

Meeting Date: 4 March 2014

Public/Private\*: Public

**Environment & Transport Portfolio Holder's Report –**

Title: **Councillor Elsie Martlew**

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**City Engineers** - Historic Quarter Parking and Loading Improvements - The formal public consultation on proposals to create a restricted zone in the Historic Quarter of the City Centre has now closed. Public comments were invited on proposals to provide up to an additional 11 disc parking places, an additional 14 Blue Badge bay, and 13 loading bays which will be available for alternative parking uses outside loading hours. This work is part of ongoing plans to improve the public realm for users and businesses and to improve parking issues on Annetwell Street. The proposals now await approval by the County Council.

Festive Lights - The Festive Lights and Winter Light displays were well received this year with many written and verbal compliments. The Winter Lights remain operational until February half term. This year, additional lights have been provided with the display now including St Cuthbert's Lane, St Alban's Row and St Cuthbert's Churchyard. Meetings are planned to take place with City Centre businesses to discuss sponsorship opportunities which would allow further enhancements next year to the lights.

Review of Residents parking zones – The County Council are consulting residents of Parking Zone A about changes which are intended to provide easier parking for residents. This is the first of a number of reviews involving the other zones. The conclusion of this review will enable the City Council to reissue permits to residents on behalf of Cumbria County Council.

**Environmental Health Service** - Environmental Health have been active in controlling the dangerous practice of unregistered tattooing. In December following information from the public and a successful application for a Magistrate's Court Order, Environmental Health Officers seized a large quantity of tattooing equipment from an unregistered premises that was operating as a business. Further formal action is being considered against this business operator.

Following another seizure in May 2013 an unregistered tattooist was prosecuted by the Council and a custodial sentence of 4 months was handed down by Magistrates. Magistrates recognised the seriousness of the offence. The prosecution has been covered in the local, national and international press with the story on the Daily Mail website being shared over 28 000 times on social media. If tattooing is not done correctly it can lead to skin infections and scarring and also the real risk of contracting blood borne viruses such

as hepatitis and HIV. Registered tattooists are inspected by the local authority and have to meet safe hygiene standards.

The Environmental Health Service is continuing to spend a considerable amount of time ensuring appropriate burials for those where no next of kin is known or where the next of kin are not prepared to take responsibility. This financial year 8 such cases have been referred to the Council from the Coroner's Office and although only 4 of these have required burial by the Council all required research and liaison with potentially interested relatives and friends. In one case after a search process a gentleman who died homeless in Carlisle was repatriated to his home County by a former employer who paid for the funeral. In another lengthy case the Council had to take steps to arrange for the funeral of a gentleman as his family were refusing to register his death. Although the family has since made appropriate funeral arrangements this was only following action by the Council.

The Education and Enforcement Team are encouraging the public to lead on projects in their neighbourhoods. A recent project in St Aidan's transformed an untidy car park for less than £500 with the help of community volunteers. The car park will continue to be maintained by a local youth group. In a similar initiative three lucky community groups are being offered £500 towards a project they think will help transform the area they live in. Leaflets are currently in circulation across the district along with a strong social media campaign.

The approach of handing responsibility back to the community has also been successful as intelligence from the public has resulted in targeted dog fouling patrols. These patrols have led to an increased number of dog fouling incidents being witnessed and addressed, some of which have been referred straight for prosecution.

**Green Spaces** - The Green Spaces Team has been focusing on completing the winter work projects around the City. Many of these have been fully or partially funded by grants and partnership working, allowing us to get more work done. Grounds winter maintenance for the Parks, Open Spaces and Cemeteries is on schedule to complete.

There has been extensive work in Durrhill Woods to remove unsafe trees and trees overhanging residential properties. This is the second successive year work has been done here and it has made a real difference.

At Talkin Tarn the Higher Level Scheme funding has paid for ecological improvements to the Farlam field to encourage Wading birds and insects as well as hedgerow planting.

In Rickerby Park we have supported the Friends group who raised the money to install new interpretation signs around the park, creation of the Friends Of Rickerby Park website and the resurfacing of various footpaths in the park.

At Kingmoor Nature Reserve the Higher Level Scheme funding has paid for hedge laying and drainage and we have also carried out path surfacing, which was partially funded by the County Council.

In Melbourne Park footpath resurfacing has been completed and the installation of steps allowing easier access to the playing fields.

At Bitts Park we have started a project with Eden Valley Hospice to improve the gardens, which they are helping fund.

At Hammonds Pond we have completed some more clearance of the overgrown woodlands that was so successful last year and we have been successful in our bid of £5,500 from Barclays Spaces for Sports for improvements to the Multi Use Games Area.

At Chances Park we have supported the Friends to complete their final projects in relation to the Heritage Lottery Fund project. A new interpretation board has been installed in the Georgian Garden which can be changed with the changing seasons

We have been successful in securing £800 via 'Designing Out Crime' funds towards the repairs to the fence line in Christchurch Gardens off Botchergate. This will please local residents and businesses who have suffered the inconveniences of this being used as a short-cut. The intention is to generally tidy up, secure the site and generally overhaul the attractiveness of the green space. Remedial work is also being undertaken to the wall and gravestones to make the area safer.

**Bereavement Services** - The Crematorium was closed between the 19<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> February for essential repairs to the boiler, prior to the closure consultation took place with local undertakers to ascertain the best time for the work to be undertaken with minimum disruption to the service.

**Neighbourhood Services** - From April 2014, the Bring site service will be delivered by our in house team; we have taken delivery of new vehicles as well as some new skips for glass collection and are planning for a smooth transfer so that service to the public is not affected.

Delivery of gull proof sacks to residents still on the purple sack collection will begin in March. Where arrangements have already changed we have seen reduced incidence of litter and it is hoped that without this food source, gulls will not be encouraged to the same extent. We are busy with communicating the changes to affected residents and have supplemented communication with a Youtube video on the use of the new gull proof sacks so that the public are aware of how to use them.

The street cleansing crews have done great work in maintaining certain standards especially during the inclement weather conditions that we have recently faced. Work has been done to reinforce procedures during inclement weather conditions which will improve standards in this work going forward. Levels of dropped litter remains a concern and work with education and enforcement in the coming months will raise awareness of this issue to prevent it happening in the first place.

**War Memorials Project** - A project to repair and clean war memorials in Carlisle City Council area has been approved. The initial approval was for memorials in the ownership of the City Council. Memorials include the Cenotaph in Rickerby Park, war memorials in the cemeteries and other urban memorials. This work has been tendered and awarded to a local contractor (Askins & Little of Carlisle) and is scheduled to start on 17th March.

Further approval has been given to clean and repair other war memorials not in City Council ownership and the process of identifying the location and condition of these memorials is in progress. Most of these memorials are in churchyards in the rural areas. The owners of these memorials will be contacted and offered assistance with cleaning and repairs in time for the 100 year anniversary of WW1 in August.