

Report from District Cllr Chris Poll
19th March 2020

Our last council meeting was due to be on Wednesday 25th March. A solely ceremonial meeting it would contain presentations to retiring personnel, Mr Bill Ashton was retiring after 40 years service, and the passing of the fundraising cheque from the Chairman to the designated charity. Sadly due to the situation with the virus all unnecessary meetings are cancelled. There will be no Development Management meetings and many staff are working remotely. Fortunately the reorganisation of a few years ago means that most staff are well capable of working from home or elsewhere and have been doing so for some years.

In the 9 years I have represented the residents of Edlesborough ward I have faced some challenges and had some small successes. As a backbencher with the same influence as any other member I have spoken up when necessary for the benefit of all Vale residents. I have represented them on the Luton Airport scrutiny meetings, Economic Development committee and the Vale-wide planning committee (VALP) as its chairman. I wanted to point out three instances of small accomplishments I made in that time.

Firstly I encouraged AVDC to implement the Safe Places Scheme whereby anyone feeling vulnerable while out and about can seek help from designated shops or offices.

Second, my VALP committee successfully convinced AVDC to invest in professional guidance regarding unmet housing need from neighbouring authorities resulting in the lowering of our required housing numbers significantly.

Third, and this was my longest campaign, was the proper investment in planning and enforcement after some cost cutting was introduced. Whilst still being a challenge for the department I do pay tribute to the executive for their decision to invest significantly more.

With the new council investiture day being April 1st, 2020 I will still be a councillor of the new authority until the elections are held. This would have been May 7th, 2020 but as you know all elections have been postponed for 12 months. A letter was sent to all 202 current members of the shadow Buckinghamshire council asking if any would like to retire. I have stated that

although my plan was to retire I will remain until the elections in 2021. This means that your new representatives will be all the currently serving members of AVDC and BCC until then. They are: Anne Wight, Chris Poll, Peter Cooper, Derek Town and Sandra Jenkins. We are still working out how to divide up any case work between us and will need to make provision for family and work commitments. In that case any resident that needs help can contact any one of us and we will endeavour to answer their enquiries.

Contact details may change in which case I will inform you as soon as I know but for now Anne and I are using the same email addresses.

These are challenging times for local government with the Coronavirus crisis and as a result some services may be disrupted, but the new Buckinghamshire Council is ready to launch on April 1st and meet the challenges ahead.

Although I will still come to your meetings when I can this is my last monthly report as your councillor at AVDC. I wish to thank all members of Edlesborough Parish Council, past and present, as well as the clerk and her predecessor for their kindness and courtesy always shown to me in that time.

I would also like to thank the residents for their support and wish them well during the months ahead and in to the future.

Kind regards, Chris Poll.