

District Councillor's Annual Report to 22 May 2012

I was pleased to be re-elected as your District Councillor and despite difficulties with my own mobility my feet do not seem to have touched the ground!

I was re-elected as chairman of planning B and Vice Chairman of licensing and also Chair of licensing hearings. I am also on the Environmental Policy Panel, Accounts Committee, member of the Snoasis planning committee and along with the Full Council I am kept very busy.

Shortly after the Council elections Mid Suffolk District Council and Babergh District Council asked the electorate to vote on a merger of the two councils. It was made clear that if the electorate did not vote then the two councils would integrate as many services as possible. It is a very fine line between integration and merger. Integration means that each district will still retain its own identity

The integration is still ongoing. We now have a Chief Executive covering both Councils and a reduced management structure again covering both Councils. This senior team totals five in all

The recruitment team are in the process of appointing the final managerial posts and the whole exercise should be complete for all employees by the end of September and with a leaner team both Councils hope to make substantial savings of £1.4million for each district. MSDC achieved the goal of savings of £1.5 million for year ending April 2012. This was achieved by the reduction in staff and monies from the new homes bonus for MSDC.

Many planning applications with regard to wind turbines are coming forward and I have attended various seminars to further my knowledge on these to enable me to make an informed decision as and when these applications come before committee.

Whilst mentioning of planning it came as no surprise that with the current economic climate the Snoasis project has stalled. Houses are still being built on site and further information is yet to be learned.

I have attended many meetings in the community of Debenham from Youth club meetings to library and swimming pool projects and of course the Debenham Project and I was delighted to be invited by Lynden Jackson to meet Sian Lockwood MBE of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Debenhams' projects are unbounded and Project D has not only been raising funds for the Skate Park but the young people have been volunteering and helping older and not so mobile people to clear unwanted goods from their home before moving.

Ted Mumford also helped this particular lady and I suggested to the Debenham Parish Council that Ted be considered for a parish community award. He was delighted to receive this award last year. Sadly Ted died earlier this year but at least his kindness was acknowledged.

I was pleased to officially unveil the plaque at the Debenham Sports and Leisure Centre for the New Sports Hall Floor, which was entirely funded by the MSDC from 106 monies. It is to be noted Debenham Parish Council wrote in their support for such action and without the hard work of the volunteers, the employees, the trustees and the friends of the DLC and most of all the people who use the DLC, this would not have been made possible. It demonstrated to MSDC the commitment of the community that not only is this a much needed facility, it has the backing of the community

Last year saw two cycle events pass through Winston, Debenham and Aspoll. The first was a little early to say the least but the second one was a splendid event and some of the photographs remain on the Debenham Website. I arranged for a total of £400 of funding to enable many of the events to go ahead.

Winston is only a small community and I was delighted to help promote the request for funding for a new kitchen. A considerable sum, but a worthy recipient.

The Parochial Church Council provided mugs for the young children of Winston to celebrate the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge's wedding and Winston Parish Council contributed £70 towards them. There was a splendid tea party all under a lovely sunny sky

With the forthcoming Jubilee we are looking forward to more mugs and this time there was a suggestion from the community that Winston Parish Council provide a bench for the Church yard. Hopefully this will turn into reality.

I look forward in representing you all in the forthcoming year.

Kathie Guthrie
District Councillor
22 May 2012