

Buzz

Out on the floor



'The monthly page where we give floorspace to representatives of Broxtowe's five main political parties to tell us what they're thinking'

Labour

I'M worried by the pervasive atmosphere of pessimism that I'm encountering as I go round Beeston and Chilwell. We need to try to get some positive enthusiasm back! I'd like to put forward some ideas, evolving out of an email last week with input from many sides.

Survival in 2014

The current prediction is still that the tram will be running by Christmas 2014 (there are massive penalties per day for overruns), and the first priority is to get through the period. Beeston County Cllr Kate Foale and I walked the route with NET and other county councillors, and in particular identified two issues:

- The current scheme to help traders (up to £450,000/year turnover) caps assistance at £20,000 per business (up to 70 percent of lost turnover). This is less generous than the original package because the County pulled the plug and this arbitrary limit squeezes medium-sized businesses, so we were able to persuade the County to lift it – there is now no limit.
- Both residents and traders outside the worst affected zone are also suffering. Lower Road, Fletcher Road and Humber Road are amongst those particularly affected and many stand at present to get nothing at all. Kate and I both feel that this needs to be revisited by the new County leadership and I understand discussions are under way.

A New Deal for Beeston

Important though these issues are, I also think there is far too little focus on what happens when the tram is running. As things stand, the outlook is merely that everyone breathes a sigh of relief.

That would be an enormous missed opportunity. We need to seize the moment for Beeston and Chilwell

and take the opportunity to make it the attractive hub on the western side of the city that it should be. I believe that all the following are realistic possibilities:

- NET must agree to operate free of charge for at least the first week, giving people in Nottingham the chance to come and see what we have to offer and giving Beeston and Chilwell residents a little bit back for all they've had to put up with. Particular concessions for people who have suffered especially during the development would be welcome.
- NET must work with the Beeston BID and local traders to offer a discount scheme for the first three months, with free advertising for participating traders on the route. I'm meeting the BID chair next weekend and hope to hear more about their plans.
- Once it becomes clear that the December deadline will be met, we should throw a mega-Christmas party including a Christmas fair and with music into the night – if we can do it for Oxjam, we can do it for Beeston too.

- The bus companies need to be drawn into the planning with trial feeder buses and combined ticketing. Canvassing in the Rylands, I was repeatedly asked about improvements to the current poor service; equally, areas beyond Bardills deserve the chance to get a better link.

- The Beeston Square plans need to be revisited or at the very least, we need to see them accelerated so they are ready in time for the New Deal.

I'd like to organise a public discussion of these ideas, provisionally on Friday, January 10.

Why am I doing this when I'm not the current MP? Someone needs to! It's really too easy to be an opposition candidate and just sit around criticising the government. If I want to stand for positive politics, it means not just moaning and

criticising but helping.

The election is some way off, and no doubt will be decided by other things. In the meantime, we've got a community that needs a future.

Let's work together, across party, and make it happen.

*Nick Palmer
Ex-MP for Broxtowe*



As a local resident living in Chilwell, I have been shocked by the size of the Labour party cuts to services and jobs on top of the massive cuts already made a short time ago by the Conservative Party.

How much more do they expect the local people to take. The reason, they say, is the cut in government funding.

If this is the case, why haven't our local MPs and councillors, being members of the three 'main political parties', told the government that enough is enough?

This is scenario is being repeated all over the UK. Consecutive governments

have payed billions and billions of pounds into the EU and in overseas aid to many other countries who really don't need it or abuse it. People locally and nationally have to pay for it, even though the children, the old, the disabled, the low paid and the less well-off are suffering. The wealthy bosses of big business and pro-Europeans just don't care; this undemocratic government just will not listen to the people.

Only the votes of the people can stop all this. I can't do this through the so-called 'Three Main Parties' any more, which is why I will be voting for UKIP in the next election.

*Bob Heeley
UKIP*



IT has been a very busy few days on the borough council.

On Monday we launched the 'Issues and Options' consultation on housing allocations. This not very exciting sounding process is actually really important for all Broxtowe residents.

The consultation is about exactly where new housing should be allowed in the next 15 years. Every possible site in the borough has been identified and listed, and the council really does want your views about which should be allowed to be developed. No decisions have yet been made and this is a genuine consultation. You can obtain the documents from the council website (www.broxtowe.gov.uk), from libraries or a copy can be sent to you (ring (0115) 917 7777). The consultation runs from now until January.

The council has also set up a working group to ensure that we maximise the benefits from HS2. All three political group leaders sit on this and I've been given the honour of chairing it. So far, the borough council has been unanimous in support for HS2 and I hope that this will continue.

Finally, the County Council has announced their proposed budget for next year. If anyone wonders what the national situation would be like if Labour had won the last general election, then they need look no further than Notts County Council. They have announced massive cuts to the budget together with

big council tax rises. At the same time, the Labour councillors who made this decision have voted more money for themselves and have rejected calls for an inquiry into councillors' allowances. They have also turned down an offer of a grant from the government to avoid increasing council tax.

I'm really disappointed about this. We keep hearing about a cost-of-living crisis and yet they are making it worse. Many people who voted Labour last May are probably regretting it at the moment.

*David Watts
LibDems*



The Green take on The Beeston Express..

THE local Green Party is going to be heartily fed-up with The Beeston Express, because there has simply not been enough time (at the right time of the day) to check the latest column I have is the right one. I can only apologise for there not having enough time to deal with it earlier.

The Editor

EDITOR'S NOTE

LOOKING for a comment from the Conservtives? Sorry to disappoint, folks, but not a squeak heard other than the occasional press relase from the constituency office at Barton House in Chilwell. Press releases are not quite what we're seeking for this page.

However, because of the desperate need for things to get a shift on the centre of Beeston and because I'm brave enough to stick my head above the parapet if it will help get things moving, *The Beeston Express* has agreed to let Nick Palmer, ex-MP, take a slightly different stance for this issue's *Out on the Floor* forum.

I was presented with this option after spending time in The Square recedntly collecting signatures in favour of a decent town clock for the centre. I'd been surprised by just how despondent Beestonians had become, not really expecting anything positive to happen and more than happy to sign the Beeston Express petition for the clock - something that council-tax paying residents would like to see had become almost symbolic of what isn't happening. There's to be no open vista over a revitalised Square to the parish church, no Marks & Sparks, no Waitrose, a carbuncle of a corner where Argos is (and the useless 'clock' still in situ!); why do we want a gym in a shopping centre... and the list went on.

The Beeston Express is NOT politically biased. It just wants to see a town centre we can be proud of when the dust finally settles.