

District Councillors Annual Report to May 2011

This year has been a really busy one, not only for me, but for the community as a whole.

I sit on the following committees to which I am formally appointed at the Council

Planning – Vice Chair

Licensing – Vice Chair

Regulatory Board of Licensing – chair

Accounts Committee

Substitute for Environment Policy Panel

Substitute for Snoasis

Substitute for Executive.

I also attend full Council.

Mid Suffolk has officially been recognised as the best area to live and the Council has won many awards but particularly pleasing is that Debenham is THE best place to live Debenham should be rightly proud of itself

Housing

During this year I have been pleased to help the residents of Winston Debenham and Aspall with many enquiries. I am particularly pleased to say that Mid Suffolk came up trumps when revamping one of our rented accommodations as they achieved a major refurbishment in a short space of time.

It is interesting to note that MSDC is one of the few councils in the country that is on course to meet the decent homes standard

Young people in Debenham

I have also been working tirelessly with the community on various issues as a result of which a very positive outcome has been achieved with the formation of the Youth Council and congratulations must go to all who attend, particularly Nathan Abbott and Oliver Hallpike and of course Jane Baldwin. I was also pleased to be part of the initiative to arrange for a Youth Shelter to be provided free of charge from MSDC to the Debenham Parish council for our young people. Hopefully this should soon be in place.

I have also attended meetings at the DLC with Project D and the Parish Council who are all working to move the Skate park initiative forward.

Planning

I have been pleased to have been part of the initiatives in pushing forward major development in the Community. There is one particular one that I am still actively working on and hope for a good resolution shortly.

Debenham Project

I have been in contact with Lynden on many occasions throughout the year with various suggestions and keep this particular project 'on the boil' at MSDC and between them and SCC they have come up with funding to help move the project along

Localism Bill

We await full details – it is supposed to give local communities more autonomy and control of their destiny – watch this space!

There is a new planning website at MSDC and a document has been emailed to the Parish councils on how to access this and further training is envisaged at the Parish council liaison meetings. It is interesting to note that applications for planning are still coming in with no sign of abating. This is good news for MSDC as new homes will give the Council further funding to spend on the community.

Merger

I know I keep on bringing this subject up but it really is the only way forward. The Council has put their findings on the Website at every stage of the way and an external validation report which is available on the website concurs with members and the Councils' recommendations.

I would urge you that if you have not voted to do so now and vote for the merger. You haven't experienced the cuts yet because MSDC met the budget last year and they are on target to meet the budget this year but the following year we anticipate further substantial cuts that overall there will be a 40% reduction in funding from Government.. Some of you may say 'cut the directors.' Mid Suffolk District Council only has 2.5 Directors as we have now cut from two chief executives – one at Babergh and one at Mid Suffolk to one chief Executive. We have been voted as one of the top value for money Councils in the Country. If you don't vote for the merger services will have to be cut.

Stowmarket Master Plan – this is moving forward and for those who say it has nothing to do with me you are wrong! This Town will be revamped to give Suffolk a new lookdown to be proud of.

Snoasis – Again this is moving forward and whilst I was a substitute for the specialist Committee I have been put on that planning group for the new year and that too is moving forward albeit slowly.

Libraries/Youth Clubs/ Waste Sites – I have put these together as these are County council run initiatives. However I have attended many meetings some of which have been held in the village and can only applaud the enthusiasm to which these groups have grasped the mettle. Again we do not know the full implication of what we read in the press but rest assured Debenham will not give up its Youth Club or library. As

regards the waste sites MSDC are strenuously opposing any closure of any household waste sites and again I have attended many meetings.

Royal Wedding- Prince William and Catherine Middleton now Duke and Duchess of Cambridge

Many events took place around the villages and I was pleased to be part of the Winston Celebrations where the Parish Council helped pay towards the Parochial Church Councils' generous donation of one mug for each of the children in Winston, made and designed by Tony Carter of Debenham. You may be interested to note that in the School room the photograph of the children of Winston in 1908 numbered 39 and we gave out 39 mugs in 2011. It just goes to show the villages do thrive!

Although in our 'new year' I would just like to mention potholes! I have been at it again! I was advised the road up to Crow's Hall had some horrendous potholes and that 'something needed to be done before the event on the 15 May' Unfortunately I was only advised on the 12th May!! However with a bit of gentle persuasion our colleagues at County rallied to the cause and they were filled in on the 13th. Who says democracy doesn't work?!

I would like to thank all those people I have worked with and for over the last year and look forward to another year ahead.

Kathie Guthrie
District councillor
Winston,
Debenham & Aspell