

**Council Meeting – 20 July 2009**  
**Report from Councillor Gill Mercer, ENC representative on the**  
**Board of Groundwork North Northamptonshire**

The North Northamptonshire Groundwork Trust was formed in 2005 and I have been on the Board since its inception. It is a regeneration company set up as a Partnership between East Northants, Corby and Kettering Councils plus the County Council.

The Board meets 4 times a year as a full board. There are also sub groups working on specific aspects. I am on the Business Development and HR sub groups. We are just about to set up Champions to follow more closely an aspect of the Business. I am to be the Champion for Empowerment and Community Development.

The Board is tasked with overseeing the running of the Trust which is a registered charity. ENC are one of the Sponsors, so I sit as a Sponsor as do representatives of the other local authorities. I am also a Trustee.

Initially the Trust was only allowed to operate within the 3 boroughs/District. However this was recently extended so that work could be commissioned elsewhere in Northamptonshire provided the project works on full cost recovery and is approved by the Board. A few projects are being investigated in the Northampton area.

The major development recently is a reorganisation of the National and Regional structure of Groundwork. Up to now the central UK office has been predominant. This is set to change with a new Regional body being set up (Groundwork East Midlands), which will be owned by the Trusts in the region. We have been consulted on the setting up of this new entity and have agreed for a model which keeps control of local activities at a Trust level. The responsibilities of the individual Trusts and the Regional body have been set out in a new Memorandum and Articles of Association and Terms of Reference. A new contract between the Trust and the Regional body is out for consultation called the Federation Membership Agreement.

Groundwork recently went through its own CPA review called the Comprehensive Business Assessment. Their score was Good. This was an excellent achievement. There are always a few areas that can be highlighted for improvement and an action plan has been produced showing the findings of the inspectors with suggestions to work towards. One was to have Board members as Champions for instance, which is now being implemented. Another suggestion was to widen the experience of the Board. A new Board member has just been co-opted - Mr Andy Dickson - who was a local Police Inspector before his retirement.

The Board receives presentations from a member of staff at most meetings to give a better idea of individual projects. A project update is also reviewed by the Board which indicates if the project is not bringing in a financial return or is otherwise a problem in that funding is about to run out.

Projects that have been undertaken in East Northants are mainly in conjunction with the ABI areas where Groundwork has been heavily involved with community development and youth work. They also work in the areas of worklessness, the environment, health and the voluntary sector.

## Item 7 (a) (iii)

### **Council Meeting – 20 July 2009 Report from Councillor Gill Mercer, ENC representative on the Parking Committee**

The Parking partnership comprises Northamptonshire County Council, East Northamptonshire Council, Corby Borough Council, South Northamptonshire Council, Wellingborough Borough Council and Northampton Borough Council. The other 2 boroughs, Daventry and Kettering are invited to the meetings, but are not part of the partnership.

The meetings are a forum to discuss parking policies and review the way the contract with NCP is working in our respective areas.

We get enforcement plans every 2 months showing the areas they are going to work. There is a section for exceptions showing special events in the area which might need sensitive handling, i.e. when there are likely to be far more cars than usual. Members of the committee normally help to inform that section.

An area which I have been most concerned with is the maintenance and repair of yellow lines and signs in some of the District which have been unenforceable since the start of the contract. I have been exerting pressure at the meetings and in between to get this rectified. It does seem now that this is being addressed with new yellow lines having replaced the worn out lines in some areas. I have been told the others are in hand.

Another area of concern has been the alteration of lines in areas which are not appropriate. This means removing lines where not needed as well as adding some in other areas. I have been heavily involved in this and have attended several meetings at Town Councils that have requested that I look into their specific problems.

Unfortunately there have been some delays in this process partly due to software changes. In addition however, this needs to go out to consultation and if there is a disagreement within an area this will hold up the process. Unfortunately also the cost of making the traffic order is so great, that a large batch were requested at the same time of over 20 sites, spanning most of the towns in East Northants. If any one hits a problem with consultation it seems that this holds up the process for the whole district.

I spend a considerable amount of time reporting and chasing these matters in addition to attending the parking partnership meetings and pushing East Northants case whenever needed.