

# *Spotlight* **Liberal Democrats**

**Vauxhall**

**Autumn 2020**



## **Covid Team Work**

How proud we should all be of the way we have come together during the last few months. A Vauxhall Covid support page was set up and Frani was pleased to be able to join Dani Schaffer and Becky Jones as part of the admin team. "I was not able to get out as I had to protect a vulnerable family member so it was great to be able to do something from home!" A list of volunteers was drawn up and the team were able to match volunteers to people who needed shopping or prescriptions collected.



***One evening's collection of food waiting to go to the food bank***

Another venture was the weekly food collection for our town's food banks. This started during the weekly clap for the NHS and now takes place monthly. Roads have organised collectors and 80 or so bags are taken to Sustain and Feast. Frani says "I have been pleased to wheel my wheelbarrow along the top end of Deakin Leas."



***We collected this rubbish from the woods opposite the Cottage Hospital in Vauxhall Lane***

A third example of community kindness was organised by Becky Jones. Sadly, one of the distressing results of lockdown has been the increase in litter dropped. This has caused distress to many residents. Becky has organised some litter picking sessions and again Frani has been glad to help. Frani has also contacted the Council to organise for some fly tipping to be removed.

***Lib Dems working with our community***

## 20 mph speed zone



**Frani** and **Garry** are pleased to support Kent County council in their plan to make all of Tonbridge a 20mph speed zone. Since being elected last year, we have received many complaints of speeding traffic throughout Vauxhall Ward. Some years ago, when Frani was a councillor previously, she ensured that many of our roads were covered by one of the first zones in the country. Now Tonbridge is to become one of the first towns in the country to be completely covered. We hope that this initiative will encourage drivers in and through our town to slow down. Even better would be if more people were able to walk or cycle, leaving the roads freer for those who have no option but to use their cars.

**Garry** and **Frani** have been trying to set up a Speed Watch scheme. Plans were halted for the time being by the Covid crisis and now we feel it is only right to give this scheme a chance to help improve traffic speeds. We will be taking careful note during the trial period. If there are still problems, please let us know. We can always try again to set up Speedwatch provided we have at least 8 volunteers for the police to train.

We would also be interested to hear of any ideas you may have to improve our cycle networks. Might it help to close Strawberry Vale to cars and allow safe passage for pedestrians and cycles?

## Planning - 1 to 4 River Walk

Residents of Tonbridge were not happy with the application for a massive block of 36 flats on the site of the old CAB building. Nor were most of the councillors. "Its time we supported our residents," said Garry. Frani was also unhappy with the lack of social housing on the site. We were told this would require two entrances. "I don't understand why," Frani asked, "Does this mean that people who can't afford the full price have to be segregated?" Garry and Frani were happy to support local councillors Viv Branson and Karen King in their proposal to refuse permission. The bulk of the building, it's imposing nature in this highly sensitive site so close to our Castle were amongst the reasons given for refusal. However, Councillors were told that there were no adequate reasons under planning law to refuse permission now that the developers had offered money for social housing elsewhere in the town.



*Artists's impression of application for 1 to 4 River Walk*

This is in line with government advice. Planning is becoming further and further away from local control and the current white paper will make it nigh on impossible for the local community to have any say at all. This proposal has now been deferred pending a solicitor's report. "Planning was always extremely frustrating when I was on the council before - now it appears hardly worth having a planning committee," Frani commented.

## Pembury Road three successes during lock down:

\*The pedestrian crossing opposite the surgery in Pembury Road has been re-painted.

\*It seems that the flooding outside the police station MAY have been resolved.

\*The broken drain cover also outside the police station has been repaired.

## Parking Charge Increase Delayed

*Garry Bridge writes -*

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council have decided to defer the increase in parking charges across the Borough, including the car parks in Tonbridge and for residential permit holders. This decision was taken mainly in response to the Covid-19 crisis. The increases will be looked at again at the Autumn 2020 review.

This is very welcome news. I strongly opposed the increase in charges in our car parks and residents permits and I am glad that TMBC have held off for the time being. Now is the time to support businesses in the town and our residents, especially during this difficult period.

Don't forget that when you need to renew your residential parking permit, you will no longer receive a reminder and will need to re-apply in good time.



## Waste Collection

As I am sure you are aware, our bin collection has been rather haphazard again over the last few weeks. Roads that we had worked hard to ensure were covered seem to have been forgotten again. Places like **Parson's Place, Pembury Grove** and **Woodfield Road** are all too narrow for the full sized vehicle so Frani asked the contractor to send round the smaller cart. However recently these improvements seem to have vanished again leaving residents without a collection at all or with their bins left in a car parking space or blocking the road altogether.



Bins left in a car parking space

The service has deteriorated badly during Covid and the recent hot weather, Sometimes collections have been very nearly a week late. Frani and Garry have been very busy trying to get this fixed. Some changes have been made by the contractor which should help to improve things. They have changed the repair system to their vehicles - which seem to break down quite frequently. But another issue that has thrown them is the amount of waste we are putting out. Due to Covid and the amount of time we are all spending at home, the re-cycling has gone up by 25%. This is fantastic news in one way, but it has meant that the dustcarts need emptying more frequently and have had to queue to get into the recycling centres. This all takes time away from when they could be on our streets and emptying our bins. They have increased their workforce and vehicle numbers to try and get over this problem.

Please continue to let us know as soon as your bins are late so we can chase it up for you. Being a Friday collection, Vauxhall gets the backlog from the preceding week.

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# Quick Questionnaire

1) Tell us where new double yellow lines are needed to prevent parked vehicles causing congestion, or danger by limiting visibility.

2) Tell us where salt and grit boxes are needed in snow and icy weather. (It's too late to think about it in January!)

3) Many people expect a second coronavirus lockdown in Autumn. What should be done better next time to limit spread of the infection, or improve your life during lockdown?

4) Would you support closing Strawberry Vale to traffic to allow safer access by pedestrians and cyclists?

Yes                  No

5) Any other ideas, comments or suggestions?

6) Could you help us to deliver Spotlight in your road?

Yes                  No

Name.....Phone.....

Address.....

Email.....

**Return this questionnaire to Frani Hoskins**

**99 Deakin Leas**

**Or send your ideas to [garry.bridge@tmbc.gov.uk](mailto:garry.bridge@tmbc.gov.uk) or  
[frances.hoskins@tmbc.gov.uk](mailto:frances.hoskins@tmbc.gov.uk)**

## Your local team

### Get in touch!



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