

QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL UNDER PROCEDURAL RULE 10.0
COUNCIL – 18 March 2015

QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLOR NIGEL BELL

Received on 13.03.15

1. Can you tell me how many complaints and objections the Council have made to the media (various papers, Television, radio, etc) when those organisations have proposed programmes and features on the Farm Terrace story?

None. The council has never objected or complained when an organisation has proposed programmes and features on the Farm Terrace story. It is of course completely appropriate for news issues to be covered in Watford and the Communications team deal with these positively regularly. Like many other organisations featured in the media though we do complain where there has been misrepresentation or inaccuracies. The most recent example was the Daily Telegraph using a picture of an idyllic Scottish allotment plot to illustrate a story on Farm Terrace – they acknowledged it had misled their online readers and broke the editors code of practice.

For more information please contact Interim Communications & Engagement Section
Head Milly Camley
Ext: 8388

2. I note the latest promotion leaflet and photo for the Borough's allotments with the caption, "Join our growing community of allotment holders".

"How can the Council justify using this statement when it is at best misleading if not an untruth?-bearing in mind that the information the Council has provided on applications since 2008 has shown a steady decline in applications, hitting the lowest point of only 128 applications last year compared to a peak of 340 applications in 2009. This is in contrast to the national trend which is of an increasing demand for allotments for the same period from 2009 to 2014."

The number of applications varies year on year, but there has not been a steady decline in applications during that period.

The key measure of allotment activity is the % of allotments that are occupied and these figures are 23% higher than 2002 peaking at 91% in 2011. The current % of occupied active allotments as of 16th March 2015 is 89%.

The poster promotional campaign is also a play on words as the activity undertaken on allotments is the "growing" of fruit and vegetables thus a "growing community".

For more information please contact: Paul Rabbitts
Ext: 8250

3. I would like to know the amount of money spent by the Council on Consultants in the financial year 2014/15 and comparing this to the years 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14

The figures are as follows.

2010/11 £234,960
2011/12 £68,240
2012/13 £205,269
2013/14 £42,556
2014/15 £130,736

For more information please contact: Manny Lewis
Ext: 8186

QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLOR SEAMUS WILLIAMS

Received on: 13.03.15

1. Does the council recognize the destructive nature that unfair zero hour contracts have on working people and working families?

This council should be actively seeking to reward companies and organizations that do not use unfair zero hour contracts. These Contracts deny mothers and fathers access to ante natal classes. They do not allow people to take care of their dependents and they also mean people cannot join a trade union.

Does this council and its leadership recognize that zero-hour contracts put a huge strain on young people's ability to seek home ownership as-well as the strain it puts on students in work.

Does this council also understand that as we become a more "Metropolitan" town with more bars restaurants and coffee show we will see the number of people on these zero hour contracts increase?

If so can council officers explain the lack of action within the town's administration to tackle something that fundamentally undermines workers' rights and will have medium and long term implications for Watford and its population.

This Council does not support zero hours contracts. None of its employees are engaged in this way. However the Council has no control over the employment flexibility that private sector employers may wish to operate. The Council has no powers to direct employers in this area.

The Council's policy has always been to promote a balanced economy in Watford and members will have seen from the Core Strategy and the Local Plan Part 2 consultation that economic growth in the town reflects a desire for new homes, increased commercial space and where appropriate increased retail and leisure provision. Watford has a thriving retail and leisure economy and this is a positive position to be in.

For more information please contact Manny Lewis
Ext: 8186