

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 14 SEPTEMBER 2012**

**Statement from: Councillor C L Strange, Executive Councillor for Waste Services and Green Issues**

Someone once wrote about September being a month of mellow fruitfulness and tranquility! Well, that seems to have passed us by at Waterside South and Station Road, Hykeham!

Although everything is on time, it is still all hands to the pump with the focus now very much on getting our new Energy from Waste plant ready for first firing of waste during summer 2013 – final handover of the plant to WRG in December 2013. The plant seems to stretch in length and height practically every week. As the Scunthorpe construction team start to move most of their team off site, you hear the sound of the slightly softer- accented French team moving on site to erect the boilers, moving the grate into position, and all the thousands of intricate parts necessary to give our county the most up-to-date facility of its kind in the world. Just as an aside, it was a French design team who also worked on our magnificent Cathedral nearly one thousand years ago - although our plant will be larger, it will hardly be as beautiful!

The back-up waste transfer sites are also progressing well, with Louth already in operation, Grantham practically complete, and Sleaford due for completion in October. We are also now moving forward with Gainsborough and Boston, to have them operational from the day the Energy from Waste plant opens its doors. Haulage contractors, with the specialist knowledge and capability to carry the material from the transfer stations to Hykeham, will shortly be offered the chance to bid for the prestigious waste transfer contract. To ensure the smooth set up and running, we are now about to appoint an overall coordinator.

The revised opening hours at the Household Recycling Centres have now been operational for several months and mostly have settled down well subject to some local alterations as necessary. All remain open (but on reduced hours) and the County Council has maintained its stated intention for 95% of Lincolnshire residents to have access to a recycling centre within a 12 mile radius of their home.

There are still problems at Skegness which we are trying to address and, as I write, we are undertaking an in-depth study of the site.

Recycling rates across the county are holding up well and, with Boston now collecting green waste, we expect an improvement of around 1.5% on our recycling figures countywide, taking us within 1.5% of the 55% we have set ourselves by 2015.

The appointment of Steve Willis seems an excellent choice, to which I can claim no credit. He is now getting to know the vagaries of the waste business (of which there are many!) and, in conjunction with Sean Kent, I know all in waste services will continue to provide an excellent service.

A great sadness to me is that we still see fly tipping across the county - it does not take much to make things look awful. However, the pride in communities such as Osgodby, Hemswell Cliff and Caistor (around the area I live in) is excellent. The villagers have monthly 'litter picks' with coffee and a bacon roll to end proceedings. District councils provide bags and gadgets to pick up the litter, followed by collection and transport – localism at its best. Our own dedicated team is at full stretch, and is greatly appreciated by the districts - there is a reduction in fly tipping from ten years ago, but there really shouldn't be any. If only magistrates would throw the book at all fly tippers.

The Lincolnshire Waste Partnership has also talked to Police and the Environment Agency, at our quarterly meetings, about metal theft. We have been assured that both bodies are now being extremely successful in their efforts.

However, it was reported in the press that an unlicensed waste collection gentleman had finally been nailed by the police for thieving - he exited the Magistrate's Court with a £50 fine! I despair.