

To all Town and Parish Councils

Your ref:

Our ref: 0812TPCPF/DH

Date: 17/08/2012

Dear Chairman and Clerk

Information for Town and Parish Councils

It has come to my attention that a number of parishes have some issues that they would like to address with us in the context of our commitment to localism and the principle of enabling communities to do more for themselves.

This letter addresses some of the more common enquiries we have received, but please do contact us should there be any other area you would like to talk to us about.

Grassland and wild flowers

Many of our towns and parishes have areas of grassland in their parish either along the highway or in open space that they value because of the presence of wild flowers; particularly in spring and early summer. Some requests have been made to leave these areas uncut or to reduce the number of cuts to allow the wildflowers to seed.

We would be happy to accommodate a request for areas to be left uncut or to have a reduced number of cuts. In doing so we would need to have regard to the following:

- For road safety reasons, some roadside verges require cutting more frequently than others. We would not be able to leave a verge uncut if this created a potential hazard. For verges which are designated as Roadside Verge Nature Reserves, we are currently in the process of agreeing cutting regimes with our contractors to preserve their wildlife value.

Central Bedfordshire Council

Priory House, Monks Walk
Chicksands, Shefford
Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ

Telephone 0300 300 8xxx

Email customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

- The contractor would have to make a judgement depending on the size of the area to be left uncut as to whether the whole surrounding stretch of grass would also have to be left uncut.
- The town or parish council would need to take full responsibility for ensuring that local residents are fully aware and understood why certain areas of verge / open space are not being cut, to avoid unnecessary complaints.

If you have identified areas in your parish that you would prefer to leave uncut or that would benefit from a reduced number of cuts, please let me know. We will assess the volume of requests and discuss any implications with our contractors and contact you with our decision.

Dog fouling

A significant number of our towns and parishes tell us that they have an ongoing problem with dog fouling and would like to know how they can get involved in reducing this nuisance.

The Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996 and its regulations make it an offence to allow a dog to foul in public spaces (land that the public has access to) and verges. These regulations were adopted by the legacy authorities and are still valid today. In addition, the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 enables you to work with us in using dog control orders to manage dogs in our public places and take action against those that flout the law. Dog Control Orders will be replaced next year by Community Protection Notices. These feature in the Home Office White Paper 'Putting Victims First', which was published in May 2012. We await the precise details of how these will work. In the meantime, the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act remains in force and will probably remain so under the new legislation.

Having said all of the above, our approach should be about education and prevention more than enforcement.

We have five Contract Officers covering the Central Bedfordshire area, who deal with issues relating to street cleansing, litter, waste collection, graffiti, grass cutting and dog fouling. Details of the Contract Officer covering your area have previously been sent to you.

Please get in touch with your Contract Officer to provide information on dog fouling hot spots and areas where you have particular concerns. Issues that should be considered include:

- Signage – is there sufficient signage and is it in the right places?
- Awareness raising – through local papers, newsletters and websites etc.
- Local campaigns – there is some useful information on the Keep Britain Tidy website.

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- Dog bins – are there enough dog bins and are they located in the right places? Are they emptied frequently enough?
- Education visits by a Dog Warden - there are two Wardens covering Central Bedfordshire. Whilst their prime responsibilities are in meeting our statutory obligations regarding stray dogs, this resource can be managed to organise patrols in specific locations. Wardens can also issue Fixed Penalty Notices for dog fouling.

If the above does not solve / reduce the problem our Environmental Protection Team can look to use enforcement action where there is sufficient evidence.

Any local issues can be taken up directly with your Contract Officer or reported via email to: wasteservices@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk.

Parking

We are often asked by town and parish councils about what can be done to manage local parking issues.

Central Bedfordshire Council's draft 'Approach to Parking' strategy outlines our intent to work much more closely with you to manage parking enforcement in your areas, which could include:

- **Co-location** – You could offer your premises for enforcement officers to take their tea / lunch breaks. This would mean they could discuss any immediate enforcement needs required on that day, and provide daily interaction on local issues.
- **Enhanced engagement** - Specific 'parking meetings' could be arranged every quarter where all parking issues can openly be discussed and worked upon.
- **Lines and signs** marking parking restrictions - It would be very helpful to have your assistance with lines and signs as these are constantly vandalised or fall into disrepair making it difficult for us to enforce the restrictions. Your assistance in identifying defects and potentially rectifying them would be invaluable.
- **Warning notices** – You could also assist with issuing Council warning notices in instances where there are no restrictions and a parking fine cannot be enforced - e.g. where a vehicle is parked on a footway or verge.

We welcome the opportunity where possible to discuss some of these or any other suggestions you may have.

Traffic Regulation Orders

Finally, I wrote to you in March regarding the process and timescale for dealing with Permanent Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs). My letter referred to a new policy of batching and advertising all non-urgent TROs on a quarterly basis to

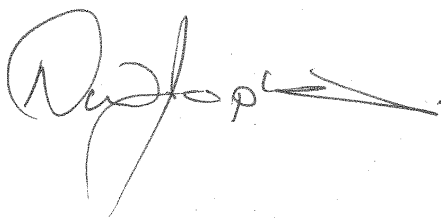
reduce the cost of advertising. This included the requirement for town and parish councils to contribute the proportionate costs of advertising for any schemes they have raised. Whilst Central Bedfordshire Council will pay the costs of implementing the works of small schemes, town and parish councils will be expected to pay for the design, consultation and preparation work that forms the costs of advertising the order.

These arrangements apply to low cost schemes only, such as single and double yellow lines, residents' parking zones and signage.

I have attached an example showing the financial breakdown of the costs for a very basic TRO to paint 100 metres of double yellow lines on each side of a road and erect four warning signs on poles. The same model would apply to other low cost schemes. The main costs and time-consuming elements of the process relate to: the design work; the statutory consultation process; preparing papers and reports for the Traffic Management Committee; and commissioning contractors to carry out the work. Please note that the time and costs can escalate depending on the objections raised. Therefore, it is important that you can demonstrate community consent for any schemes before they are submitted.

If you would like to talk to us about any of the issues I have mentioned above or if you have other ideas in mind, please contact Peter Fraser, Head of Partnerships and Community Engagement on 0300 300 6740, email peter.fraser@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Yours sincerely



Councillor David Hopkin

Deputy Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Lead Member for Localism

Specimen TRO costs for 100m of double yellow lines on both sides of a road

activity	Cost to T / PC	Cost to CBC	Total
undertake initial drawing	£270.00		
prepare detail plan and notice	£250.00		
advertise in press	£150.00		
advertise on site	£100.00		
review objections and write report	£230.00		
<hr/>			
write works order		£50.00	
publish final notice in press		£150.00	
undertake works		£700.00	
completion check (site visit)		£100.00	
Total	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	
Overall Total			£2,000.00