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Edited by Ian Marks

Ian selected again



Cllr Bob Barr and Ian delivering FOCUS leaflets at the last election

On 5 May there will be an election to choose one of Lymm's three representatives on Warrington Borough Council. Ian Marks is currently one of your councillors and has been selected to stand again.

About Ian.....

- A Lymm Parish Councillor since 1979
- First elected to Warrington Council in 1983
- Leader of Warrington Council since 2006
- Represents Warrington in the region - Deputy Leader of North West Regional Leaders' Board, Chair of Cheshire and Warrington Leaders' Board, member of new Local Enterprise Partnership Board
- Three times parliamentary candidate
- Longstanding member of Board of Warrington Housing Association
- Statham Primary School Governor
- Married to Pam with two grown-up children, James and Katie and two grandchildren
- Educated at Cambridge University
- Worked as a senior manager in the glass industry
- Interests include playing tennis, gardening and travel

Rectory Lane to be resurfaced



The resurfacing of Rectory Lane is due to start on 18 April and is planned to last two weeks. Cllr Ian Marks says, "The surface at the bottom of the Lane is terrible and I am glad this work is being carried out at last. Your councillors have been putting pressure on the Highways Department to give this job priority.

The road will be closed each weekday from 9.30am to 3.30pm and the Pepper Street junction will be closed between 9.30am and 1.00pm. The gated access from Longbutt Lane into Scholars Green will be opened when Pepper Street is closed. No weekend work is planned and there will be pedestrian access at all times.

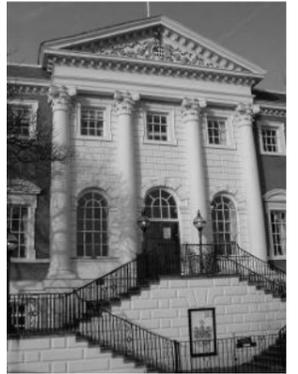
Parking



- Over the next few weeks several parking surveys are being carried out in Brookfield Road to study the problems
- Residents are being consulted about imposing parking restrictions at the junction of The Crescent with Higher Lane

A Positive Budget

Despite the challenges of having to find £18m savings for the 2011/12 budget, there are many positives in the Council budget. Our priorities are based on the most extensive consultation with residents ever carried out.



- No increase in council tax for next year
- Protecting frontline services by slimming down 'back office' functions
- More support for local economy and firms
- Lower than expected reductions in grants to voluntary sector
- Continued commitment to safeguarding vulnerable children and adults
- Maintained investment in police community support officers
- Improved look of the town through new 'borough caretaking' scheme
- Improved and speedier filling of potholes
- Extension to blue / green bin recycling schemes
- Investment from private sector through public /private partnership projects
- Cutting out free food for councillors and first class rail travel

Investment is possible because we have already made £30m of efficiency savings since taking control in 2006. Sound control of our finances has meant government cuts have not affected us as deeply as some of our neighbouring authorities and staff redundancies are far fewer.

Lymm's Big Society

One of the most attractive aspects of Lymm is the wide range of community activities such as Dickensian, the Festival, and the May Queen. Throughout the year community groups, scouts and guides, sporting clubs and environmental groups organise events and activities for the rest of the village and visitors to enjoy.

All these activities depend on a limited number of very active and hard-working volunteers out of a total population of over 11,000. Sometimes volunteers move on, retire or simply get exhausted and getting replacements isn't easy. Recently it looked as though some groups were going to fail because of a lack of volunteers, but the corner may have been turned.

The Youth Club, and Oughtrington Community Centre have both renewed their committees and spread the work. Both are able to offer a wider programme of activities. Lymm is a lovely village and a vibrant community, but if more people could put in just a few enjoyable hours working with others there is so much more we could do. If you are interested contact the FOCUS team and we can put you in touch with the right people.

Clear the Clutter



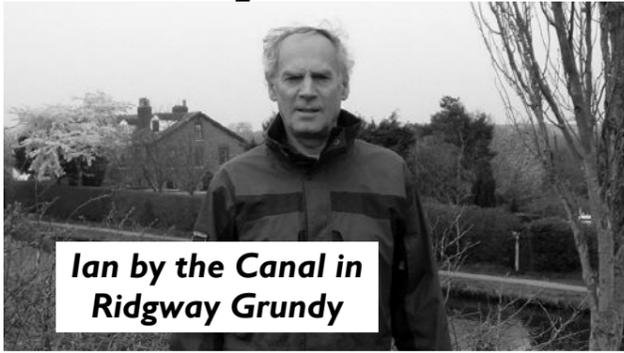
Ian by the sign in Camsley Lane

A local councillor is calling on the police to remove unnecessary signs. Cllr Ian Marks says, "These large blue police signs have been up for years but I have never understood what they were for. The wording 'Police Enforcement Area Ahead' suggests there are other areas which are not enforcement areas! This is not the case.

Although signs may be put up in good faith for a particular purpose, there comes a time when we are getting too much clutter and signs should be removed if they no longer serve a purpose. I have spoken to a senior police officer and he is going to see whether they can be taken down. I welcome this approach and I hope they are able to take some action."

Liberal Democrats in
Government - on your side

Picnic table for Park by Canal



Ian by the Canal in Ridgway Grundy

Lymm Parish Council has agreed to buy a picnic table for Ridgway Grundy Park to be sited near the Canal.

Cllr Ian Marks says, "The idea came from a local resident who said there ought to be a corner of the park reserved for senior citizens. He said the new play area was very popular but that part of the Park wasn't the right environment for older people to sit down and relax. What he and others wanted was a more peaceful place where his generation could sit and enjoy a view over the canal and the hills beyond. When I put this to the Parish Council we all agreed this was an excellent idea for our annual bench and we are currently choosing the most appropriate design. We have been in touch with Warrington Council who own the park and we are going to install it right by the Canal behind the football pitch in the corner by Ridgway Gardens.

Clearly we cannot reserve it solely for senior citizens but I do hope that the youngsters don't hog it for themselves and respect the privacy of their elders!"



Alternative Vote Myths

As the referendum on voting reform approaches, those opposed to change are trying to confuse voters about the Alternative Vote known as AV.

1) AV will break the link between voters and their MP – **NO** - there will still be a single MP for each constituency

2) AV gives some people more than one vote - **NO** - each person's vote only counts once, it just doesn't get thrown away early in the process. It might be counted several times but it is only one vote

3) AV is complicated - **NO** - it is as easy as 1,2,3 – the Conservatives use AV to select their leader and the wider electorate will understand how it works to select an MP

The biggest single advantage of AV is that an MP only gets elected if more than half of those voting choose to put them as one of their choices. So instead of being elected by as few as 22% of those eligible to vote and 35% of those who actually voted as happened in Warrington South, MPs will have the legitimacy of some degree of support from most voters.

AV means no more wasted votes! However if you don't want to express a preference for more than one candidate you will still be able to vote in the conventional way by marking only one candidate as your choice on the ballot form. The choice will be yours. **We say YES to the Alternative Vote, we hope you will too.**

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT COUNCILLORS AT THE HEART OF OUR COMMUNITY

Ten Lib Dem successes in Government

- ✓ £4.50 a week extra for pensioners and basic state pension increases linked to earnings
- ✓ Tax credits for the poorest families have been increased
- ✓ Tax allowance to be raised by £1000 from this April and 1.1 million of the lowest paid workers will pay no tax by 2013
- ✓ Green deal to be introduced under which 14 million homes will be better insulated saving a household £550 a year on lower energy bills
- ✓ Plans for expensive Identity Cards have been cancelled
- ✓ Labour's Post Office closure programme has been scrapped
- ✓ 100,000 more apprentices to be created to help young people get back into work
- ✓ Banks to pay a fairer share through a continuing £10 billion bank tax
- ✓ Referendum on a fairer voting system on 5 May
- ✓ Pupil Premium introduced to help children from poorer backgrounds

The Pupil Premium in Lymm

The Pupil Premium was one of the four key manifesto commitments from the Lib Dems.

In its first year the programme will provide £625m extra funding for the poorest children in schools, rising to £2.5bn each year, by the end of this Parliament. In year one, every school is guaranteed an extra £430 from the Government for every child on free school meals. In Warrington this should benefit over 3400 children and bring in over £1.4 million of extra money.

Cllr Ian Marks says, "The Premium gives our Headteachers the freedom to use the money how they want, in the ways they know work - not how politicians in Whitehall tell them to. There may be extra classes for children falling behind or it may provide one-to-one tuition.

Despite the recent controversy over tuition fees, all the evidence shows the best way to help bright kids from poor families get to university is to target additional resources at them when they are younger and so give them a head start in life. In Lymm our schools will gain an extra £44,000 this year from the Premium."

Higher Lane / Booths Hill Road resurfacing and road safety

Your councillors are in discussion with the Highways Department and the local Action Group urging the Council to progress this long awaited scheme. Funding has been cut back but we are determined that action is taken soon.

Need a postal vote?
Apply before 14 April by phoning 442184, by post to the Town Hall or by email to elections@warrington.gov.uk

Affordable Housing



Ian and Pam look at the plan for the proposed development

We are waiting for a planning application for the land at the bottom of Sandy Lane. In 2002 a high density housing scheme was turned down on appeal. For years there has been a white fence around the site. Cllr Ian Marks says, "Local residents received a letter in December describing proposals for ten high quality shared ownership homes. They would only be for people who live or work locally. They would be aimed at people who cannot afford to buy outright but have enough income to buy a stake in their home."

Cllr Pam Hunter who lives in Sandy Lane adds, "The main concern of local residents is traffic. We cannot accept an access onto Sandy Lane because the traffic at the junction is dreadful already at school times. We are also uneasy about the height of the buildings. We want to arrange a meeting between residents and the developer to air our concerns."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Dingle Steps

The Parish Council is moving forward with the plan to improve the access to the village centre from the Upper Dam with an 'archway' and better signage.

Cornfield Meadows

The Parish Council has welcomed Warrington Council's plans for a wildflower meadow at the Dam and a cornflower meadow on the grassed area at the junction of Princess Road and Booths Hill Road.

Carparks

New white lines will be painted on the upper bays on the Pepper Street carpark. The recycling bay at Davies way is being re-arranged to provide an additional parking space.

Booths Hill House

The sale of Booths Hill House to McCarthy and Stone has now been completed. Demolition is scheduled to start at the end of April.

Your FOCUS Team – can we help you?

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