

District Councillors Report and End of Year Report to 3 May 2019 for Debenham Ward

Aspall, Ashfield-cum-Thorpe, Bedingfield, Debenham, Kenton, and Winston

First of all, it is an honour and privilege to be your local Representative at the Mid Suffolk District Council. Fortunately, Cllr Matthew Hicks remains your County Councillor so we will be a double act! I will do my best to represent the community but above all listen to your all issues and help where I can. My email address and mobile phone number are at the end of the report.

An end of year report should be succinct so I do not wish to repeat all of what has been achieved by Mid Suffolk District Council some of which you will have read in the end of year booklet but highlight a few notable issues.

MSDC budget adopted 2019/20 – increase of Council Tax of £3.26 for a Band D Property (2%)

In March 2018 MSDC and Babergh DC received £475,200 from the Warm Homes fund and have insulated and installed Air source heat pumps in Council properties.

For our Council tenants the improved letting turnaround times have been reduced from 51 days to 24 days thus allowing tenants to move into much needed homes more quickly

MSDC have committed £2.5 million to the Regal Theatre in Stowmarket for a revamp and this work is proposed to start in the current year.

The Mix in Stowmarket develops skills for 16 – 24 year olds and funding is made available for support workers and career programmes.

The former Nat West Bank and Aldi building was purchased by MSDC demonstrating its commitment to invest in the community.

Moving to Endeavour House has enabled ‘smarter working’ and encouraged a range of new staff. Permission to build a range of housing and business opportunities have been granted for the Mid Suffolk District Council Offices.

It costs £300,000 to clear litter off our main roads annually and MSDC received a grant to install and trial brightly coloured litter bins with solar panels to illuminate them at night and the littering was reduced by 37%. What we do about our country lanes I don't know – Education and Parish Council litter pick initiatives (my locality budget assisted locally with that)

My £6250 locality budget was allocated as follows:-

£250 The Mix,

£250 Debenham Girls group

£320 Debenham Fun and Festivities Society

£500 Debenham War Memorial Bench

£317 Winston PCC – School Room

£2500 Debenham Sports and Leisure

£580 Active Lives

£600 Debenham Library Foundation

£500 Allotments

£433 Litter Campaign

Community Infrastructure Levy saw £469,764 collected from developers for house building between 1 October and 31 March 2019. Parish Councils receive this money automatically and can receive up to 15% or 25% if they have an adopted Neighbourhood plan. All villages can apply quarterly for funding from this pot for a properly drawn up project within the spending criteria.

MSDC funded two PCSO's and once again they are back in our communities.

CIFCO, Mid Suffolks Capital Investment Fund Company has generated a net income of £1.4m which is anticipated to grow to £5.5m over the next four years.

As I am Chair of The Planning Committee much of my time has been spent with the Planning issues and I am sure many of you are aware of the five year land supply issue. Without it developers can, and do apply, to build houses on the outskirts of our villages on our agricultural fields and all applications have to be examined. That said the country needs more housing. So there is a balance

The three main things one needs to ensure the housing is built in the appropriate place is, a Local Plan, a Neighbourhood Plan (NHP) and a five year land supply as well as careful attention to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the expertise of the planners. The NPPF changed significantly a few years ago and was updated as recently as July last year. It is anticipated the final stage of the Local Plan will be out for consultation with members of the Public Shortly.

The Debenham Parish Council and their Neighbourhood Plan team have spent over 6 years and many hours to get a NHP through and this will now feature as part of the Planning Process in the years to come. So many congratulations on the hard work achieved on this. Some of the outlying villages of course have their own boundaries and issues with Planning and I am aware of potential issues looming

At MSDC the Ward member can speak at committee but not vote but not all Planning applications go to committee so if you have any issues please feel free to contact me. Email is usually best.

I hope this gives a flavour of what happens at Mid Suffolk District Council during the year and of course with the recent local elections there is much to do and new Councillors to train so they can achieve their role to the full.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as I can and of course deal with any of your District Council issues

Councillor Mrs Kathie Guthrie

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