

## **MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL**

**HELD ON THURSDAY 10 OCTOBER 2019**

### **Public Question Time**

Members of the Public Present: 3

Prior to question time starting a member of the public asked why the question time session has changed in recent months in that questions are limited to two per person and the notes from question time are not included in the minutes.

It was pointed out that the public question time is minuted and the questions/responses are typed and displayed on the website. An Officer will check that the notes have been publicised and if not will ensure they go on the website. The minutes are not verbatim. Any resident may submit written questions prior to Full Council and will receive a response. The reason the questions are restricted is to give everyone a chance to speak.

### **Question 1**

During the showcase event there was information about the work that is going to take place on Bowes Street, but no artwork. The only thing apparent was that the trees are coming out and Bowes Street is going to be tarmacked, what is the reason for this? The Town Forum has been going for 10 months- what is their vision for Bowes Street? There is a problem with the planters near Wilkinson's. We are paying a precept to the Council for grass cutting etc. In the past 2.5 years nothing has been done – where are the upgrades and repairs? The Town Centre has been neglected.

### **Answer**

Four Councillors from BTC are on the Town Forum which is an NCC meeting. Also included are NCC Councillors and business people. This group is looking at an overall plan for the town centre and have been granted £150,000 to draw up a scheme for Blyth. There are several steps in the process to secure additional funding.

The market place showcase event was very well attended and the public were consulted – lots of comments forms were completed and this feedback will be analysed by Anne Lawson and a document will be produced in due course.

With regard to Bowes Street, BTC is not the Highways Authority; it is NCC. NCC are meeting the cost of the improvements. The planters are being removed for several reasons and it isn't possible to relocate the trees as it is a very costly exercise with no guarantee that the trees will survive – residents may not be very happy if a lot of money is spent on the trees and they do not flourish in another area. The road is sinking therefore it has to be resurfaced. All of the shopkeepers were consulted on the proposed scheme, including car parking issues. The planters in Church Street and the pergola at Wilkinson's will also be removed. Pathways are included as part of the highway and anyone taking care of them has to have public liability insurance.

### **Question 2**

People in Blyth are fed up and want a public meeting who would put that to NCC?

### **Answer**

If you send your request to the Town Clerk he will forward it on to NCC. That was the point of the showcase meeting for residents to raise their concerns. Councillors were there all day and it was widely publicised.

### **Question 3**

Someone has suggested the police should move into the town centre and people would feel safer. If you do not get this sorted it will make no difference. You have to be accountable to people. We feel we are living in a drug fuelled mess and nothing is being done. The public has to be kept informed. There is lots of anger in Blyth and it is an intimidating place. How many hostels do we have?

### **Answer**

That did come across from a lot of residents. There is going to be a Blyth Town Centre Task and Finish meeting held on 24 October 2019 with Safer Northumberland Partnership where the police, NHS and other professionals will be looking at the issues that are present in the town. We need to have that meeting first with relevant officers and partner agencies. Hopefully there will be a plan formulated and perhaps a public meeting.

Question time closed at 6.25 pm.