



Steve Battlemuch – Wollaton West Councillor Annual Report 2016/17

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 07981 032031. 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 am delighted that the second Wollaton Arts Festival took place in the first 2 weeks of July. Much expanded from last year due to a lottery grant and the hard work of lots of volunteers who have put together a brilliant programme of events. This will now be a firm fixture in the Wollaton summer season.

Fernwood Safety Campaign

Progress has been made in the past year. We now have a camera which monitors parking outside the school gates and have agreed new parking restrictions which will become operational in the Autumn term. This will mean restrictions on parking in the streets immediately around the school at drop off and pick up times. We will continue to monitor the effect on the other surrounding streets to see if we need to extend the restrictions further afield.



Roads and Pavements

I have continued to report a number of potholes on streets to the Highways Department. This can also be undertaken online directly by residents via <http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/transport-parking-and-streets/report-problems-and-find-out-about-highways-services/report-a-problem-with-a-road>

I arranged for some road resurfacing to be undertaken across the ward, including Torvill Drive, Radford Bridge Road & side roads off it, Nidderdale and Nidderdale Close. Next up is part of Bramcote Lane and part of Grangewood Road.

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 7 years means that we can't do as much of this as we would like. We continue to highlight to central government the impact this reduction has on a regular basis.

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. We have now consulted people on the design and the work will be completed this year. It will be a fantastic new addition to the Park.

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. Hundreds of hours of volunteering have made a real difference to the Park and Hall. The volunteers deserve our thanks. I know they would welcome further support so why not join the FWP group?

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 housing development is now starting to take shape again after a year of delays caused by the holding company CEG trying to start work in breach of planning conditions.

A housing company is now on board – Avant Homes – and their plans include a slight reduction in houses from 110 to 89. They are meeting with local residents and the

allotment gardeners to try to find a way forward that suits everyone – obviously most residents would prefer it not be going ahead at all!

I continue to support the gardeners and local residents and have met with the planning department and Avant Homes to progress issues. On current plans the first allotments and houses should be ready by March 2018.

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 both at Fernwood and Middleton. 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.

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 persuaded the Council to set up clear 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.

In the past few months residents have been consulted about the plans for a resident parking scheme for the streets opposite the main entrance. This has largely been welcomed by residents and we are trying to find ways to answer the concerns of a minority of residents who may feel the scheme does not suit their needs. With goodwill and co-operation the new scheme should be operational for 2018.

The scheme around the Parkside gates has been more problematical. Any parking scheme runs the risk of displacement of parking to the boundary of the scheme. At present the problem mainly occurs on Parkside for a number of houses either side of the gates. Officers came up with a scheme that covered this but many residents who live outside the planned area have objected, mainly by saying they want to be included too. As this report goes to press discussions are ongoing to find an acceptable solution.

Cut through Roads

Traffic speed and volumes are becoming an increasing part of my caseload. Residents from Torvill Drive, Elvaston Road, 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.

In the past year the Police – after lobbying from myself on behalf of residents – have been undertaking speed traps on some of these roads. Warning letters have been issued to drivers exceeding the limits.

Also I'm pleased to report the installation of a flashing speed sign on Torvill Drive which will also hopefully contribute to the speed reduction campaign.



Financial issues / grants & donations

From my small grants budget I have supported the following projects –

Wollaton Christmas Celebrations, Wollaton Arts Festival and Wollaton Summer Planters, Heritage Open Days Publicity 2016 Booklet, Wollaton Park Community Centre Garden and Wollaton Sports Association

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.

World Class Dinosaur exhibition comes to Wollaton

I was proud to be at the opening of the Dinosaurs of China exhibition and would urge everyone to go along to take a look at it. It's at Wollaton Hall until the 29th October and tickets can be booked via www.bit.ly/dinoticket



Casework

Whilst obviously not mentioning the individual issues, I have taken up over 550 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Battlemuch', written in a cursive style.

Steve Battlemuch

Councillor for Wollaton West