

## **Cllr. Mark Versallion annual report April 2024**

I'm sorry I can't be with you due to a close family bereavement last night.

Here is a brief update on two key issues among many I am working on.

I continue to fight for traffic calming for our village with convincing and educating new council officers at CBC, of which there are many in recent months.

This repetition of the all the work I did in recent years on previous officers has the added challenge now of much less money available due to the new independent-run council having significant financial difficulties. Although the parish has its own money to contribute, CBC still require officer time and commissioning of designs and legal notices which therefore require their agreement no matter how hard I push. Therefore, I must push thoughtfully as well as firmly as they have a very long list of, in their opinion, much more pressing priorities throughout the county.

With this context in mind, I was very happy to secure a site meeting with one of the brand-new highways officers recently in addition to the many office meetings, phone calls and emails that I continue to make. As you know, traffic calming has always been a top issue for me, both as the county councillor and personally having walked my young children through this village for the last 20 years.

I do understand that some will have forgotten that I secured the two zebra crossings and the four raised tables as well as white zigzags, road linings and alike in 2014 but I hope no one would suggest that I do not care or work, to bring more traffic calming to our village as soon as is possible.

On the matter of CBC's flood works in Emu, the Stile and Linslade Road. The council posted letters to residents late last year without consulting me and as we know now was full of many errors. A number of residents contacted me and over the following weeks and months I communicated with them by email. Due to CBC not communicating with residents any further I agreed to meet with those who had contacted me and also attended my ward surgery.

I requested that the CBC right to all residents in the three affected streets but they refused but I did manage to bring a CBC officer with me who was also disgusted that CBC had not communicated further. That competent officer left the council two weeks ago.

Further to that meeting and many internal conversations I've had again with officers I can tell you that a larger soak-away chamber is now scheduled to be installed in Emu close on the 22nd April. Although I had an agreement from the CBC officer for other works I am now having to convince the remaining officers to standby that agreement.

I was very happy to have secured the budget for these flood works but despite my pressing the council to actually get on with the works, the whole project was suspended in January by CBC due to the complaints from some residents.

It has to be said that some still regard me as working for the council but I am not in employee of CBC. I hold them to account for their failures and continually pressure and influence them to do what is needed, including writing letters to residents. I will continue to do what I can off my own back and if anyone has contacted the council and have not had a reply done as several residents have done, please feel free to contact me.

Finally, I continue with all the many and various council meetings on behalf of all the villages I represent, including chairmanship of the Social care, Health and Housing committee, as a member of the Bedfordshire Fire Authority, as a member of the Police Advisory Committee and as the Armed Forces Covenant Champion.

As always, I am available on the phone or via my council email.

Cllr Mark Versallion  
Ward Councillor