

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

COUNCILLOR JIM SMITH

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
DIRECTOR: MARTIN EDEN
DATE: 3 OCTOBER 2019**

YOUR CALL

A total of 1150 volunteers have signed up to the Council's community litter picking initiative via the Lancashire Volunteer Portal.

The packs provided to the volunteers includes a litter picker, a quantity of bags, a handy hoop for holding the bags in place, a first aid kit, a sharps box, health and safety instructions, hi-vis vest and gloves. Once out litter picking in the community, the litter pickers are asked to leave their bags adjacent to council litterbins, to enable them to be removed. Some volunteers have also started to separate recyclable items in clear sacks which is really helpful for recycling. Some of the volunteers are preparing to use biodegradable bags for fallen leaves during the autumn.

WASTE ENFORCEMENT

The Council's Enviro-Crime and legal teams have taken a number of cases recently to court, with successful prosecutions being made on 10 households within the last 8 weeks, resulting in total fines and costs of £4699.00. Further cases are scheduled to be taken to Court from September onwards.

WASTE AND RECYCLING

The Council will soon be awarding the contract for the treatment and disposal of general household waste that will secure the Council with an outlet for up to the next 6 years. During this time, discussions with Lancashire County Council will continue over a potential joint procurement arrangement for the longer term, as Lancashire County Council's contract concludes in 2025.

The portfolio has established an Environmental Education Officer role, funded from within existing resources, to lead on waste and recycling education and engagement across the borough. The post holder commenced employment in early September and will be working with schools and community groups and volunteers to raise awareness of recycling and food waste.

GREEN LANE MULTI USE GAMES AREA

Section 106 green spaces funding is being used to redevelop the Multi Use Games Area located at Green Lane Blackburn. The existing derelict site will be replaced with a new durable metal fence with inset goals for football and rebound boards for basketball and a new hard surface with appropriate line marking for a variety of sports.

PARKING SERVICES

Town Centre Pay and Display

In the first 4 months of the financial year we have seen an increase from last year in the income and usage of our town centre car parks. Income has risen 20% from April to Sept, with overall usage also up by 2%.

Old Bank Lane car park

The Council owned parking facility adjacent to Royal Blackburn hospital has seen a huge increase in usage over the last 6 months. From 1st April to the end of September we have experienced a 100% increase in income from this facility and have helped to improve traffic flow around the hospital site.

The parking facility was visited by the British Parking Association (BPA) and Old Bank lane was successful in achieving Park Mark Status for the second year running.

WITTON PARK LICENCE

The application to vary the premises licence for Witton Park to increase the number of event days per year has resulted in a negotiation to balance the desire to provide more entertainment in the park against the need to control the impact upon the people who live in surrounding area.

A new operating schedule has been agreed which will enable 6 events a year with one of these events being able to operate over 2 consecutive days (7 days in total). The licence contains a robust set of conditions to manage and control noise, traffic, parking and the timing of the events.

JOINT TAXI SAFETY OPERATION WITH HYNDBURN BOROUGH COUNCIL

An increasing number of drivers who are licensed in Blackburn are working in Hyndburn, so on 14th August a joint taxi safety operation was undertaken in Hyndburn with officers from Hyndburn Borough Council, the Police and VOSA.

A total of six BwD taxi drivers and vehicles were stopped and checked, but apart from minor issues no problems were found. Due to increasing cross-boundary licencing, this type of operation will become a regular occurrence.

INFIRMARY TASK FORCE

A task force has been set up to improve conditions within the Infirmary Selective Licensing area. Officers from Housing Standards, Envirocrime, Planning Enforcement and Empty Properties teams are coordinating their approach to deal with unsightly waste issues and anti-social behaviour in specific streets in the area. The task force will operate for 6 months, with results being reviewed at that point.