

Melksham Without North Rural

Some significant changes this year which will I honestly believe benefit all residents in the Melksham Area including those in our Melksham North Rural Ward.

Cabinet has now approved the £23m budget for the new Campus and I am pleased that at Full Council on 28th February 2012 that budget got full approval. I have attended many meetings including some with the Transformation Team that have assured me we will not only keep Library, Youth and Leisure Services but will see them dramatically improved.

Broughton Gifford, Atworth and Whitley will also keep their mobile library service, which I think is particularly pleasing.

Specifically for the residents in my Ward, I have been supporting and fighting NHS Wiltshire on behalf of a proposed new Surgery and Pharmacy that is proposed for part of a development at the Leekes department store site. I think a surgery on our side of the A350 can only benefit us by ease of access. Although we lost the appeal for a licence, I am hopeful and will push for it if it comes to Planning Committee, for the surgery to still be built. I have not given up hope of getting a pharmacy on the same site and at present am dealing directly with Health Ministers with the kind promise from D Hames that should I wish to visit Westminster, which I intend to do should ministers also say no, then he will facilitate that meeting.

My advice has been sought on many Planning applications to which I hope I am considered to have done my best whilst striving to support the Parish Councils view. I was required to take some of these applications to County Planning, with mixed outcomes for residents, but almost always able to find other ways forward if unsuccessful.

I have been a strong supporter of Touch 2 ID which I believe will really benefit our younger folk. I was successful, with Colin Goodhind in getting Wiltshire Council Licensing department to include Touch 2 ID on all present and future Licensing literature given to public houses and supermarkets, shops and clubs.

As we move into an era of the “safest county in the country to live in” I have been concentrating some of my efforts on mapping and then hopefully improving Neighbourhood Watch schemes. Although we have looked at some maps that can easily show us areas of neighbourhood crime problems, we are still struggling to find a way to super impose these with the NW Areas. Work with Sgt Dave Hobman will continue with the hope we can increase the coverage to maybe include farms as well. We will then work with Parish Councils to see where areas can be improved or levels maintained.

In the forthcoming year we have secured, from Wiltshire Councils Budget, more money for the Community Area Transport Groups giving us up to £500 000 to share between areas for local initiatives such as footpaths and road traffic safety. This group also deals with SID's and Speed Watch.

Hi speed broadband will be rolled out in the coming year and I have some assurance those areas in most need, rural areas, such as Atworth, Broughton Gifford and Whitley will where possible be at the front of the queue.

I am looking forward to this next year, not least for the Jubilee and the Olympics and all the varied events they should bring. I must also mention the freedom of Melksham to be awarded to 2385 (Melksham) Squadron ATC, a thoroughly deserved honour.

We have had some contentious issues this year;

Bicycles on pavements

Pedestrian Crossing

Bus Shelter

A new group has formed, ATAG for which I have been asked to attend tonight's meeting, with D Hames, but which the Parish Council can be assured will make no decisions, via myself or the Area Board without the correct authority of the Parish Councillors.

The general issue of Traffic and Road Safety of course continues, and I will continue to work with and assist the Parish Council as and where I can, with the next project I hope, being a Gateway to Atworth feature.

You have also said farewell to Charles Boyle who I found to be the most helpful of Clerks and a genuine, nice person, who helped in, as I am sure Mitch will continue, making Atworth Parish Council a leading light amongst Parish Councils in Wiltshire.

I wish you all a very happy and hopefully prosperous future year.

Mark

Councillor

Melksham North Rural