

## **Report to Boarhunt Annual Parish Meeting - 11<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

### **Neil Cutler - Winchester City Councillor, Boarhunt & Southwick Ward**

Please accept my apologies, I am unable to attend the Boarhunt Annual Parish meeting due to a pre –arranged post election meeting at Winchester.

My annual report deals with the past year, before last week's election. However I would like to thank local residents for re-electing me, along with Angela Clear and Therese Evans in the new three member ward of Southwick & Wickham (including Boarhunt & Knowle). We will work together as a team, with all three of us available to help residents with their concerns and queries. Angie and Therese also are unable to attend tonight due to the same Winchester meeting.

#### **Local Issues**

The past year has seen continuing concerns about three sites in Boarhunt Village:

**Wickham Court:** The owners continue to develop the site, stretching planning rules to the limit. There is currently an application to increase the number of 'residential' pitches from 18 to 30. A decision on this application is imminent. Meanwhile I have made the planning enforcement dept. aware of the number of new park homes now sited on what was originally the green zone for touring caravans. Enquiries suggest that the owners, who have purchased the chemicals site off Southwick Road, intend to use this as a new entrance, and that their intention is to have as many as 140 park homes on the site. No planning applications have yet been received.

**Boarhunt Garage:** Mr Chambers had his application for lawful use of the site for office, storage and industrial use refused, and has appealed the decision. A public enquiry will be held in early August by the planning inspectorate. Meanwhile he has submitted an application for a house and 5 studio flats, which is currently being considered by the council.

**Firgrove Lane:** The environment agency is investigating allegations of illegal rubbish burning on the site. Planning enforcement have put a stop notice on the continued construction of two houses on the site without planning permission. Currently there has been no action on the siting of more than the permitted number of mobile homes. I continue to press officers to take action.

#### **Other local Issues**

Fly tipping continues to be a major problem in the ward, Winchester City Council is still fairly prompt in clearing rubbish if it is reported, however little headway has been made in terms of prosecutions and deterrence.

Speeding along the B2177, particularly through the 30mph zone in Boarhunt is a major problem, both by cars and motorbikes. I have had discussions with Sgt Gilmour on this issue and will continue to press for the police to take more action.

### Winchester City Council

The Silver Hill development in the centre of Winchester has dominated proceedings all year. The scheme, first mooted as long ago as 1996, has been a litany of failure, culminating this year in the abandonment of the scheme, partly due to the loss of a judicial review into procurement by the council. The scheme was supposed to deliver income to the Council to mitigate government cuts. This will not materialise now for at least another 5 years. The administration appointed an independent review into the scheme, which reported in January. The review pointed to deficiencies in the Council's governance processes, public engagement and management of major projects, culminating in a 'Perfect Storm' which scuppered the scheme. As Chairman of the Audit committee, I, with the full support of the committee, have been working to ensure that improved governance and risk management will become embedded in the Council's culture.

The failure of Silver Hill and delays to other major projects gives rise to concerns about the longer term strength of the Council's finances. The policy of 'more for less' continued drive for efficiencies has its limits, and I fear that some services, particularly planning and enforcement, are beginning to severely fail residents – some of our local issues are testament to this. Your Councillor team will continue to fight for improvements.

Housing: The government policy of forcing councils to sell their most valuable houses to pay for the housing association 'right to buy' will have severe implications for Winchester's ability to maintain a good stock of council houses. It is particularly unjust that a council that has already bought out its stock from government, in order to have autonomy in the management of the stock, should be forced to sell vacant properties and hand the money to housing associations.

Devolution: Hants County Councillor Stallard will no doubt have brought you up to date on the progress with devolution. Again this is a process forced on local government from above. I particularly fear that the Southern Parishes of Winchester District will come under huge pressure for more development from the putative Solent City on our doorstep.

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