

District Councillor's Annual Report

There has not been any change in the committees I am involved with from last year: I serve on the Communities Select Committee as well as being the Spokesperson on the Health Select Committee. The latter has also involved working on the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee looking at respite services in Orchard View, as well as a larger Joint Committee looking at the Greater Western Ambulance Service. There has been a review on the services provided for Autistic young people; however this has been delayed because of lack of staff resource.

The Communities Select Committee has looked at the future of waste services, how the Council is tackling inequalities in priority neighbourhoods as well as the library service and we are currently carrying out a review on tackling obesity in young people.

As some are aware, I also Chair the Environment Forum, and we have received interesting presentations over the past year, including hearing about the benefits of switching off of street lights during the night at Charfield.

As a ward councillor I sit on the Area Forum, which decides on small grants (Hawkesbury groups have benefitted) and helps prioritise small spend on traffic management schemes. I also attend the Safer Stronger Community Meetings.

As a parish council we are well represented on the Cotswolds Conservation Board, where I also sit on the Executive committee; Hazel Bleaken was recently voted onto the Board as a parish representative.

During the past year, I was approached by Natural England regarding Higher Level Stewardship funding for the Commons. I have helped facilitate walks and meetings with residents, the council and other officers on how this might be achieved.

Hawkesbury School has been developing its School Travel Plan, and I have worked with the officers in trying to identify cycling routes to school. This is an ongoing piece of work.

There has been a great deal of work carried out in producing the Core Strategy, which helps identify areas of growth in the future, as well as how this should be carried out. I have attended many meetings regarding the growth areas around Yate and Sodbury as well as how development should progress in rural areas. I know the latter is of concern to the parishes and I am keen to gather views on residents' aspirations and concerns on this matter.

The new Council office at Westerleigh on the outskirts of Yate is shortly to be opened. This will be the home for the Planning, Transportation & Strategic Environment, Communities, Revenues and Benefits and Children and Young Peoples departments; home to about 900 staff. It has been built to high eco-standards, with photo voltaic panels, and a biomass boiler. The offices at Kingswood and Thornbury will remain in use, but leased buildings at Bowling Hill, Chipping Sodbury, Emersons's Green and Nibley Court Yate will cease to be used by SGC.

Thanks to the Clerks of the Parish for their help over the past year. To David and Karin best wishes in what ever they do next and thank you to parish councillors for keeping me on my toes, and those in the parish who have contacted me on many different matters.

Sue Hope
South Gloucestershire Council
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