

Since being elected as the council's vice chairman last May I had taken on a Civic role often deputising for the chairman. This had taken me all over the district and as far as the edge of Bristol. I had met many fascinating people all working for the benefit of their communities and all facing similar problems with trying to provide the same services with dwindling resources. I had also met carers of children, disabled Olympic athletes, business leaders, sports personalities and university lecturers.

I have also served on the council's Licensing committee and there have not been any problems in the ward. Also on the council's Overview and Scrutiny committee which ensures the council decisions are taken legally. As part of that role the committee questioned the decision to suspend the waste service for one week in January. Cabinet members, senior officers, Ubico management and drivers all appeared before the committee giving reasons why the decision was taken. It basically came down to safety of the workers. Various ideas have been suggested to avoid a similar cancellation if conditions are the same in future, such as snow tyres and metal spiked overshoes for the roundsmen.

No one is confident that they would have led to a different decision being made if they had been available in January. Neighbouring councils that tried to carry on lost a 36 ton refuse truck when it slid off the road into a house.

Cllr Clive Bennett, CDC