

Annual Report

Council Michael Edwards – Bridge Ward

I was elected to Nottingham City Council from Bridge ward on 20th October 2011.

Roles

I serve as -

- the Chair of Area 8 Committee (until May 2016);
- the Chair of the City Centre Forum;
- a member of the Planning Committee and the Audit committee (until May 2016);
- a council nominated member of the EnviroEnergy Board;
- a council nominated observer of the Meadows Partnership Trust (MPT) Board;

I attend public meetings, tenants and residents groups' meetings (NeMTRA and OMTRA), and have supported -

- the Arkwright Meadows Community Gardens and the In Bloom campaigns in their work,
- the Friends of the Meadows Library.

I attend the Meadows & Clifton Family and Communities Advisory Board meetings (whose work includes oversight of Sure Start Centres).

I hold advice "surgeries" at the Meadows Library (as well as collecting casework at the Bridgeway Shopping Centre) and I attend ward walks.

Way of working

I seek to add value as an elected representative - celebrating our free society and embracing the principles of public life; demonstrating how we can achieve more together in partnership and through public services; helping those most who need most help; and meeting the challenges of today and the future (local jobs for local people, an ageing society, climate change and energy security).

For current services and new initiatives, I test the vision, the planning and the performance management, the capacity, capability and culture, the overall legitimacy; and whether it is inspirational.

I try to visit sites of planning applications in the ward that have been referred to Planning committee and have sought to promote greener architecture and facilities for bikes in particular.

As of 19th July 2016, and since the by-election, 1700 items of concern ("cases", including - demands for improvements, requests for information, concerns about failure in service delivery) that require some form of oversight have been logged, probably from around 700 or so clients. Whilst walking around, I also report problems in the public domain (including tipping and litter, road and pavements defects) directly to 2 specific council officers (1 for The Meadows and 1 for the city centre), for them to deal with; there may well have been some hundreds of such reports that were not formally logged.

I have met many hundreds of residents during the 2105 and 2016 elections and referendums.

Much of my work is reported on a photo-based blog which I began in October 2012 – <http://www.michaelmedwards.wordpress.com>.

New Opportunities in the Meadows and the Challenges that come with them

Main campaigns have been -

- introduction of the extended tram systems;
- tackling ASB in Arkwright Walk;
- residents parking permits for most of the New Meadows;

- a new cricket pavilion for Meadows Recreation Ground, and improving Victoria Embankment;
- challenges associated with the decommissioning of stacked maisonettes (the “Q blocks”);
- problems associated with the planned closure of Meadows police station;
- challenging rogue private landlords, especially in the Wilford Grove neighbourhood;
- identifying trees in the public domain that are most in need of pruning; and
- objecting to a free school being sited next to a thriving engineering business.

Crime has generally remained low in The Meadows, although special attention has been required along Arkwright Walk.

The number of complaints about the services provided by Nottingham City Homes has remained low.

More queries and issues have been associated with growing commuter parking in residential areas and plans to improve parks.

Previous achievements include the engineering changes to avoid cutting at least 27 trees down for the tram, introducing 20mph speed zones, the retention of Portland Leisure Centre through transfer to a trust, defending plans to double the capacity of Riverside school and the continuation of decent homes work. It was a pleasure to see the refurbishment of “crosswall” semi-detached houses, new street lighting throughout The Meadows and to attend the opening of the extension to the outstanding Welbeck primary school, improvements to the Victoria Embankment and Meadows Recreation Ground (road resurfacing, NHS outdoor gym etc.).

A Meadows regeneration plan has previously been issued and updated.

Meadows concerns

There has been a continued determination to tackle tipping.

City Centre concerns

I have reported issues concerning the public domain.

Plans for renewing Broadmarsh shopping centre and a new college on Suffolk Street are huge opportunities and bring major challenges.

City concerns

I continue to take interest in the use of the railway station.

Impact of cuts in public spending

I have liaised and sought to help on the following issues of concern –

- Cuts in benefits to those most in need, especially families with disabled children, means Meadows Advice Group has needed to reach even more people.

Personal

I enjoyed -

- presenting the history of sports grounds in The Meadows at the celebration of the new Meadows Cricket Pavilion, and
- boarding the first public tram service from Queens Walk to the city centre; and
- supporting the “Piecing Together “ tapestry of The Meadows.

I appreciate and value the help of Cllr. Nicola Heaton, Lilian Greenwood MP and her staff, and the caseworkers of the city council.