant increases the cost of fertilisers fuel etc, so margins have been "squeezed", probably to the bone. But I had not realised some the bureaucracy involved in making what appear to be fairly straightforward claims, under the laws of the EU, to for example obtain approval for set aside / headlands it can take many months to get approval but our growing season is probably less than the time to get the approval!

Sywell Wood

I have had meetings recently with the Forestry Commission. The boundary hedge which was destroyed has been temporarily replaced with Post and Rails and the hedge will be replaced in the autumn. In the last missive I was not able to mention that there was a Management Agreement between Sywell Aerodrome Ltd and the Forestry Commission. I have seen the vast majority of the correspondence at the F.C. and have been shocked at some of the wording and threats in the letters from the Consultants for the aerodrome, one letter intimated that in the event that there was an aviation accident in the woodland that the FC would be held responsible, that is absolutely scandalous. The Woodland was not considered an aviation obstacle in the Public Inquiry and current calculations show that it is not an aviation obstacle now. Under this agreement the company had the right to "coppice" the woodland, I am not an expert in woodland management but the advice I have had from professionals would doubt whether the woodland was coppiced properly, however further "work" continued after the contracted work was "signed off" by the F.C. That additional work has, I am told, almost certainly destroyed the root cultures required for proper regeneration. I am assured there will be no further felling /coppicing in any of the Sywell or Hardwick Woods for the foreseeable future.

Sywell Aerodrome Joint Consultative Committee

In the last Missive I wrote that the Sywell Aerodrome Joint Consultative Committee (SAJCC) will meet at Sywell Aerodrome on 28th July, I also stated that "Everyone is welcome". After discussions with colleagues I have somewhat reluctantly agreed that the first meeting will not be open to the public and will be a "getting to know you session" and the election of an Chairman. All further meetings will be open to the people. Apologies for any confusion! If you wish to make any complaints in regards to the aerodrome they should be addressed to Carol Wilson at WBC on Tel 01933 231902 or to me.

Sywell Aerodrome Ltd

The company recently made a request to WBC to allow retrospective planning permission for "turnaround" sections at the ends of the runway. The company states "*the authorised parallel taxiway is unlikely to be constructed before 2010 due to cost considerations*". The company quotes drawing No J98084/C2/Gen/010 Rev1, the drawing is dated April 2009. This is truly interesting since I photographed the runway with the turnaround sections in October 2008!! I wonder how the construction company managed to build the sections without proper drawings? But perhaps just as importantly the Company appears to be in financial trouble despite all of the claims at the Public Inquiry that Runway was funded from an approved Business Plan, which according to the Inspector was "not challenged" and therefore would not require increased air traffic movements to fund it. Was the Company being honest in its claims to the Inquiry or not? Finally how can this application be considered when the new runway is not in the place as defined by the Secretaries of State?

As ever if you have any queries please contact me and remember, I cannot help you if I do not know of your problem.

Jim Bass

(Councillor for Sywell, Ecton and Mears Ashby, Wellingborough Borough Council)

e-mail: jhbass@btconnect.com Tel+44 1604 647594 Mob +44 7711 103816