

District Councillor Mrs Kathie Guthrie report to 15 January 2016

Planning – There are changes afoot with a hopeful improvement to the service. As John Pateman Gee will be giving you a presentation I do hope he alludes to that. Frankly I am fed up of making excuses for them. Another senior officer has jumped ship and I am not sure what it is which is making it difficult to retain good senior officers.

Members will be voting on CIL arrangements next week and that impacts planning

Flooding – Community Emergency Planning. Whilst I have sympathies with people up North my concern is for Debenham which is in a vulnerable position with regard to flooding. That too impacts current dwellings and planning applications. I will be attending an update on the Emergency Planning Team next week. This is headed up by Sue Herne and contact details are on the website. I have also been liaising with the Environment Agency who are working to try to alleviate problems upstream but that is ongoing work

MSDC have secured £20,000 for 10 council tenants who wish to purchase PRIVATE property and can demonstrate they have further funds to secure a mortgage and can pay ongoing commitments. They also have to have had a clear rent payment period. So far one applicant has been successful.

The accommodation review continues and that is to align Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council Offices to get the best use out of those sites and how best both Councils can serve their communities. There are no firm commitments as yet but clearly we must make best use of the buildings currently used by both Councils and make further savings which brings me on to Finance.

MSDC budgeted for a 30% reduction in income from the government but now the figures are out the reduction is a massive 46%. I, along with all other members, have been attending finance updates and reviews as to how the budget is moving forward for MSDC and once we have our Council meeting I will be able to comment further but clearly there will have to be changes along with expectations.

I hope regular members of the committee will indulge me in advising new members of what I have been doing on their behalf since the last PC meeting which sort of links in to the musings above.

As I am Chair of Development Control B (Planning committee to you and I) and Chair of Regulatory Committee ( Licensing) and Chair of Licensing Hearings, briefing sessions have to take place before hand. So for each one there are two meetings. I have had two Planning meetings, One licensing meeting and one Licensing Hearings (6 in all) and all the work that goes with that reading and understanding reports and taking those meetings and hearings. I have attended two full Council Meetings. I have attended an all day workshop on media training and it was not the same as the SCC it was an in house session and this was a real insight into how to get the best information to the Media – more to it than meets the eye. I have also attended two hour briefings on Local Plans and Planning and a two hour session on the budget before the full Council meeting where we debate and vote on the budget papers. Just to pick up on the Planning issue there will be more information coming out to the Parish Council and the public with Officer and myself partaking of those sessions.

Amongst all that I have been dealing with many issues which the electorate come to me over and of course Christmas and New Year was in between!

