

Report to 14 May 2013 for Debenham Parish Council AGM

The biggest events that have happened this year are the integration of many of the back office services and the management and officer structure within Mid Suffolk District Council and Babergh District Council. They are now onto the final stage of this and all personnel will be in post shortly. The outcome of all of these moves means that we have been able to save £1.6m between Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council for the last financial year. The current year MSDC has a budget which will mean we should save £1.4m and for 2014/15 we have to make further savings of £1.6m. Babergh District council will also need to make similar further savings. Not an easy task.

With the new structures come the unenviable task of working differently but trying to keep front line services afloat. As members we too have to work differently and find better ways to arrive at solutions to many issues

One of the initiatives that the joint working has achieved is that our waste collection and recycling is one of the highest in the country. The Brome household waste site is a prime example of working differently. The SCC chose to close it but with determination and a lot of help from MSDC and hard work from the private owners not only is the site open it has recently won an award. A lot of credit goes to the local Councillor who put in much hard work.

Another initiative is the saving of the Library and with a positive attitude Debenham people have stood up to the mark and come up with an enterprising way of not only retaining our Library but hopefully enhancing it. I have been privileged to be part of that group.

The Councils have had to deal with the new benefits scheme and that in itself has been a huge piece of work but all tenants and recipients have been kept fully informed.

People are often confused as to the difference between the District Council and the County Council but if anyone has asked me for help on an issue which is SCC I have dealt with it as best I can and then advised our County Councillor and Vice versa this to me seems the best way rather than saying 'its not my job' I hope Cllr Mathew Hicks will have that same approach as Eddy Alcock!!

District Councils deal with planning, waste collection and policing amongst other things whereas County deals with Schools, health and Highways for example but the lists for both are endless

For those of you who don't really understand what I do, not only do I try and help people in the community with their Council Issues, but I am chairman of planning B Chairman of planning (the old referrals group) and vice chairman of Licensing and also am one of four who can chair licensing hearings which do seem to be taking up a lot of my time.

As Winston and Aspall are both within my ward I deal with issues arising in those areas but of course, Winston and Aspall compliments Debenham with their rural outlooks and they both benefit from all the facilities of Debenham.

There are many active groups in Debenham and many are run by unsung heroes but I am sure they will forgive me if I do not mention them individually but I do keep a keen eye on all the activities within my Parish and attend meetings when asked.

Kathie Guthrie
District councillor.