

Councillor Annual Report – Councillor Michael Edwards 2019-20

I was elected in the new Meadows ward in May 2019, having represented The Meadows on Nottingham City Council since 20th October 2011. This report is for the civic year of May 2019 to mid-May 2020.

Roles

I serve as -

- Chair of the Planning Committee;
- a member the Audit committee and the local Area committee;
- a council nominated member of the EnviroEnergy Board;
- a council nominated member of the Queens Walk Community Association;
- a member of Heritage Boards overseeing the award of grants to restore buildings along Carrington Street and within the city centre;
- I occasionally attend the Police and Crime Commissioner's panel.

Way of working

I attend public meetings, tenants and residents groups' meetings (most particularly OMTRA and NeMTRA). I share written progress reports at those meetings.

Much of my work is reported on a photo-based blog which I began in October 2012 – <http://www.michaelmedwards.wordpress.com>

I hold advice “surgeries” at the Meadows Library and I attend ward walks.

I seek to add value as an elected representative - celebrating our free society and embracing the principles of public life; demonstrating how we can achieve more together in partnership and through public services; helping those most who need most help; and meeting the challenges of today and the future (local jobs for local people, an ageing society, climate change and energy security). I regularly speak at council meetings.

For current services and new initiatives, I test the vision, the planning and the performance management, the capacity, capability and culture, the overall legitimacy; and whether it is inspirational.

I try to visit sites of planning applications in the ward that have been referred to Planning Committee and have sought to promote greener architecture and detailed decoration in the designs in particular. There was a Planning Committee tour of new sites along Crocus Street and Queens Road in January and a special event to explore green architecture for office buildings. Special

briefings were organised for community activists concerning the larger developments in the north of the ward.

As of 30th April 2020, around 120 items of concern (“cases”, including - demands for improvements, requests for information, concerns about failure in service delivery) that require some form of oversight have been logged, including from around 50 or so new clients. Whilst walking around the ward, I also report problems in the public domain (including tipping and litter, road and pavements defects) directly to specific council officers, for them to deal with. I met many residents during the 2019 General Election. I campaigned against Britain’s withdrawal from European Union.

The Meadows

Beyond the Public Health Emergency that officially started in mid-March, the main challenges to people of the The Meadows are -

- low earnings and incomes;
- bad private landlords and escalating rents (I supported the new service overseeing private landlords);
- empty sites, empty houses and empty former shops;
- litter and ASB associated with drug taking in public at certain locations, including the misuse of public phone boxes.

The sudden closure of Clifton Bridge led to some days of traffic jams in The Meadows - I arranged for traffic to be stopped from passing through until opening more lanes on the bridge relieved the jams. Action was also needed when safety concerns arose for children retiring home from school over the Old Toll Bridge.

A relief to see car parking prioritised for shoppers at Bridgeway Shopping Centre, by charging for the hours at the start of the working day through RINGGO. It had taken 8 years to get some kind of scheme introduced. Pleased to see the restoration of the Bandstand, even if the original colours are a bit surprising, but again it took too long. Also supported the additional memorial for all the Nottinghamshire fallen of World War One. The Mundella play park was renovated.

I have supported local campaigns such as a conservation area for the Old Meadows and new Greener Meadows group with its aim to win funding from the Climate Action Fund; and wider campaigns for the restoration of The Memorial and its gardens through National Lottery funding, and in the longer term, the renewal of the paddling pool, the football pavilion, and for new tram stops in The Meadows for phase 3 of Nottingham Express Transit.

I attended Arkwright Meadows Community Gardens open days and the Annual General Meetings of Meadows Advice Group, Meadows O-zone Energy Services, Meadows Muslim Centre and Bridges Community Trust.

Pleased to commission, with Cllr Nicola Heaton, the 3 regular favourite community events of:

- the ward action plan consultation (with a Meadows' version of "Dragons Den" giving small funds to various local initiatives);
- a Christmas tree at Bridgeway Shopping Centre (which has no empty units), with 3 local schools singing before switching the lights on; and
- the Christmas Grotto at the Meadows Library.

Personal

I appreciate and value the help of Councillor Nicola Heaton, Lilian Greenwood MP & her staff, and the caseworkers of the city council.