



Cllr Nan Farmer Cllr Peter Farmer

FOCUS

October 2009



Response Cards

Together with our Councillor colleagues in Dalston and Castle wards, we pay for our Focus newsletters from our own pockets. But to help make this a two-way dialogue, our Group have now taken out a licence with the Royal Mail and have produced post paid, pre-addressed response cards with a common postal address. You will see that there is one of these cards in this Focus leaflet. (Which is why we are slightly late this time).

If you have any issues or concerns that you wish to take up with us, please let us know on the card, and pop it in the post. Alternatively, you can simply keep the card by you until there is something that you want to bring to our attention.

The response in the Dalston ward was very encouraging and we hope that we will see the same at Morton. It is an opportunity for residents in the Eastern end of the ward to have some input. Please do write to us.

Highway Issues

We had been approached about traffic speeding through the Morton estate. In response to this, the police installed a monitoring device in Stonegarth from 16th to 20th September. This showed that the average speed of vehicles was 22.3mph, with an occasional speed of just over 31mph.

On that basis there is little action we can take, but if there are other area anywhere in the ward where it is clear that there is excessive speeding, please let us know.

The road markings at the junction of Stonegarth and Westrigg Road are so worn that many motorists are ignoring them. We have taken this up and they are to be repainted

Dialogue with Riverside Carlisle

We have also been informed by Riverside that they will shortly be holding consultations on the proposed types of properties that they wish to build on the **Barras Close** site.

The renovation of Freshfield Court is completed, and planning permission has been granted for the modernisation of Westhill House at Brampton. We are advised by Riverside that further consultation will be held about the plans for **Morton Court**.

We are pleased to see that **the benches at Seatoller Field** have been reinstated and are in daily use. This has been an excellent example of us working together. Once you had identified the need for these. Riverside Carlisle generously provided the finance and the City Council installed them and will provide ongoing maintenance.

On a more general note, as winter approaches, we are concerned about the state of several pavements and walkways, due to **uneven paving slabs**. Apparently, there is a recognised limit which they are allowed to protrude, beyond which the Council are required to relay them. We would appreciate it if you can help us to identify them across the ward regardless of where they are, and we will take it up with Riverside or the Council, whichever is appropriate. Perhaps you could use the response cards to let us know.

Eskdale Avenue

The residents of Eskdale Avenue tell us that they are delighted that they now have natural light and more sun and warmth now that the trees have been removed.



Lack of Play Areas

We have frequently expressed our concern about the removal of play equipment from the parks and the lack of access to amenity areas. Given the size of the ward, there are very few play facilities **for the young and teenagers**. Some areas are actually gated off and locked. We recently met with officers of the Council to discuss what can be done, against a background of severe financial pressures on the Council's budgets.



It occurs to us that there should be an opportunity to address this issue within the **Morton Masterplan**.

The planning application is likely to be considered at the November planning meeting. Both of us are members of the Development Control Committee. The rules prevent us from giving a view on



this before the meeting but this is an opportunity to address this deficiency under what is called **“Planning Gain”**. Developers are required to provide play areas for large housing schemes such as is proposed here. This will follow when the detailed planning applications are submitted. However, at this stage there is an opportunity for us to put a marker down.

The youngsters tell us that they would like a **BMX track at Morton**. It was suggested that this could be at the “Nature Reserve” at Winscale Way, but after discussions with the residents living nearby, this was discounted.



We are now looking for an alternative site and would appreciate any suggestions that you may have. One possibility is the grassed amenity area near Dalston Road which will not be affected by the Morton Development. Please let us have your thoughts and suggestions.

Incidentally, following our approaches to the Council, excessive undergrowth is being cleared at Winscale Way.

Robert Chance Park

Several residents have told us of their concern when they see such large scale felling of long established trees as part of the £1 Million (approx) Scheme for the park. There have also been a number of letters in the local press. Some of this is simply thinning out of established trees following years of growth.

We can understand your concerns to see so many trees being taken out, but having seen the plans for the project, all we can say is please judge it when it is completed.

In Council

We are now entering the **2010/11 Budget** process in the Council. This will involve the various scrutiny panels. The parlous state of the Government finances is being felt at Local Government level, with the prospect of a cutback in Government grant support. Local Councils depend on this for almost 75% of their income. Since about 60% of City Council revenue costs are staff related, this is driving the agenda for a comprehensive reorganisation of the staff and management team, (the Transformation Initiative) and shared working arrangements with other authorities. The purpose is to take costs out whilst maintaining front line services. At present we are relying on our Reserves. We are both active in the Council. Amongst other things, **Peter** serves on the Community Scrutiny Panel and **Nan** on the Economy and Resources Panel. Nan is also a member of the Employment Panel and is involved in decisions affecting the most senior team.

Visit of MEP

Chris Davis one of the Liberal Democrat MEPs for the North West will be visiting Carlisle on Friday 27 November 2009. Chris is the European Spokesperson on the Environment.

If you have any questions you would like us to put to Chris during his fairly brief visit, please let us know as soon as possible.

Once we have your questions, we will pass them on to Chris and then let you have his comments either through a personal reply or in our next Focus Newsletter.

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