



Steve Battlemuch – Wollaton West Councillor Annual Report 2015/16

Introduction

I have been your Councillor since June 2013, re-elected in 2015 and I wanted to give a brief update of the issues I have been involved in the past year. I am happy to discuss any of these issues either at one of my surgeries (see details below), via email to steve.battlemuch@nottinghamcity.gov.uk or by phone on 0798 1032031. Also on Twitter @Battlemuch4WW

Surgeries

I hold two regular surgeries - at Wollaton Library (2nd Saturday of the month 11-00am to 12-00) and Wollaton Park Community Centre on Harrow Rd (4th Saturday of the month 11-00am to 12-00). These are open for people to drop in without an appointment but if you call in advance it does help me plan! I am also available to come to local groups, meetings etc on request. On top of this I do regular door step consultations.

Wollaton Arts Festival

I was delighted to be involved in the first ever Wollaton Arts Festival this summer. I spoke at the opening ceremony and was pleased to also be at the family picnic where I introduced the Sheriff of Nottingham who gave the awards to local children and adults who were winners in the art and photography competition. The festival was a great event for local people and I hope next years will be even bigger.



**Fernwood
Safety
Campaign**



Alongside parents, residents and the School's leadership team I have been involved with trying to improve the safety for children at Fernwood Primary as a major priority all year. We held a number of meetings with parents ward councilors and council officers which led to a 'week of action' in April. I attended 8 out of a possible 10 school gate sessions (1 day I was working outside of Nottingham). I spoke to many parents and residents and saw first hand that some parents (a small minority) do park in an inconsiderate and sometimes

dangerous way. I was happy to judge a great poster competition from all years at the school and these winning posters are now outside the school gates making very important points to people who see them.

Lots of parents and residents completed our survey and from this we are taking forward some suggestions for improvements including possible yellow lines, a safety camera and the introduction of a 'park and stride' scheme from the Hemlock Stone Pub car park.



Roads and Pavements

I have continued to report a number of potholes on streets to the Highways Department. I requested some road resurfacing to be undertaken across the ward. Urgent pavement repairs have also been tackled in many streets, following casework complaints raised by residents. However I am aware that more is needed. The cost of new pavements is very high and the reality of the reduction in funding the council has seen from central Government in the past 6 years means that we can't do as much of this as we would like.

Wollaton Park

Since the new playground opened in the summer of 2014, a priority for me has been to refurbish the nearby hut into a cafe. Following approval of Area Capital funding, we have now consulted people on the design and I am hopeful we will see it completed in time for next summer.

I am really pleased that Wollaton Park now has Green Flag status.

The Friends of Wollaton Park group has gone from strength to strength. The volunteering days have been very popular and give local people the chance to give something back to the park and hall.

I am also working with the Friends group to look at proposals for the future of the walled garden. This would be a major project to restore it and will involve multi agency working, something I am very committed to helping achieve.

Allotments

2014 saw the decision by the national planning inspectorate to overturn the council's decision (which had been to refuse planning permission) and therefore grant permission for a building company to build 110 houses on the site of the Wollaton allotments.

To recap - I did everything I could to stop this, including writing to the planning inspectorate opposing the development, speaking on local radio and to the Nottingham

Post, working with the North Wollaton Residents Association and the local MP to ensure that all the residents concerns were heard at the enquiries. I spoke at both local enquiries held. When the decision came through I wrote to Eric Pickles the Secretary of State asking him to personally step in which he refused to do.

The past year has seen the start of the development but residents have highlighted this to be in a very haphazard and disruptive manner. Without properly completing the many conditions imposed by planning on them, the company (CEG) started work. They said it was to ensure that the allotment holders could continue to garden but because they breached the conditions the planning dept had to put a 'stop notice' on the work. This has left the gardeners who rent plots stuck in the middle with their growing season completely ruined. I have been involved with all parties trying to resolve the issues and as I write this report more key meetings are due to be held.

Fernwood Nursery school

I supported the school with the request for a Nursery school and was therefore delighted to be part of the opening in February.



School admissions

School admissions are an area that local councillors have little or in fact no influence over. If parents don't get their children into our local schools they can appeal to an independent panel but there is no role at the appeals stage for influence from a local councillor. I have taken up a few cases where decisions not to admit have appeared harsh and tried to get a clearer explanation for parents. We have very popular schools in Wollaton and with a rising birth rate this issue is likely to become a bigger issue in the years ahead. It's for this reason that I have supported the expansion of places at Fernwood. I was involved in detailed talks in 2015 to get some catchment area children into Middleton and know how much local parents value being able to get into their local school.

Waste land on Trowel Road

I am very keen that this plot of land is used for something useful and not left to become a wasteland and, meanwhile, I keep pressing for it to be kept in a clean and tidy condition.



Parking issues near Wollaton Park

This continues to be one of the most pressing issues for me. Some residents are concerned about the amount of parking on their streets especially the ones opposite the main entrance to Wollaton Park on Wollaton Road and near the entrance on Parkside.

I managed to persuade the Council to set up clear and larger no parking signs for the dates of big events – about 10 days a year and also bank holidays. This has improved the situation but not removed the problem completely as problems occur most weekends in the summer.

The Area Committee now reached a tentative agreement on a residents parking scheme – subject to a formal consultation with residents. This would make parking on these key streets resident only. I am hoping the scheme will be introduced in 2017.

Cut through Roads

Traffic speed and volumes are becoming an increasing part of my caseload. Residents from Torvill Drive, Parkside, Woodbank Drive, Grangewood Rd, Bramcote Lane, and Russell Drive and Avenue have all complained about this. It is in part a reflection of the society we live in now that drivers will increasingly look to bypass traffic jams by looking for short cuts around them.

This year after much lobbying by residents and letters from myself to the Police we saw the start of speed trap work in some of the above streets. This was a change to the previous Police policy of not taking action in 20mph zones. I welcome this change of position by the Police and I will continue to monitor the situation, and push for more action.

Community activities

I have supported many local meetings and campaigns and last summer was pleased to be involved in supporting some summer activities on the Grangewood estate.



**Financial
donations**

issues / grants &

From my small grants budget allocation I have recommended support for the following projects –

Wollaton Christmas Celebrations, Wollaton Arts Festival, Friends of Wollaton Nature Reserve, Fernwood Primary School Sensory Room, Wollaton Summer Planters

Wollaton and Lenton Abbey Area Committee

I was honoured to be elected the chair of this committee and Cllr Sally Longford from Wollaton East is the Vice Chair. The Area Committee meets 4 times a year and in addition to councillors from the 2 wards, has reps from local groups in the area. Observers are welcome.

Speaking out on issues

I have spoken at every council meeting to date on a range of issues. I see my role not just to look at Wollaton issues but to raise your wider concerns to the City Council and through them to the Government, on that basis I am always keen to hear your views via email and at my surgery.

Casework

Whilst obviously not mentioning the individual issues, I have taken up over 440 cases since I was elected in 2013. On top of these formal cases I have given advice to hundreds more residents via email, phone and meetings. This is one of the most satisfying aspects of being a local councillor. I want to thank all residents who have brought issues to my attention and I will continue to represent your views and wishes to the best of my ability.



Steve Battlemuch
Labour Councillor for Wollaton West