

## **Councillor Annual Report 2019 – 2020**

**Bestwood Estate, Top Valley and Bestwood Park**

**Councillors: Jay Hayes, Georgia Power and Audra Wynter**



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### **Introduction**

We are so proud to serve you as your elected local City Councillors representing the Bestwood, Top Valley and Bestwood Park areas, and we hope that this annual report gives an idea of the work we carry out on a daily basis to ensure that your voice is heard, and that as your local Councillors, we continue to work in positive collaboration in order to support all of our residents, especially during such worrying and unprecedented times due to the Covid – 19 pandemic. We have stood strong during these testing times to ensure that our most vulnerable residents receive the support that they need, and one of the ways in which we have done this is by helping to deliver hot meals to those residents, and by ensuring that they have access to the relevant support services to help them through these difficult times.



As Councillors, we are involved in a number of local groups such as Tenants and Residents Associations, Community Centres, schools, churches, the Police and other city services. This involvement gives us the insight we need, and the determination to help us improve our relationship within the community along with other organisations and partners within the ward. We will continue to provide democratic accountability for public services and work hard on your behalf to resolve problems and identify failures in service delivery.



## **Council Involvement – Committee and group membership and positions**

### **Councillor Jay Hayes:**

- Deputy Whip
- Corporate Parenting Board – Vice Chair
- Nottingham Education Trust
- Bestwood Park Community Association
- Bestwood Advice Centre

### **Councillor Georgia Power:**

- Member of the City Council Corporate Parenting Board
- Vice Chair of the City Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Member of the Leen Valley community association
- Board Member of Nottingham City Homes
- Member of the Bestwood Partnership

### **Councillor Audra Wynter:**

- Vice-Chair of the City Council Audit Committee
- Chair of Bestwood, Bulwell and Bulwell Forest Area Committee
- Member of the Planning Committee
- Member of the Licensing Committee
- Board Member Nottingham City Homes

## Community Involvement

In the Bestwood Ward we use a range of different ways which help us to successfully engage with local people, and to support them to resolve any issues that they might have through good working relationships with partnership agencies in the area. Examples of the ways in which we engage include:

- We hold four monthly Councillor Surgeries so that you can meet with us face to face
- We work closely and in positive collaboration with the Bestwood Partnership and Bestwood Park Church supporting community groups and initiatives
- We undertake monthly Councillor Ward Walks with partner services (Locality Management, Police, Nottingham City Homes, Community Protection and residents have the opportunity to raise any neighbourhood issues or concerns. At each ward walk we cover between 300 and 400 properties to give us a real insight of any local issues
- Other membership includes school governor roles and, associate members of Community Associations.
- We regularly attend local community meetings, events and themed problem-solving groups to find ways to make your neighbourhood a better and safer place to live
- We continue to deliver food parcels across Bestwood and Top Valley

## Ward Work and Achievements

- In partnership with Best-Top Kitchen and Bestwood Park Church, we helped deliver more than 400 meals to our most vulnerable residents and to those who were shielding during the Covid – 19 government lockdown
- We supported Culture Week, celebrating the diverse cultures across our ward
- The Ridge Adventure playground extension was completed



## **Other Achievements - Casework**

We are immensely proud of the outcomes we have attained through our casework during the year. We have undertaken lots of case work for people living in the ward. These have included things such as, housing repairs, street cleaning, parking issues, clearing footpaths, concerns of road safety, access to education, antisocial behaviour and neighbour/noise complaints. We have worked hard to attain successful outcomes on behalf of the residents we have supported through such casework, and we will continue to take on cases and strive for successful outcomes.

## **Housing**

We believe that everyone should have access to a safe, decent and affordable home where they can plan their lives and thrive. Working in close partnership and positive collaboration with Nottingham City Homes and other partners, we are transforming Nottingham's neighbourhoods by developing a mix of much-needed properties across the whole city, from housing for families, flats for couples and single people, to bungalows and independent-living schemes.

With an increasing number of people on Nottingham's council house waiting list, the Council has made a commitment to build or buy 1,000 council or social homes for rent over the next four years, and we are proud to say that so far a total of 130 new homes for affordable rent, along with open space, have been approved for the former Eastglade School site. We will of course keep you updated of any future developments.

## **Community Safety- Operation Reacher**

As your local Bestwood Labour councillors one of our main priorities is reduce incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour and to keep our community in Bestwood and Top Valley, as a safe place to live, work and raise a family. We have been working hard with the Police and Crime Commissioner, Paddy Tipping, to make that happen. April 2018 saw the creation of 'Operation Reacher' with the aim to disrupt and dismantle criminal activity, tackle anti-social off- road bikers, and to get to know those people who live within our community. Operation Reacher is an additional policing unit in our neighbourhood working alongside the local beat team.

Success in Bestwood from the Reacher team includes the seizure of almost £1.8m of illegal drugs as well as eight guns, with a number of people sent to prison and the dismantling of criminal gangs peddling drugs in the area and living lavish lifestyles on the back of crime. We will continue to work hard and in partnership with the police and other partners, to ensure that Bestwood and Top Valley remain a place and community to feel both safe in and proud of.

## **Learning and Development**

As Co-Councillors we have all embarked on an exciting journey together, and we have learned so much about the different communities we serve, as well as the community as a whole. We have also learned about how to successfully attain positive outcomes on behalf

of our residents through the casework we receive. Supporting our residents by addressing their issues and concerns, has enabled us to further develop our advocacy skills and widened our knowledge of the issues and priorities that our residents say matter most to them.

Overall, collectively we have learned to be a voice for our residents, especially for our more vulnerable residents, and we are proud to say that our residents empower us every day to be their voice of justice and fairness.

## **Devolved Budgets**

As your local Councillors, we have responsibility for a small budget, which has been pooled to maximise spend and to achieve better outcomes for the community we serve. We are proud to have funded the following community projects and initiatives:

- War memorial: £1,000
- Bestwood Community Choir £300
- Elmbridge Planters: £1,000
- Operation Reacher Merchandise Nottinghamshire Police £300
- The Ridge Family Summer Fun Days £500
- Bestwood Youth Pilot Mentoring Project £1,000
- Bestwood Festive Lighting £9,036
- Bestwood Christmas Launch Event £2,200
- Masson Court Christmas Meal £200
- Southglade Library Christmas Event £100

## **Area Capital Scheme 2018-2019**

- Ridgeway Walk bollards Approved: £4,800 complete Installation of bollards to prevent illegal vehicle access
- Ridgeway Old Farm road safety Approved: £4,000 Installation of pedestrian tactile crossings to improve mobility access (joint with Bulwell Forest Ward)
- Bewcastle Road area road safety Approved: £13,000 Installation of pedestrian tactile crossings to improve mobility access at Bewcastle Rd junctions with Churchfield Crescent and Duke of St Albans - lead service: Traffic & Safety
- Queens Bower Road Footpath Approved: £66,612 - complete Reconstruction of footpath from Deer Park Drive to Mildenhall Crescent (LTP contribution) - lead service: Highway Maintenance
- Belconnen Road/ Cairns Close parking approved: £18,000 installation of resident parking scheme to mitigate hospital parking in Belconnen Rd/Cairns Close

## **Challenges**

There are many challenges that the local authority face which impacts the communities which we serve. Such challenges are:

- Reduced public spending
- Financial resilience - Some Bestwood residents have experienced significant impact upon their finances with welfare reform, stagnant wages and rising prices.
- There is an increasing need for welfare advice services, foodbanks and clothing sharing schemes.
- To continue to maintain lower levels of crime and ASB.
- To maintain levels of youth provision
- To engage the hardest to reach long-term unemployed into employment
- To encourage further development on vacant pieces of development land Bestwood Ward

### Ward Surgeries

We had held ward surgeries every month in all three areas within Bestwood until the COVID outbreak meant they had to be cancelled. This was your opportunity to meet with us in person, and for us to see how we can help you with any issues or concerns which you may have. People have raised all sorts of issues including housing repairs, anti-social behaviour, welfare advice, potholes and much more. If you wish to raise any issues or concerns with us then you can do so by email or by phone.

Overall, we will strive to face these challenges head on, always seeking to find ways to support our residents during difficult times. We want you to know that we will always do our very best to support you and to ensure that you live in an area that you are proud of. Please remember that you can always attend the surgeries we hold if you have any issues or concerns. Additionally, if you are unable to visit the surgeries we hold, you can contact any one of us by phone and we can arrange to meet with you elsewhere. We sincerely hope that you found this Annual Report useful, and we wish to thank you for putting your trust and faith in us to be your elected representatives, and to be a voice for you and your community.