

## District Councillors Report to December 4<sup>th</sup> 2021

My last report was sent and dated 14<sup>th</sup> November so this is a shortened version of activities since then.

Mid Suffolk District Councils licensing department had to put out a second Public consultation for the gambling Act 2005 Statement of Principles. This was because some Councillors thought we ought to have a 'no Casino Policy' included in that document. As I am Chair of Licensing & Regulatory Committee, I feel it my duty to bring to your attention what a complete waste of time and taxpayers money for this second review just to add that Policy. Of course, myself and all district Councillors support the Health and Wellbeing of everyone in our community and do not wish to add to peoples' anxieties regarding Gambling. However it was made very clear by the licensing officers, committee and myself, at full Council, there are no such applications for a Casino nor on the horizon either in our district or surrounding districts, and no local districts have such a licence. Allocations are to Manchester and London for example. These specified licences are issued by the Government and there are only 8 in the Country I believe. There is no appetite by the government to increase that number, nor should I imagine, the time. Should an application come in the Licensing team would do all the necessary checks and it could have then come to committee where it may or may not, but more likely, have been refused and if there are no allocations left anyway it stalls at the first hurdle. However the full Council decided we needed such a policy hence the further consultation. There were no public comments or amendments. That then had to come back to the licensing and Regulatory Committee last Friday. Only three out of 10 members turned up to debate this matter again and those not present were predominately those who wished for this amendment to be made. I then had to present it to Cabinet along with the Officers again on Monday. That is democracy and politics.

With the new Covid Omicron we must once again, although we should have been vigilant anyway, return to masks in shops and public transport. I personally have worn masks all the time in spaces where public present particularly in small meeting rooms and where windows and doors are not kept open or 2 metre spaces. This advice includes family gatherings. Government is also advising to take lateral flow tests prior to attending gatherings or social events and take lateral flow tests before arriving.

Eight new affordable homes are now available in phase one of the development at the Mid Suffolk District Council Offices which were opened last Friday.

Needham Lake café and visitor centre has been named by the public as Duck and Teapot and will open early next year.

Work has begun to put 70 carbon cutting solar car port schemes at the Stowmarket Leisure centre

I have already forwarded the Christmas refuse schedule. If you did not receive it do ask and I will send again.

Don't forget Parishes can apply for trees with the National Tree Scheme initiative. Look on MSDC website to apply and see if your parish can join in.

If any bin collection is missed due to closed roads keep the bins out and the team will find a way!

Kathie Guthrie