

Public comment re item 35

I wrote to you on the 2nd, 3rd and 20th of November 2020 with regards to the local residents objections to the proposed bus shelter in Harris Ave. It seems that a decision will be taken on this matter on a meeting on Monday 4th of July. Having spoken to the residents, I intend to attend this meeting on behalf of them to ensure our objections are properly discussed and documented.

In the mean time, would you please include this and my previous emails in any documentation to be used during the discussion, so that all attendees can understand the reasons behind our objections and thus give proper consideration to them.

I also wish to draw attention to this paragraph in the report compiled by councillors Youngman and Butler, in particular the following highlighted in bold

"The undersigned councillors are left with a dilemma. Both live in the ward, but neither has witnessed any untoward behaviour at bus stops. There is no wish to create a problem and thereby cause misery to the residents of Harris Avenue. **On the other hand, just because there has been trouble in past decades is no guarantee that anti-social behaviour will arise around a new bus shelter.** Three manufacturers of bus shelters have been contacted; all designs incorporate significant anti-vandal measures. **It would be a sad reflection of the local community if the idea were to be abandoned just because of the threat of anti-social behaviour.** "

There is a growing tide of anti-social behaviour appearing in this area, Recently the residents hall has been vandalised, A resident who lives adjacent to the existing bus stop has recently has her wall graffitied which took some cleaning off. There also used to be a bench at the top of the road on the junction of Harris Ave and Hollingsworth road, this too was removed because of anti-social behaviour. The phone box, when it was there, was often vandalised

I am particularly upset about the second highlighted statement. I find this very Glib. Councillors Butler and Youngman, nor the bus users will have to live with the anti-social behaviour if and when it arises, we the residents do, and have done in the past before the previous shelter was removed

The councillors also state that they have not witnessed any anti-social behaviour at bus stops, can I ask, how often were the bus stops observed, did these bus stops have shelters and were the observation carried out during the evenings and at night, if no, then that statement has no bearing on the matters here.

The councillors have consulted with the residents who live in this street and have been told that we strongly oppose a bus shelter here and have outlined very good reasons for not wanting it. The council need to listen to our objections and take heed. We object to the shelter for the following reasons.

- 1) The bus shelter would become a gathering point for local youths especially in the evenings/ nights.
- 2) A general increase in noise as youths horse around
- 3) Attempted/actual vandalism
- 4) Use of drugs (syringes have been found in the ally opposite the bus stop before)
- 5) Drinking of alcohol
- 6) Litter
- 7) Attempted arson (trying to burn the bus stop)
- 8) Urination (Again this happens in the ally opposite)

9) residents park their cars in the street and have had them vandalised before, recently, no 77 had a car vandalised and their son was assaulted. Having youths congregate in the bus shelter increases the likelihood of this happening again (And it's not the councillors that have to pay for the damage)

In their submissions in support of this proposal, the councillors state that:-

"This is a popular stop adjacent to shops, Gunton Community Hall and the Baptist Church (with food and clothing banks). There are several sheltered homes and accommodation for elderly people nearby."

In using this statement, the councillors give no evidence to support that people use this bus stop to get home again having accessed the shops, community Hall or the Baptist Church or the clothing and food banks. Nor have they presented any evidence to suggest that residents of the sheltered homes and homes for the elderly use this stop, in fact 2 of these nearby shops, also sell Alcohol

The councillors also state:-

"Every waiting passenger asked has fervently supported the proposal of a shelter. Buses are frequently 10-15 minutes late due to traffic congestion in town, and closures of the bascule bridge."

Passengers only wait there a short time, albeit exposed to the wind and rain sometimes, (like they do at most every other stop on the route), The 101 service no longer crosses the bascule bridge, therefore delays are less, however, any delay experienced at Harris Ave will also be experienced at every other bus stop on the route.

Also the bus stop users will be using the service during the day, services stop early evening, therefore the users of the bus stop would not be subject to any issues, as the residents will be, especially late evening/night

In my previous emails, I have asked what is the driver for choosing this stop to waste £7,200 of tax payers money on. The only reason offered is that it used to have a shelter before, which the council acknowledges was removed because of antisocial behaviour, but think it's a good idea to replace it despite vehement opposition from the residents that live nearby.

In seeking to replace this shelter the council has not carried out any Due Diligence to see if this stop is indeed the most popular stop on the route, nor have they carried out any form of risk assessment or identified any risk mitigation measures

The council also state that Suffolk Council, will undertake future maintenance of the shelter. Taking a look at the pavements local to the bus stop both sides of Harris Ave, you can quickly see that that any bus stop maintenance will be virtually zero.

The council have also not address how they will tackle any anti-social behaviour if and when it does arise. In placing a shelter in the proposed location the council could become directly responsible for creating anti-social behaviour, and as such, they also have a duty of care to those residents who are affected by such behaviour

It looks like the council will pay to have this shelter erected and then wash their hands of it and any associated problems caused.

The council states that Planning Permission will not be required, Please could you explain why this is the case.

Before coming to a decision on this matter, we wish the council to carry out Due Diligence and establish factually that this is the most popular stop on the route. If it is not, then the proposal should be withdrawn at that point

We also wish the council to acknowledge the real prospect of anti-social behaviour at and around the shelter and identify the measures that the council will put in place to tackle it; Simply saying it's a Police matter won't wash as the residents have pre warned the council of the potential and the council will be responsible for causing the anti-social behaviour in the first place.

We would like evidence of the Due Diligence and the risk mitigation proposals presented to the residents at a meeting at the Gunton Residents Hall along with the proposed designs before any decision is taken whether to proceed.