

Keeping the Customers Satisfied?

This letter is about rubbish – the household waste kind, and the customer service kind. It will come as no surprise to long- suffering council tax payers that the villain of the piece is the local authority – in this case, Wear Valley District Council.

The collection day for refuse in Tow Law is Tuesday, which just happened to be the day for industrial action this week by local government workers.

Our Council puts stickers on our wheelie bins to advise of revised collection days during predictable holiday periods such as Christmas and Easter. It also supplies black plastic sacks to store excess garbage until collection takes place.

No such notice was given for the missed collection for the whole of Tow Law on 28th March. In the absence of any information to the contrary, bins were put out as required all across the town. They remained uncollected on Wednesday, and again on Thursday.

I rang the Council on Thursday 30th, and was told that there would be no collection at all. However, if I provided my own plastic sacks, the Council had agreed that on this occasion, rubbish placed in sacks alongside the bins would be collected! I also assume we will not be fined for leaving our bins out beyond scheduled collection day. Isn't that generous of our local jobsworths?

Hang on, I hear you say, this was a strike and was un-predictable. No doubt the Council would also like us to believe that. What rubbish! OF COURSE IT WAS PREDICTABLE!

Trades Union legislation brought in by that friend of Tow Law people, Margaret Thatcher, requires a ballot to take place before industrial action takes place, and notice of subsequent action needs to be given to employers.

So why were the residents and Council Tax payers of Tow Law kept in the dark?
I suggest a number of possible explanations:

1. We usually are, and its a hard habit for the Council to break or,
2. It was too much trouble or,
3. Despite double the rate of inflation council tax rises, WVDC couldn't afford it or,
4. WVDC holds its council tax payers in contempt and it never occurred to anyone to communicate with us or,
5. The concept of customer care has not yet penetrated the corridors of power in Crook or,
6. The Council wanted to make sure we took notice that some nasty people were striking or
7. The workers wanted to make sure we noticed they have a grievance or,
8. The leaflet from the Council blew away and I missed the posters or the notice in the local press,
9. Or maybe its just sheer incompetence.

I could go on, but having got this off my chest, I'll just go on paying my thousand pounds plus a year for minimal local services.

Anyone fancy a Council Taxpayers strike?

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