

**CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL - 12 APRIL 2010**

**Agenda Item 10i**

**CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Roger Walters**

**CABINET PORTFOLIO: Environment & Sustainability**

**Portfolio covers:**

- Clean & Green Strategy
- Waste Strategy
- Environmental Strategy
- Climate Change/Energy Strategy
- Street Management (parking, signs, etc.)
- Regulatory Functions (licensing, building control, environmental protection)
- Emergency Planning

**REPORT COVERS ACTIVITY DURING PERIOD COMMENCING 2 FEBRUARY 2010 AND ENDING 30 MARCH 2010.**

**CLEAN & GREEN**

**Play Areas**

I am pleased to report that the refurbishments of the play areas at Bridport Way and Albert Moss Recreation Ground, Rivenhall have been completed. The new equipment offers great play value for young children to encourage them to play naturally, whilst enhancing the local areas.

New security fencing around the skate park area in Spa Road, Witham has also been completed. Thanks to Witham Town Council for their support in funding this work.

Two outdoor gyms have been installed: one at Meadowside, Braintree and one at Spa Road, Witham. These were screened off, pending installation of signage, but local children were obviously keen to try them out as they partially removed the screening to access the equipment. Consequently, the screening has been fully removed and the gyms are already in use. Outdoor gyms are a new way to look at health and fitness. They include much of the same equipment found in an indoor gym, but the difference is they are specifically designed for outdoor use.

**Braintree Local Committee Priorities**

We have completed three Local Committee projects as follows:-

Marks Farm Community Hall: resurfacing of car park, improved disabled access via ramp to car park and construction of tarmac cycle path across the nearby open space to Dunstable Drive.

Restoration of two small areas of woodland: one at Beckers Green Way and the other at Tapestry Walk, Braintree.

**Allotment**

The first new 'clutch' of green fingered tenants are enjoying cultivating their new plots at the extension to the Cut Throat Lane Witham allotment site.

## **Verge Cutting**

The District Council will carry out the grass cutting of the verges on Public Highways this year on behalf of Essex County Council to ensure a more co-ordinated approach with litter picking taking place in advance of grass cutting. The work comprises of two cuts in the Spring and Autumn on many of the strategic routes and rural roads throughout the District, excluding the A12 and A120 which are the Highways Agencies responsibility.

## **STREET MANAGEMENT**

### **Street Sweeping Waste**

The Council is now recycling all of its street sweeping waste from its sweepers that was previously disposed of at landfill. This is a joint arrangement in conjunction with Uttlesford District Council and a private company. Recycling credits are being paid by ECC, which covers the cost of the collection and treatment. The great thing is that the waste is being recycled and not being buried in the ground.

### **Highway Rangers**

The Highway Rangers have been as busy as ever out and about the District carrying out various jobs that ordinarily would take a lot longer to be completed. They have been sign washing, renewing nameplates and direction signs, temporarily filling in pot holes caused by the recent cold snap, as well as picking up the odd fly tip or two on their travels.

### **Car Parking**

A note to remind Colleagues that the Council is increasing car parking charges from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010. This includes new charges for parking at Causeway House on a Saturday and Sunday and Sunday charging in all but the four rural car parks at (Sible Hedingham, Earls Cone, Coggeshall and Hatfield Peverel), where there is no change to the current arrangements.

The car parks at Halstead owned by the Town Council have been included in Braintree's Off-Street Parking Places Order. The reason for this is that from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010, enforcement will be carried out by the Parking Partnership through a Service Level Agreement. This is also applies to the small residential car park (9 spaces) in Braintree Road Witham, that was owned and managed by Witham Town Council.

Work has also progressed on the transfer of the Council's car park at Sible Hedingham to the Parish Council. Work on the potential transfer of the 3 remaining rural car parks (see above) is also under way with condition surveys of the infrastructure being completed and land ownership queries. More on this in my next report.

I am delighted to report that our 6 car parks that have Park Mark accreditation were reassessed and retained this award for another year. In addition, a further 7 car parks were submitted for the first time and all were assessed as having met the strict criteria laid down in order to be accredited.

Park Mark is a nationally recognised scheme for parking facilities that have achieved the requirements of an assessment conducted by the British Parking Association and Police. Being accredited means the Council has put in place measures that help to deter criminal activity and anti-social behaviour as well as providing a safe and clean environment. Customers, can park with the knowledge that 13 of our car parks has been vetted measures in place in order to create a safer environment.

The Car parks that were awarded accreditation are:-

George Yard MSCP  
Station Approach  
Manor Street  
Mill Lane  
Newlands Drive  
Whitehorse Lane

The 7 car parks that were assessed for the first time and passed are:-

Causeway House  
Silks Way  
Victoria Street  
George Yard Surface  
Maylands  
Lockrams Lane  
Hadfelda Square

## **WASTE STRATEGY**

### **Recycling Performance**

With the imminent opening of the new Lidl store at Rayne Road, Braintree, our recycling team have been in discussion with Lidl to install recycling bring bank site providing facilities for the recycling of plastic, cans, paper and textiles. These types of sites at supermarkets are always well used by Customers. The new site will be installed early in the new financial year.

We are on track this year to exceed our target of diverting 48% of household waste from landfill. We are anticipating that we it will be at least 1% better at 49% that can be directly attributed to the roll-out of wheeled bins to the remainder of the District and the collection of food waste in the green bin It is also interesting to note that the current economic climate and the reduction in demand/consumption of goods is continuing to have an impact on the amount of waste being generated across the District. Whilst this is good news in one sense it does mean that the overall tonnage we recycle is likely to be lower than we expected.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

Our Engineering team has successfully overseen the Braintree Town Centre Tree Planting Project, overcoming obstacles such as buried pipes and setting up sustainable irrigation systems. This month they will see the completion of the Town End Field to Dengie Close Cycleway Link, Witham, the Marks Farm Community Centre car park and the maintenance and repair works to the Council owned industrial estate roads.

I attended an education and promotion event on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2010 at the Flich Way Braintree to discourage littering and dog fouling. Also present were the Council's Dog Wardens, Community Wardens, ECC Ranger, Rayne Parish Council and Friends of the Flich Way. Lots of advice and guidance was given out to walkers and dog owners and the overall day was a great success.

### **REGULATORY FUNCTIONS**

In Halstead, one business was prosecuted for giving waste to an unregistered waste carrier and for failure to keep control of its business waste, whilst another Halstead company was prosecuted for giving their waste to an unregistered waste carrier who subsequently deposited the waste at Blue Bridge Industrial Estate. A Halstead resident was also fined for fly-tipping.

A Braintree resident was prosecuted for failure to pay a fixed penalty notice issued by one of the Council's Community Wardens for flicking a cigarette butt on floor.

The Dog Wardens have taken action in the magistrate's court against an owner of a Staffordshire Bull Terrier that attacked a Dalmatian causing injuries that required veterinary treatment.

Environmental Protection Officers are in the throws of a joint exercise with Trading Standards, Customs and Excise and other local authorities to clamp down on illegal on-street car sales in the District. By sharing intelligence and working in partnership, they can effectively tackle a large scale car sales crime network.

The Licensing Sub-Committee held a two-day hearing about the future of Mardys, in Braintree Town

Centre, and made its decision to revoke its premises licence.

Perhaps a slight glimmer of hope on the improving local economy as our Building Control department has seen a 50% increase in the number of building control applications submitted this month than the same time last year.

### **EMERGENCY PLANNING**

The Emergency Planning Team have started the annual update of the Emergency Plan and are now making it available on individual USB sticks, making it easier to carry around and avoiding the cost of printing such a large document.

***FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE CONTENTS OF THIS REPORT CAN BE OBTAINED BY CONTACTING:***

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