

Councillor Paul Hopfensperger

Report to Howard Estate Association of Residents and Tenants (H.E.A.R.T.)
Monday June 17, 2019

1. My Apologies For This Item But It Is Time People Knew What is Going On...

I have never, in 16 years as a councillor, reported anything like this before, as it could be considered part of being in politics to have to receive personal attacks from other councillors. But it has now got really bad, and what happened last week at the West Suffolk Council Overview and Scrutiny meeting could have a direct effect on not only the people of St Olaves Ward, but indeed Bury St Edmunds.

For the past 4.5 years, following a request by Cllr David Nettleton for me not to speak to members of his group of Labour and Green Party members (apparently a "Centre Left Group"), I have abided by his wishes and tried to steer clear of him. Over this time, I have received e-mails, Twitter tweets and Facebook posts, which he has used to engage with and encourage other users to launch a consistent and sustained, relentless attack on almost everything I do and say as a councillor. One of them was actually a West Suffolk Council employee who has been reprimanded over it. Users of Facebook may have seen first-hand what he did during the recent elections in which he tried everything he could to attempt to stop me getting elected. This included, bizarrely as the leader of a left wing group, going out delivering leaflets with and on behalf of the Conservative Party candidate! Never in 22 years in local politics, and 16 years as a local councillor, have I, or people I have spoken to, witnessed such sustained and bizarre behaviour as this. It is relentless. It is my personal belief the sole reason for this is that he is only interested in protecting his Suffolk County Council Tower Division seat and sees me as a threat. I can see no other reason. I only lost to him by 5 votes 2 years ago (1828-1823) and with only 23 months to go until the next elections where I will stand, I can only see things getting worse.

As you may know, in my role as the West Suffolk Council member of the Suffolk County Council (SCC) Health Scrutiny Committee, which I have sat on for 3½ years, I have been working with the West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to provide a CCG Compliant Medical Room in the new Newbury Community Centre. I have also worked to ensure that a new Doctors Surgery is provided as part of the new £125 Million Pound development in Western Way. This is all through my work on the Suffolk Health Scrutiny Committee and could all now be in jeopardy because of David Nettleton.

Last Thursday, despite recommendations from a senior Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member, Cllr Richard Rout, and an e-mail from Cllr Jessica Fleming, the Chair of the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny, asking for me to remain on the committee, Cllr David Nettleton voted me off the committee using his casting vote, giving my place to a Councillor from Haverhill. In my opinion, there was absolutely no reason for this other than self-interest. In my opinion, Cllr David Nettleton has let down not only the people of Tower Division he supposedly represents, he has let down the whole of Bury St Edmunds by electing a Haverhill Councillor in place of me. I had done nothing wrong.

Every month at *this* meeting we have SCC issues raised; Street Lights, Parking Problems, Grass Cutting at the old Primary School Site, Grass cutting in general, Roads, Pavements and much more. David Nettleton has not attended one of these meetings for 4.5 years. WHY NOT? I ask you to remember this when you cast your Suffolk County Council votes in 2021. I hope you agree, this had to be said.

2. Old Howard Primary School Site

Following requests from residents, I have reported to Joy Stoddart, the grass not being cut regularly. This is Suffolk County Council land and again our Tower Division County Councillors should be addressing these issues. Joy Stodart has promised to cut this grass and keep an eye on it as required until the new Newbury Community Centre project begins.

3. Beard Road Neighbour Problems

Those of you who were at last months meeting will know that I was unable to say exactly what was being done to address the neighbour problems occurring in Beard Road. I was able to tell you that my wife, Suffolk County Councillor Beccy Hopfensperger, Cabinet Member for Adult Care, had reported it to the Assistant Director for Mental Health. I was also able to mention that the West Suffolk Council (WSC) enforcement team were dealing with it also. I can now tell you, that WSC successfully executed a warrant to abate a Noise Nuisance and sound equipment was seized and removed from the property. I can say no more than that as it is a very sensitive issue for all concerned. I'm sorry I could not say more last month, but these are very sensitive issues and the rights of all parties have to be respected legally.

4. Bury St Edmunds Annual Town Meeting



Left: Greg Luton, Town Clerk and me.



Right: A packed audience debate town issues.

On Wednesday May 29th at 6pm at the Town Council Offices, 7 Angel Hill, the Bury St Edmunds Town Council hosted the annual town meeting for the people Bury St Edmunds.

This annual event is a very unique meeting in council terms and gives **people who live in the parish of Bury St Edmunds**, an open forum in which to engage with not only **Bury St Edmunds Town Councillors**, but Bury St Edmunds based West Suffolk Councillors and **Suffolk County Councillors**.

As the Chairman was on holiday, I chaired the meeting in my role as Vice Chairman. I was delighted that Barbara Bannister was there representing The **Newbury Community Centre** and spoke to thank the Bury St Edmunds Town Council for its support to various projects for the Community Centre over the past year.

Top of the agenda for discussion was the state of the pavements and illegal/lack of parking facilities, especially in the historic core. We were lucky to have two members of Suffolk County Council's Cabinet on hand to help with these issues. I would like to personally thank **Cllr. Beccy Hopfensperger** and **Cllr. Richard Rout**. Both of them rushed back from their Suffolk County Council duties at the Suffolk Show in Ipswich to be with us, and their input was invaluable to assist with the answering of questions raised by members of the public. The two Suffolk County Council members for Tower Division (Cllrs. Nettleton and Everett) did not attend.

Speeches and thanks were given by organisations helped by the town council over the past year, including by representatives of **The Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership, Bury St Edmunds Lions Club, Churchgate Area Association, Cotton Lane Allotments Association, Gatehouse, The Newbury Community Association, Greener Growth, RWSfm, St Nicholas' Hospice Care** and one of the **Bury St Edmunds Town Council** sponsored **Police Community Support Officers** (PCSO's) employed by Suffolk Constabulary.

Once again, thank you to everyone who attended, and we look forward to seeing more people than ever attend next year's meeting.

5. Trees, Trees, Trees! – Please Report Them Here

I have been absolutely inundated by the problems of trees in St Olaves Ward since the election. This is in fact a town wide problem, and as I have said on many occasions, when they planted these trees years ago, they must have known that they would grow! The fact is, the problem is so huge that there are simply not the resources to deal with the problem, and as a single Councillor, I cannot keep reporting single trees. It would take me my whole life just to do so! So, could I please ask that you try initially to report them here:-

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roads-pavements-and-verges/trees-grass-and-weeds/trees-and-hedges/>

You will need a photo as well as your e-mail address, telephone number and a 750 character description of the problem. This will cover all of the Suffolk County Council owned trees, which are generally the ones alongside roads like Northumberland Avenue etc. However, they could be owned by Havebury or West Suffolk and then you will be told via the above website. I hope this is useful. Footpath problems can be reported here also.

6. General Issues

Also, since the election, I have been absolutely inundated with many issues, probably more than I ever had before. Issues include, Grass Cutting, Housing Problems, Havebury Building Problems, Pigeon Mess, Tree Roots pushing up Pavements etc. Can I say, that I am/will deal with every one in Chronological order as they come in. It may take time, but I will get there in the end! Please bear with me.

7. Election Manifesto Update

As promised on my election leaflet, I am currently working with the Newbury Community Association to provide a defibrillator outside of the Newbury Community Centre, probably underneath the archway. This will be paid for from my Locality Budget money.

8. Oakes Road Bus Stops

As has been requested by residents, I have arranged for both bus stops to be repaired in Oakes Road. I have definitely had one litter bin approved for installation at the bus stop at the top of Oakes Road, and am just waiting for confirmation for a second to be approved. Work should start shortly.

IMPORTANT: General Footnote for Dealing with Ward Issues

If anyone has any questions on anything or requires me (or any councillor) to deal with ward issues, then e-mail is always the best way to contact me (**NOT Facebook Messenger, Twitter, Facebook or Instagram which are not General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliant**). I **must have your consent** to pass the e-mail on to 3rd parties help address your issue. It is now the law of the land.

Paul J. Hopfensperger

17/06/2019

Cllr. Paul Hopfensperger

Independent Councillor for St Olaves Ward - Since 2005

Bury St Edmunds Town Council and West Suffolk Council