

District Council report October 2022

Cllr Joanna Sweett

Brown Bins – I voted in favour of the new Brown Bin collection scheme. Throughout 18 months of detailed negotiations to take the contract back in house the collection rounds have been deteriorating. Suspending the garden waste collection is obviously regrettable but sadly the Council needs these months to ensure the rest of the service is fully back on track, drivers increased and trained and the rounds fully staffed, street and toilet cleansing back the previous standards ( though I will continue to lobby for a higher standard than previously.) The charge I'm afraid was inevitable as the brown bin is a discretionary service and no other Devon Councils provide it for free. That said I did raise at FC that there needs to be a system for those that need the service but simply can not pay. I will continue to lobby for this. The contract is due to pass back to SHDC October 4<sup>th</sup>- Finally!

Quote sent to last weeks Totnes Times.

" Finally we have a way forward after 18 months of negotiations with FCC and intense planning to take back the refuse collection contract. I do have very real concern for those that need a garden waste collection but simply cannot afford an extra £49 annually! Last week's mini budget further magnified the accelerating financial trenches in society . I raised at full council that we need to waive the fee for those that can't afford to pay for the garden waste collection. I will continue to lobby for this. South Hams officer did an excellent job means testing for grants during Covid, I see no reason for this adapted skill to expand to help those on low incomes moving forward in this cost of living crisis. "

Freeport CPO- I did not feel I could vote for a CPO for the Langage site. There are too many variables at this point and no guarantee that it will benefit business and jobs for the South Hams. That said the Green Hydrogen plant at the site a big positive.

Fusion- Disappointing news regarding the business case for the Totnes Pavilion leisure centre. -Will update

Skatepark-There was a well attended public meeting for residents and Clubs. There were the obvious concerns raised though the project has general support. Further noise mitigation is being designed it by way of bunding/banking prior to submitting a planning application.

Wildanet and Airband- Currently Wildanet are installing fibre broadband underground in Bridgetown (Totnes and Berry Pomeroy). They will not be installing any overhead cabling so will not be erecting any poles. Those erected by Airband have been incredibly unpopular. Airband have still many more poles to instal throughout Totnes and Berry Pomeroy (and the District) if Fibre can progress before poles are installed then CDS ( Connecting Devon and Somerset could possibly cease that contract. If Town and Parish Councils wish they could contact CDS to make this point.

Road Closure Concerns -I was informed last week that Wales and West Utilities intend to dig up the road in Fore Street in High Street from the Arch down for planned gas works. This will result in access disruption and road closures. The town council met with Wales and West a couple of weeks ago and two of us Totnes Chamber of Commerce members were informed at a traffic Steering group meeting last week. **By** chance met with Wales and West and Devon County on Fridays they were discussing the necessary traffic management plans through the town centre. The repairs are an upgrade to the gas pipes to ensure they are adequate to supply green hydrogen to homes in the future. This is a good thing. The bad news is it will entail roadworks and they working on a traffic

proposal to put to Devon county council with the work taking place between the 4th of January and the end of March! Sections of the road will need to be closed so access to the top of the High st (where no works are planned ) will still be severely disrupted throughout. Wales and West and DCC are aware of issues past and present i.e. that deliveries need to access and market vehicles and as far as possible they are hoping to use a traffic light system to let essential traffic through. None of this is set in stone as yet as the traffic proposal is not finalised but obviously both traders and residents need as much time to plan. The need for stakeholders to be involved in decisions rather than informed of them afterwards is imperative.

I am pushing Wales and West to run a consultation with the relevant stakeholders at the very soonest. Obviously, traders will be concerned after the consequences of the similar works carried out in 2013.

Wildanet the fibre broadband company who are also planning works in the town centre have been informed by DCC to use the same timescale as WWU.

Civic Hall Improvements- I am receiving concerned comments. Many members of the public are wanting the improvements to be for community use and a return of use of the hall for music and theatre events.

Acorn/Baltic Wharf- Design plans are inching forward.