

Councillor Paul Hopfensperger

Report to Howard Estate Association of Residents and Tenants (H.E.A.R.T.) Monday September 16, 2019

1. 2019 Community Awards – Thursday September 19th



Many of you may know that the Bury St Edmunds Town Council have always held an annual Citizen of The Year and Young Citizen of the Year Award ceremony in November. Well this year it has got somewhat bigger and the Bury St Edmunds Town Council and Bury Free Press have joined to provide what is called the “**2019 Community Awards**”. It will be held this Thursday, September 19th in the Guildhall, and I’m delighted to announce that I nominated our very own Ernie Broom for the “**Citizen of The Year**” award, and he is a finalist. Ernie has also been nominated in the “**Lifetime Achievement Award**” category, which recognises an individual who has made a significant contribution to making the town a better place to live, work or visit. Both former Town Councillor Tom Murray and Ernie Broom have been nominated in this category.

I’m sure that we all wish Ernie the very best of luck for this Thursday.

2. Western Way Development

As has been previously reported, a substantial £100 Million+ development is being proposed in Western Way (known as the “**Western Way Development**”), the final business case of which will be considered at the West Suffolk Council meeting this Thursday. As you know, I have been pushing for link road between Beetons Way and Newmarket Road, a Rail Halt behind the new Abbeygate Sixth Form College and most importantly, a bridge linking Oakes Road Playing Field with the ASDA Car Park in Western Way. **Officers have considered all three of these proposal as part of the final business case, but very sadly, have rejected ALL THREE PROPOSALS.**

I have scanned in and listed their thoughts and reasonings below here. I would like to say that due to this and the mess this country finds itself in, has led me to make my announcement in item 7 below.

Extract from West Suffolk Council Western Way Development – Final Business Case Paper

3.50. Although not included in the transport study document, as requested at the OBC stage, the project team has also looked at:

(a) Road Link from the end of the Beetons Way footpath onto Newmarket Road

Pick Everard's initial work concluded that a link road from Beetons Way to Newmarket Road might assist in reducing the development traffic along Western Way. However, once they investigated the practicalities in forming a road link along the Beetons Way footpath, including a junction against Newmarket Road, they established that, to gain the visibility required around the corner of the Grade II Listed Barrack Wall, the Council would need to acquire significant additional land for the project. Recognising that potential compulsory purchase would add significant cost and risk to the development (as well displacing residents unnecessarily and controversially), the project team decided not to pursue this option at this stage. This can obviously be considered as a long-term aspiration if needed, as the option does exist. It is also expected that this route will be a key cycle and pedestrian access to the site.

(b) Footbridge over the Railway & A14 to access the residential development to the north of the site

A footbridge over these two major routes would be a very expensive undertaking as the length required to span this would be in the region of 53m clear span, plus long ramps on either side to provide full accessibility. Costs and restrictions to work over the national rail network are a major issue. Also, providing access to the bridge on either side of the A14 would require the acquisition and/or disruption of private land and public open space, and also impact on the amenity of residential properties.

Therefore, while the reasoning behind this suggestion is understood, it would be prohibitively expensive for the WWD project to take on as a cost of its own, and would almost certainly undermine its overall viability.

While it would undoubtedly improve walking and cycling access for many residents, there is also already a pedestrian and cycle access to the WWD under the railway bridge on Beetons Way, and the WWD travel plan will seek to improve public transport options. In that context, and given the catchment of the WWD, it is not expected that any developer of the site would be required by the planning authority to provide such a bridge.

For these reasons, it has not been included in the cost plan, or the pre-application consultation proposals, and would only be added if separate funding were made available or it became a requirement of the planning process. There has been no indication in the pre-application stage that it would. As mentioned above, this is also a good example of the kind of wider transport issue that should be addressed strategically and not be dependent on a specific development proposal. For this reason, the request for this footbridge will be fed into any future work on the new local plan.

Finally, while it has not been suggested that the desire for this bridge is linked to perceived safety, it is worth recording that, in the last 10 years, there has only been one recorded incident of a pedestrian injury accident near the existing bridge under the A14 (which resulted in a slight injury).

(c) Railway Halt

Irrespective of the potential benefits, this is not a matter that could be progressed by the developer of the WWD site. Such decisions would be taken by strategic transport providers and, even if supported (which is felt unlikely at the current time given the practical and cost considerations), would take many years to deliver. The focus therefore will be on improving access from the WWD to the existing station, and upgrading other forms of public transport to the site.

3. Battle of Britain Parade



Yesterday we celebrated the 79th anniversary of the Battle of Britain with a civic service in St Mary's Church and a procession on The Angel Hill. The RAF Regiment, USAF, Royal British Legion and the 301 Squadron Bury St Edmunds Air Cadets as well as the Thurston Squadron all attended on a beautiful sunny Sunday. Representatives of West Suffolk Council, Bury St Edmunds Town Council and Mayors and Chairmen of many other local councils were in attendance.

4. Defibrillator

We have had a slight change of plan providing the Defibrillator which I pledged as part of my election manifesto. Originally, we were going to locate it on the wall outside the Newbury Community Centre. However, a planning application has been recently submitted by BT for the removal of the payphone in St Olaves Precinct, but not the phone box itself. So I have put the following item on the agenda for the Bury St Edmunds Town Council agenda on September 25th:-

"That the Bury St Edmunds Town Council investigates the costs involved to purchase and maintain the disused BT Telephone Box in St Olaves Precinct, for the purpose of providing a much-needed Defibrillator for the local community. The defibrillator will be funded separately by Cllr. Paul Hopfensperger's West Suffolk Council Locality Budget. (Paper to follow)."

I would like H.E.A.R.T. to put in the application for the defibrillator itself, so with your approval tonight, could I ask that I liaise with the committee to complete the form for the locality budget, and at least we can purchase the defibrillator and it will ideally be located in the telephone box, but if the Town Council say no to the above proposal on September 25th, we can still put it on the Newbury Community Centre wall as was originally planned.

5. Howard Primary School

At the end of last term, I visited the Howard Primary School to meet with the head teacher and discuss the memorials for two pupils who tragically died in the 1970's. After discussions with the head teacher, we are proposing that two awards, named after the boys, will be presented to outstanding achievers at the end of the year. They will also receive a trophy which should help inspire achievement and encourage everyone in the school to do their very best. I will update you once I have further information and pricing on this as I would need to progress this through Locality Budget funding via H.E.A.R.T.

6. New Community Centre and Associated Housing

Just to let you know the exciting news that earlier this month, contracts were exchanged with the developers, **Keepmoat**. This is subject to a number of conditions, one being the planning submission, but after 8 long years of many people's input and hard work we have reached a major milestone for the community new centre. The planning application will now be submitted by **Keepmoat**. Once this is live I will update you further on this exciting development for the estate.

7. Standing for Parliament

I have followed and thought long and hard about the disastrous and chaotic series of events in parliament over the past three years. Our country is in a state of pure chaos and division and we somehow have to heal the rift that has divided families, communities and towns and cities. We have an almost equal proportion of people wanting to stay in the EU as want to leave. Whatever happens, **no one** is going to be happy and it is my belief that we need to try and heal the rifts for the sake of not just ourselves, but for the sake of our children's future. Seeing our MP forget to vote on national television, just tipped me over the edge. **This, coupled with the fact that have been denied time and time again in our request for a footbridge across the A14 and the Rail Halt in Beetons Way, means that I have decided to stand as an independent candidate for Parliament at the next election to try to fulfil these items which you, the people have requested.** I am now a "Prospective Independent Parliamentary Candidate" for Bury St Edmunds and I will update you further on this in the near future as and when an election is called.

IMPORTANT FOOTNOTE

If anyone has any questions on anything or issue(s) to raise with me then e-mail is always the best way to contact me (NOT Facebook Messenger or Facebook posts or Twitter which are not GDPR compliant).

I must have your consent to pass the e-mail on to 3rd parties help address your issue so please put:
"You have my permission to pass this e-mail onto whoever you deem necessary to address this issue"
or similar. Thank you.

Paul J. Hopfensperger

16/09/2019

Cllr. Paul Hopfensperger

Independent Councillor for St Olaves Ward - Since 2005

Bury St Edmunds Town Council and West Suffolk Council

Deputy Mayor of Bury St Edmunds

Prospective Independent Parliamentary Candidate for Bury St Edmunds