

## District Councillor's Report for the year to April 2010

I cannot possibly comment on all aspects of work at the Mid Suffolk district Council (MSDC) so you will be pleased to know I will be brief!

My roles within the Council are as follows:

I am vice chairman of Planning B which sits monthly  
I am on the referrals planning committee which sits as and when required  
I am vice chairman of licensing - monthly  
I have attended and chaired many licensing hearings some of which are technically challenging requiring careful input from the legal department.  
I have deputised on the Executive committee  
I am a committee member of the Scrutiny committee- monthly  
I attend monthly Full council meetings - monthly  
Member of Statement of Accounts committee – twice yearly  
I am also a deputy for the specialist Snoasis planning committee and have sat on the first three meetings.

There are also monthly lectures for the Council to update members of the major issues the Council experience and of course various conferences to attend from Wind Farm Projects to Carbon Footprint reduction initiatives.

In addition of course I attend Parish Council meetings, and many of the local initiatives in our vibrant and proactive community including: Care for the Carers, Youth Club project, skate park project Police initiatives, 'Crow's Hall Country Fayre and many more. Taking all these projects into consideration I do hope the Debenham Parish Council enter Debenham for the Village of the Year competition

**Finance** - It does not need me to say this has been a difficult and challenging year. On the positive side Mid Suffolk District council received commendation from the auditors that we had been a top Cash efficient district for three years running. We have received funding from Growth incentive Scheme for business in the sum of £35,000. The continuation of the Snoasis project could improve that next year!

Because of the hard work in the planning department we are in receipt of a Housing Planning Delivery Grant for 2009/10 of just over £1m. This has helped this years finances but we envisage considerably less next year. And have earmarked some of it to help next years budget.

However due to the economic climate there has been a 17% increase in the workload for benefits. The increase in council tax was kept to a minimum of 2.5%

We are also working closely to share services with Babergh District Council and updates are regularly appearing on the MSDC Website. This initiative has been taken forward after the disastrous waste of time effort and money on the Unitary bids originally imposed from government. It may be reviewed at a later date but we cannot stand still and need to look to alternative ways of saving money and working collaboratively.

**Waste Contract./ Green forum** – We constantly strive to improve our waste recycling and collection to be more efficient and reduce our carbon footprint of the collecting vehicles. With that aim a collection day change is necessary and I would recommend people to look at the website

<https://www.csduk.com/NR/rdonlyres/7BC8CF3D-C562-48C6-AE4-2A8C30BE3DAC/0/RoundChangesApril10.xls> A bit longwinded(!) or phone 0845 606 6045

Garden waste services are signing up new customers everyday which helps keep the recycling rate to an excellent 42%

Ways of reducing the carbon footprint of Leisure Centres at Stowmarket and Stradbroke are being explored. In addition the council has supported 185 **private** homeowners this year with grants to improve insulation and paid out some £76k in Energy Efficient Grants. These grants continue and Debenham has been nominated by MSDC as the community that should received the roll out of the Greener Homes DIY insulation scheme. With this in mind Heat seekers thermal imaging project has been signed up at Debenham to focus home insulation imaging and promotion in the area.

Funding in Debenham – In addition to the funding initiative above MSDC has once again supported the Debenham Leisure Centre and I continue to raise the issue of funding from all those departments/groups who use these facilities in particular the Car park. I have secured funding for the Waste recycling centre at the DLC and Eddy Alcock has provided additional funding from his locality budget to rearrange and improve the area and facility. We do need the public to keep it clean and tidy.

I have also enthused the Local strategic Partnership (LSP) along with the chief executive to look favourably on the Debenham Project and with Lynden's presentation and everyone else's involvement the LSP has granted funding for basic equipment, insurance costs and project administration costs.

**Planning** – As you can imagine planning applications have reduced over the last year and obviously has an impact of income. Whilst I cannot comment on individual planning applications I can advise work is continuing to resolve issues surrounding the land and buildings at the Garage and Cherry Tree sites. I am conscious it is the shop window to Debenham

**Snoasis** – To give a bit of background on this project. Originally MSDC were minded to approve the development. However the Secretary of State called it in and on approving it she put in place stringent and difficult conditions. However parties are moving forward slowly within the legal framework. There is a dedicated planning officer working on this project and a dedicated planning committee. I am a deputy on that committee and have sat three times so far and am pleased to say the affordable homes linked to the Snoasis site are a step closer and the clearance of the site has begun. This should bring welcome job opportunities.

**Scrutiny** – amongst other issues we had Carole Taylor Browne from the Ipswich PCT and other chief executives and financial executives at a scrutiny meeting before Christmas and have put pressure on to try to ensure we do not down grade The Ipswich Hospital by loosing yet more specialisms. Councillor Elizabeth Gibson

Harries is on the Ipswich Health Scrutiny Committee and continues to put pressure on our behalf. Similarly she is trying to advance the Eye Hospital site.

**Regeneration of Stowmarket.** Can I suggest you look at the MSDC website at the Proposed new submission document at [www.midsuffolk.gov.uk](http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk) and search for Stowmarket Action plan. Your comments can be submitted during the 6 week consultation period.

Alarm was raised at the last Parish Council meeting that Hopgoods was closing down. Indeed it is having a closing down sale but it will refurbish, rebrand and reopen so we are NOT losing a quality and important shop!

It is to be noted that Stowmarket will have over £50m invested over the next few years. This funding has been sourced from both the public and private sector.

**Tourism/2012 Olympics** – I have attended presentations particularly for the 2012 Olympics and at the moment the MSDC Website is still under construction but should link to the SCC website where much information is heralded for the 2012 Olympics

Of course our own dedicated Tourism Website is full of activities places to stay.

Finally I would like to thank you for all your support during the year and I look forward to another busy and challenging year ahead.

Councillor Mrs Kathie Guthrie