

ANNUAL REPORT 2016

PETER ARMSTRONG

As one of the new District Councillors (although not new to the workings of Local Government due to my background), it has been an interesting and busy year since last May with over 100 meetings (including training sessions) as a District and Parish Councillor. I serve on the Planning and Development Control Committee, Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel and on a couple of sub-groups e.g Member Development.

Netley View Estate - An initiative from a thought I had over three years ago brought together Parish, District and County Council representatives and others. I have been the Group Co-ordinator for this Action group. This year 2015/16 it has resulted in the District designating Netley View as their Improvement Estate/area for the whole of the District. NFDC have invested over £300,000 into improvement works to most of their tenanted properties. The works include dropped kerbs/driveways, fencing, car park areas and tree and shrub planting. It has been my privilege to work with officers and staff at the District to achieve this. The Project Team (including myself) were nominated for an internal Respect Award. Sadly we didn't win but it shows how many good teams there are at the District. To hear the Estate being spoken about as a model and example for any future projects the District does in targeted areas is good news for our Parish area. In recognition of the District's work the Parish Councillors agreed to send a letter of thanks at our February meeting.

Credit Union - In January this year, after nearly a year of behind the scenes meetings and correspondence with District Officers and the Credit Union CEO, a drop-in was opened at the Parish Offices. The Credit Union offers fully regulated secure savings and affordable loans. It is also known as a Community Bank as all the monies stay in the local economy and profits go back to the membership. For more information go to www.solentcreditunion.co.uk or drop-in on a Tuesday from 10am-12noon.

Promoting Local Businesses / Tradespeople + - I was elected by the Parish last November to be on the Board of the New Forest Business Partnership (NFBP). I have since been working closely with District Officers and our Parish Development Officer with regard to the Brand New Forest scheme. This is running successfully and growing. It enables local businesses to get free advertising/exposure across the whole of the District area by providing a suitable offer. Hythe has a very good opportunity to apply for and be Brand New Forest Town of the Year. This would bring extra promotion and recognition to the Town and Parish area. We already have a number of new businesses who have recently signed up but need more. For more information go to - www.brandnewforest.com.

It is a great way for Local Businesses and tradespeople to promote themselves but also be part of putting Hythe more 'on the map'. The Pier Train celebrates 100 years next year; we have an opportunity not to be missed.

Totton College - Being on the NFBP I was invited to be on the Totton Education Forum with the new owners of Totton College. They are people of vision and excellence. The College are currently looking to set up a couple of courses in basic skills and employability. Know of anyone who is interested? This is the number to ring - 023 80874 874 ext 748.

Litter Picking and Clean for the Queen - Over the last four years my wife and myself have been out most weeks litter-picking. It has now become my local Councillor's Surgery with people we meet!

Last September Keep Britain Tidy announced the Clean for the Queen Campaign as a way to focus people's attention on our Nation's Litter problem. I approached the District who in turn spoke to the Forestry Commission and National Park who are all on board. I was then asked to be the District's Litter Champion and Keep Britain Tidy interviewed me and published me as a Hampshire Litter Hero!

At the time of writing this report I am in the final run up to the main weekend at the beginning of March and have been co-ordinating efforts for our Parish whilst liaising with District Team and other Councillors/Groups. Litter pickers, bags and collection by the District and a local firm supplying Hi Vis and gloves.

If you were not able to join in this year get in touch for future events.

As well as the above there has been a steady stream of local residents' queries. These have covered a wide range of issues which I have been handling or passing to the appropriate people for action.

As you can see I'm not one to sit around and watch the world go by. As far as I am concerned being a Councillor means serving the local people and resolving issues where possible.