

Cabinet speech Coronavirus 2 July 2020

Others may summarise the government's failings over the coronavirus crisis and its impact on our residents better than I, lament the shortfall in funding for remedial measures more eloquently and praise all the myriads of volunteers and staff who went 'above and beyond', sometimes at terrible cost to themselves more loudly. But I am here this afternoon to plead for a bit of common sense – **gumption** in plain English. Sadly it is not just the virus which can prove fatal, but the measures put in place to combat it, or equally tragically, removed prematurely. As a council, as parish councillors and as individuals we need as many hard, science evaluated facts as possible, and I am sure our officers are doing their best to extrapolate the information we need from all the confusing and contradictory government statements in a rapidly evolving situation.

I came here to represent the Radstock/Westfield traders, businesses and shoppers because I have been campaigning since 2006 to get the area recognised as a retail destination in its own right, a social hub and a good place to do business. It has been very tough because certain officers fail to hear what senior planning officers have said about the 100 space lack of parking in the town centre, cyclists about the lack of connectivity of the National Highway 24 cycle track and the various community groups about the shortage of community space for meetings and events. However, in this new, challenging, far from normal world, I am sure **you** are listening. I am so glad that common sense about the proposal to remove parking in The Street and Fortescue Road has prevailed. You just need to get the enormous hedge stretching across the pavement from the Children's Centre in Church Street cut, and the scaffolding sticking out into the road by the Victoria hall removed. Ideology driven policies on walking and cycling have to be flexible if villages in NE Somerset are not to be even more isolated.

So may I leave you with the Otley (edge of the N Yorkshire moors) solution. Get all pedestrians to walk up and down streets on the left hand side, and cyclists to keep off the pavements.

Thank you.

Cllr Eleanor Jackson.