

OWPC 24/9/08 BOROUGH CLLRS' REPORT

I attended Special Crime & Disorder Forum meeting on Thursday 11 Sept. which was arranged to receive a presentation from Chief Constable Sarah Thornton. She answered several previously submitted questions, including that of our Vice Chairman. That question asked why national figures showed TVPA precept in the mid range but number of officers among the fifth lowest : a less than clear answer was given but when I sought clarification was told that a large number of civilians were employed specifically to allow officers to get out on the streets. This did not was not readily accepted! Antisocial behaviour remains highest public priority, car crime is down, burglary fluctuates but mostly down. Parking remains a high NAG priority in TV and when I pointed out that this was now decriminalised in RBWM and no longer a police responsibility, she said that TVPA still dealt with criminal parking on yellow lines etc.

I then moved on to the latter part of the DALC meeting. The new Chairman conducted things at a pace and the meeting finished earlier than usual. He is specifically asking for ideas to increase the profile and activity of DALC and on its procedures.

Cllr Wiles and I have both attended training seminars on Overview & Scrutiny and new rules for Codes of Conduct & Standards Committee procedures. The first, by an outside consultant, indicated that RBWM O&S does not use its teeth or set the agenda as actively as it could, and the revised Code being adopted by the Borough seems to have a few flaws which need clarification.

As a member of the Local Development Framework Working Group, I attended a lengthy Part 2 meeting on Thursday 18th Sept in which taking action on GOSE's demand for a Green Belt Review was a key issue.

I was one of a relatively small number of Cllrs who attended the Battle of Britain civic service and wreath laying in Windsor last Sunday.

I gave a low key presentation to the Lib Dem group on Monday about the NATS proposed flight path changes which might affect Maidenhead.

At last night's Council meeting I seconded a motion that the RBWM follow up the outstanding success of Team GB cyclists in the Olympics and Paralympics by further promoting the use of cycles and improvement of relevant facilities (safe routes to schools, cycling proficiency training, etc etc) in the interests of health (especially in regard to overweight children) and reducing road and parking congestion. I also highlighted the wide range of recreational benefits and ride to work options if appropriate end of ride facilities were made available by forward thinking employers. The vote was unanimous in favour.

At the same meeting I also spoke in support of a motion by a Councillor who teaches at Eton College seeking action to stop night flights because of the detrimental effect upon children's sleep and learning ability. I pointed out that this was just one of an enormous number of issues which the Borough, colleagues and I had been campaigning about for very many years, and invited him to join the Borough's Aviation Forum. Almost all supported my comments although one representing a Windsor Ward but living in Old Windsor thought night flights did not bother him and that I was too vigorous in Heathrow bashing. The vote was unanimous in favour.

I commented at the end of the Planning Notes that street lamps are to be renewed in Church Road, Queens Close, Meadow Way and Follett Close from 13th October. There will be more of them than at present and will better illuminate junctions and the currently ill lit road down to the Parish Church. Efforts to get St Peters Close included in this year's programme have not succeeded despite fact that this might encourage more shoppers to park there.

The Clerk circulated a newspaper cutting recently about larger extensions being allowed under Permitted Development Regs from 1st October. As this could cause tensions and confusion, I have asked Cabinet Members and Officers to produce some explanatory leaflets and run teach ins for RBWM Cllrs - and also suggested that something similar be arranged for Parish Cllrs. I am informed that the Head of Planning will be visiting groups of Parishes to explain the new PD Regs.

Malcolm Beer.