

Annual Parish Meeting Report 2019 County Cllr Anne Wight

Thanks very much for allowing me to speak today regarding some of my wider work as a county councillor.

It has definitely been a busy year in Ivinghoe Division. While I know that we have had our fair share of traffic disruption and diversions, potholes, water mains repairs, and sewer works which have been challenging locally to say the least, I would like to focus today on some of the things I work on which are often outside the scope of the monthly parish council meetings. As I try to attend as many of my monthly parish council meetings as I can, and provide written reports to the clerk, I will try to make this evening's report more about my wider activities within the county council.

For those of you who may not be aware, I am on the Corporate Parenting Panel, which is actually one of the more rewarding parts of my job. Corporate Parenting is all about helping to ensure that Bucks County Council provides a continually improving service to our looked after children in care. Children and young people who, for one reason or another, cannot live with their parents are some of the most vulnerable and have a unique place in our society. In Buckinghamshire we take our responsibility to be corporate parents seriously and commit to treating our Looked After Children (LAC) as any family would, by keeping them safe, meeting their health needs, ensuring that they have as positive an experience as possible whilst in care, by improving their life chances and supporting them to meet their full potential.

Based on the most up to date research we know that our children are very likely to have experienced significant trauma and abuse prior to being Looked After. They will also be at greater risk of sexual exploitation, going missing, offending and are likely to experience greater challenges with education. Therefore, it is essential that our Looked After Children receive the best possible services from us as corporate parents in order to support them to achieve the same outcomes and have access to the same opportunities that we would want for our own children.

It is essential that our children's experiences of care addresses the disadvantages they have faced rather than compound them. Good local

service provision is likely to improve our children's life opportunities, be better value for money and contribute to good performance.

As a corporate parent my aim is to help the children and young people of Buckinghamshire who are currently looked after to thrive and reach their full potential. Unfortunately, this is becoming ever more challenging, as more and more children nationally are coming into the care system.

The Corporate Parenting Panel meets quarterly, and I am privileged at that meeting to discuss the needs and wishes of kids in our care system directly with two of our older children in care representatives. Being in the system themselves, they are in a good place to let us know what we are doing well and what we can improve on. Their personal experience of the service means that I can help make sure that we get it right for the kids, whether they are in institutional care, or placed with foster families, or whether they are in the Stay Put program which allows them to remain with their foster carer until age 21, if that is mutually agreeable.

One of the most rewarding events we host each year for the kids is the annual BBQ, at which each child is presented with an award for a personal achievement, whether it be developing a new skill, settling in quickly into a new foster family and environment, or coping well with a new set of challenges. As many of our kids have special needs as well, it means a great deal to them to know that their progress and achievement has not gone unnoticed, but rather is being celebrated and acknowledged through the annual award ceremony.

There are also entertainers on hand, along with good food, an ice cream van, a fire engine and crew, bouncy castles, games and a guest speaker. This year we had Ashley Jean-Baptiste, who was himself in care and came through the system to go on to earn his degree from Cambridge and who is now a BBC presenter.

Another part of being a corporate parent for me is to make sure that our kids in care receive some presents at Christmas through our BCC Annual Christmas Present Appeal. Having promoted this appeal locally, I am pleased to say that this year BCC received double last year's number of presents from our very generous residents. This meant the world to our kids, some of whom spent Christmas in a children's home rather than with a

foster family. The high quality of presents was very much appreciated, and some of the older children said that they were able to use some of the tablets and ipads in their schoolwork and to help them network online as they approached the stage of leaving care.

Another part of my work which is especially rewarding is my work as a Trustee on the National Paralympic Heritage Trust. As you probably know, Buckinghamshire is the Birthplace of the Paralympics. The NPHT is concerned with archiving and preserving the historical documents and objects which tell the history of the Paralympic movement since its conception through the efforts of Professor Sir Ludwig Guttmann to rehabilitate soldiers who had lost the use of limbs after WWII.

Over the next 6 years the NPHT aims to establish:

An archive and collection of national and international importance and interest that will be recorded, accessioned, conserved, stored safely and respected globally.

- A website that enables people access to this unique and inspiring resource alongside the ability to share their own stories.
- A Heritage Centre at Stoke Mandeville Stadium, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire.
- Regional hub exhibitions telling local stories.
- A series of small touring exhibitions supporting sporting and heritage events across Britain.
- A creative learning and participation programme will run across all areas of work.

We want to achieve all these things to a high standard of access and equality.

We want people to be:

- Inspired
- Keen to learn more (visit the website)
- Motivated to try new things
- Proud

- Understanding of the benefits of sport whatever your ability
- More aware of access requirements

Above all, we want to change attitudes to disability.

I was proud to have been invited to attend the opening of the Heritage Centre at Stoke Mandeville Stadium on 29 March, along with Sir Philip Craven and Eva Loeffler, the daughter of Prof Sir Ludwig Guttmann, who has carried on his inspirational work with the Trust.

If you haven't had a chance to visit the Heritage Centre yet, do please stop by and see some of the legacy artefacts from the Paralympic games on display along with some information detailing the vision of Prof Guttmann for rehabilitating the disabled through the use of sport, training and competition.

Some of my wider work also involves my participation in the London Luton Airport Consultation Committee, and the Noise and Track Subcommittee. These committees meet near the airport and include members from Herts county council, Luton Borough Council, and representatives from Beds councils as well as representatives from the airport.

With the forthcoming expansion of both Luton Airport and Heathrow, airspace planning has never been more dynamic, challenging or exciting than it is now. There are several proposals afoot to modernise airspace over the UK, and the hope is that through airspace modernisation air transport might become more streamlined, efficient, and reduce impacts on the environment and our communities.

The aim is to do this through the use of modern aircraft which are quieter, noise reductions might also be enabled over those of our communities which are affected by aircraft noise.

While I won't go into all the technical detail as to how the airport hopes to achieve these aims, I will say that I am now well versed in some of the technical concepts behind both noise reduction and airspace planning more generally, so if anyone wishes to discuss these ideas further, do please get in touch and I will be happy to explain a few of the principles insofar as I'm able to do so.

Committees aside, most of my work involves all of you---my residents, our local parishes and communities. If it's important to you, it's important to me too. That's why I organised a walkabout in Ivinghoe and Horton last summer to see some of the freight hotspots and invited our Freight Strategy officer along to have a look at some of the areas which you signalled to me as being of concern for you. That's also why the real upside for me is being able to help even if it is mainly in small ways, to ensure that we keep our communities friendly, clean, well maintained and thriving.

To that end, I was delighted to have been able to donate my Councillor Leadership Fund money this year to Dagnall Village Hall for their fundraising to replace the community playground equipment. Unfortunately, their entire set of play equipment failed safety checks last year. While the leadership fund wasn't enough to allow for the purchase of all of the new playground equipment, it at least kick-started the funding appeal and so hopefully it won't be long until the new playground is up and running.

I am always very happy to hear from any community groups or parish councils if they have similar funding requests for next year. If the request meets the funding criteria, I will be happy to consider donating my leadership funding towards it.

Apart from all that, I'm on the Transport for Bucks working group, which means that I am always trying to help TfB improve its service and communication towards residents and parish councils. If you have any ideas which you would like me to feed up to the TfB team, if you drop me an email I will be very glad to take those forward for you.

IN Pitstone this year our new Local Area Technician, Matt Whincup, is looking to continue to improve road surfaces and drainage and I will be working with him to try to get road surfaces improved. I am looking forward to working with him and the parish council to keep Pitstone beautiful and thriving over the coming year. I am also pleased to say that the Ivinghoe-Pitstone Traffic Calming Safety Scheme is up and running, and at

the last meeting quite a bit of progress was made, so I hope that it won't be too long before we are able to implement the designs.

In conclusion, I would just like to thank you for having given me the opportunity to serve as your county councillor, and I look forward to working with you all, as well as with our district councillors, so that we can transition smoothly into our new unitary authority next spring.