

22 September 2007 – Press release for immediate use

New Waverley Chief tells Forum she will monitor drug use

Waverley's new Chief Executive, Mary Orton has told a meeting of Busbridge Community Forum that she wants her staff to take ownership of residents' problems and to be responsible for solving them. "I would like to engender a can-do culture – please complain if problems are not solved to your satisfaction because I am not happy to go on making the same mistakes over and over", she said.

At the meeting, held on 19 September as a consultation with Ms Orton, she expressed support for the Forum's philosophy which seeks to form collaborative relationships with council officers charged with the delivery of services. She told the meeting, "Treat us well and we will try our very best to treat you well. Our jobs simply can't exist in isolation from the community."

Growing evidence of cannabis use by young smokers in the Holloway Hill Recreation Ground and other open spaces was high on the list of residents' concerns. Neighbourhood policing specialist PC Peter Harris reported that the police have stepped up their efforts to combat dealing in the Forum's area and believe they are having some success. Mary Orton appealed to residents for help, "It's important you tell us whenever you find suspicious packets. We can monitor this area more closely for all forms of disorder using covert methods, if necessary including mobile CCTV units."

Discussion of proposals for housing on redundant land at the Milford Hospital site centred mainly on the likelihood that the development would bring unacceptable levels of traffic to Tuesley Lane. Ms Orton said she shared the worry about access. A speaker from the floor suggested that land be acquired to provide a new route to the hospital site from the A3100 Portsmouth Road and Mary Orton said she would look into the possibility. "We should be in the business of building communities, not housing estates", she said. She also pointed out that Waverley Borough Council has worries about the future of the hospital itself. "We want to preserve it", she said.

Other topics covered by Ms Orton in the two-hour meeting included:

Refuse collection – "This council is not going to return to weekly collection from wheeled bins but from now on, the collection days will stay the same".

Supervision of contractors – "I urge residents to be the eyes and ears of the community regarding refuse collection and street cleaning. Please report any failures to the council."

Disabled access to facilities – "I will lean on the Waverley staff who have not responded to complaints about access and about the condition of public toilets".

ENDS

Notes to editors

Mary Orton took over as Waverley Borough Council's chief executive and managing director on 25 June 2007 and now handles a turnover of £25 million. She is responsible for 500 staff delivering approximately

100 services on behalf of 57 councillors in 29 electoral wards. She was previously at East Hertfordshire council, where she ran strategic policy. She has worked in local government for 18 years.

Busbridge Community Forum was founded in October 2006. It serves an area in the residential streets to the south of the town of Godalming, covering the districts of Busbridge, Holloway Hill, Crownpits and Bargate Wood. Residents can exchange information and express their views to the authorities through the forum.

Forum meetings are held approximately four times a year and there is also a lively exchange of views by e-mail. Residents can sign up for an e-mail list and the forum maintains a web site at www.busbridge.net

The forum is independent and non-political. It does not serve sectional interests or seek to usurp the function of other organisations within the area. Its function is to provide a focus for inclusive community action and help residents communicate their views to the authorities, including councils, the police, Royal Mail, road authorities and licensees in the area.

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