

District Councillors report to October 14 2016

Planning – There is still no update as to when the planning matter regarding the application at the Butts is likely to go to committee.

MSDC Office move - It has been decided to move the offices to Endeavour House in Ipswich. As MSDC share back office and executive staff it has been difficult working over two sites and it is considered the best course of action for the electorate to save money. In addition MSDC and Babergh DC are working on better ways to access services via the internet. Of course that assumes one has the internet. I am assured 'faster Broadband' is coming to Winston in 2017. I would just like a regular connection to any broadband! It also enables better public transport links to be used. There will be 'Hubs' out in the district with computers and real people, but no one has identified where these will be or how they will be funded. Suggestions have been made we could have them in the Drs Surgeries or libraries – provided of course a) they agree b) they are open and c) who funds this idea. I think more thought needs to go into this.

Until a new Chief executive is appointed over the two District Councils we have the services of the Chief Executive from Suffolk County Council who has capacity to assist us in the absence of a CE.

The legal service is now being shared with four Councils, Babergh, Forest Heath, St Edmundsbury and Mid Suffolk District Council

I continue to work as chair of planning though that is getting more and more controversial. If necessary the planning committee reject what we think as inappropriate planning applications only to have them overturned on appeal. Two recently in separate locations but with the same problems in each were refused on similar grounds. On appeal one was dismissed and one was approved both with the same reasoning but two different appeal Inspectors! I have asked if they need more training! Villages are having to 'take' more and more planning applications and they are not just for one or two houses but one or two hundred houses. The argument is we do not have a five year land supply. Between MSDC and BBDC we have over 2500 applications approved but not being built out. This is not the Councils' fault but something has to be done to kick start these approvals.

MSDC is in the process of building 38 new Council homes in the area over several sites – the first for many many years and with the purchase of the middle School, Stowmarket from SCC this opens up opportunities for further development of 'our own Houses'

I continue to work with residents in the community and after five long years I was delighted to be at the opening of the Debenham Library.

Devolution – we will be voting for this at a special full Council meeting. Norfolk don't seem happy with it but it looks as though Suffolk will support. Matthew will give us all the facts and figures in his report.

Kathie Guthrie