

## **Council Matters**

### **High Street Wellingborough**

At their meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> April the Council Planning committee refused an application for a major new development on the Jacksons Lane car park site.

What made the decision interesting was the fact that the application was submitted by Keepmoat who had been chosen as the preferred developer for the site following a tender process. The tender specification called for mixed residential, retail and multi storey car parking for 200 cars as part of the Town Centre Action Plan and the developer had formulated plans against this brief and had made presentations to councillors.

There were several objectors to the planning application, notably English Heritage and the Chamber of Commerce. English Heritage were concerned that the proposals would cause substantial harm to the historic environment due to the design and location of the multi storey car park. The Chamber's objections centred mainly around lack of employment opportunity with a lukewarm reaction to housing provision.

There is a speculative proposal in the pipeline which claims to bring an ASDA store to the site. It will be interesting to see how any future planning application would satisfy the concerns of English Heritage.

The views of the Chamber are also confusing. On the one hand they were against this current application which was all about regenerating an important part of the town and bringing additional residents to the town centre whilst openly supporting the plans to develop on green fields on the edge of town in Great Doddington & Wilby with the so called Prospect Park.

We need as many houses as possible to be built and unless we can demonstrate that we have a five year land supply our villages will become vulnerable to development and unwelcome developments like Prospect Park become a reality.

### **First year success for new council venture**

The environmental services company set up in March 2012 by Wellingborough Council has reported a successful first year of operation.

Figures released in March show that the company, Wellingborough Norse, has so far generated a surplus for the council of more than £250,000, as well as improving service standards and employing a number of local people in permanent jobs.

The company was formed as a joint venture between Wellingborough Council and Norse Commercial Services to take on responsibility for a wide range of duties, including emptying around 34,000 wheelie bins each week, keeping streets clean, removing fly tipping and graffiti, preparing and maintaining graves, looking after

public toilets, and taking care of parks and open spaces. Around 100 council employees transferred to the new company when it began operating on 1 March 2012.

The venture meant that the local authority could keep significant control over the services, but would also benefit from half of the profits generated by the company. Over the course of the 10-year contract, Wellingborough Norse is expected to save the council several million pounds through taking on additional work, profit sharing, increased buying power, reduction of costs, and increased recycling income. At the end of its first year, the company has forecast a profit of around £530,000, meaning the council is likely to receive more than £250,000.

Also during its first year, the company reports that it has replaced agency workers with permanent employees, recruiting nine people in total. Other highlights featured in the report include an increase in support for environmental wardens to help enforce by-laws, an above-target increase in the amount of waste recycled, and a reduction in the number of bins missed for emptying. The company has also secured trade waste contracts and ad-hoc building cleaning work.

### **Over 400 bags of rubbish collected from roadside**

More than 400 bags of rubbish have been collected during a night-time operation to clean up a nine mile stretch of the A45 including Great Doddington.

The clean up took place over four nights from Monday 4 March to Thursday 7 March. Six employees from Wellingborough Norse, the company that provides environmental services on behalf of Wellingborough Council, worked from 10pm through till 5am each night to clean the outside verges of the road from the Wilby Way roundabout through to Ecton.

Because of health and safety requirements, the high-speed road was litter-picked with a rolling road closure in place. The two-tonne haul of rubbish included carrier bags, drinks cans, bottles, crisp packets, chocolate wrappers, and food packaging. The clean up was supported by the nearby McDonald's at Wilby Way. The company has also bought a couple of extra bins to put in lay-bys where the litter is particularly bad.

Wellingborough Norse budgets around £9,000 a year for cleaning up litter on the A45. A big clean up is done once a year, with further litter picks organised where possible to coincide with other highways works, such as white lining or grass cutting, in order to reduce traffic management costs.

### **Council buys land to build crematorium**

Wellingborough Council has bought the plot of land needed to build a new crematorium in the borough. Contracts were exchanged on the 11-acre site next to the prison near Great Doddington last week, and the council hopes to have the facility up and running in the next couple of years.

The land was identified and secured by private developer Mercia Crematoria Developments Ltd last year, and outline planning approval to build a crematorium on the site was granted to the company in December. The council, which had also been

looking into the need for a crematorium in the borough, entered negotiations to buy the land from Mercia last month.

The site already benefits from outline planning permission so the next step in the project is to apply for detailed consent, which will set out the specific proposals for things like the design, layout, and access arrangements. Once that's approved, which should be within six months, the process of building the facility can begin, with a view to having it ready to start operating in 2015.

The council is estimating the crematorium will cost between £3m and £4m. It will be funded from the council's capital reserves, which is money that is kept in the bank to be used for large projects that benefit the community, but can't by law be used for the running of day-to-day services.

### **Wellingborough Carnival Saturday 6th July 2013**

The Wellingborough Carnival will be held on Saturday 6 July 2013 from 1pm in Croyland Park. The Carnival Parade starts at 1pm from Broad Green and finishes at Croyland Park at approx. 2:30pm.

For more information on Wellingborough Carnival go to [www.wellingboroughcarnival.co.uk](http://www.wellingboroughcarnival.co.uk) or telephone Barbara Terry, Chair of Wellingborough Carnival, on 07531664466.

### **Party in the Park: Sunday 7th July 2013**

This years Party in the Park will be held on Sunday 7th July 2013 in Croyland Park from 12 noon The Mayor of Wellingborough and the Wellingborough Carnival Court will officially open the event at 12 noon followed by live music until 6pm.

If you are interested in performing at Party in the Park please contact Julia Wells, Events Officer on 01933 231986 or [jwells@wellingborough.gov.uk](mailto:jwells@wellingborough.gov.uk)

*For any further information on Council services or assistance with council matters please contact*

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