District Councillor Andy Brown

Report to Farnhill Parish Council’s Annual Meeting 6th May 2021

Clearly this year has been dominated by Covid. Like many people locally I’ve been volunteering to help out with grocery buying and delivering for those who can’t get out and I also did a paper round for ten months for a dozen people who didn’t want to go out. I’m currently volunteering at the Silsden and occasionally Long Lee vaccination centres where it has been a pleasure to see the NHS and the voluntary sector working together to do such a great job of service delivery in difficult circumstances.

Craven District Council meetings have continued online and I have been able to attend every planning meeting and full council meeting during the course of the year. I’ve also advised local people on planning issues in relation to some highly controversial developments both in Farnhill and in neighbouring Parishes where there has been an impact on Farnhill. Despite strong opposition and achieving unanimous rejection at Craven District Planning Committee the latest scheme for Starkey Road was unfortunately approved on appeal. Clearly a system that allows applicants multiple opportunities to apply until one route is successful has its flaws.

I’ve taken actions on issues as diverse as bin collections, local footpath routes, dog waste overflows, and traffic nuisance.

More generally I continue to press the Council to be active in tackling environmental issues and have raised issues around the spraying of glyphosate, managing down excessive traffic spreeds, and air pollution from the Aire Valley Incinerator project.

Towards the end of the year it became clear that central government was determined to re-organise local government across North Yorkshire. This eventually resulted in the local elections being cancelled and terms of office being extended pending a restructure. I’ve argued consistently that larger units of government make local government more remote and less democratic and reduce the ease of contact with your local councillor. I also don’t believe that the promised savings will be achieved or that reorganisation is a sensible thing to focus on as we seek to emerge from the pandemic. I intend to continue to argue that North Yorkshire is too large a county to be run as one single entity and that local people will suffer if Scarborough, Northallerton, Bentham, and Cowling are managed by one local government unit. I do not think it will be in the best interests of the people of Farnhill to lose Craven District Council’s closer focus on our locality than can be achieved by North Yorkshire County Council operating out of Northallerton.

I remain keen to hear from anyone who has issues they’d like me to take up on their part and I can be contacted via andy.brown1951@outlook.com and 07886858038

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