

District Councillor's Report for the Annual Parish Meeting 16th May 2022

Covid continues to play a large part in the actions and challenges for West Suffolk Council along with the rest of the country. The Council has used huge resources administering the various government grants supporting local businesses and trying to reach out to those isolated and vulnerable members of the public. It has been good to see also council officers back in the offices carrying out their valuable work.

There has been a new Independent Living Suffolk service started between all the districts and county council to try and keep elderly and vulnerable people in their own homes by utilising governments grants to improve and adapt these homes.

The council declared a climate emergency and are looking to become carbon emission net neutral by 2030. This can be helped to be achieved by the installation of a "big battery" at West Suffolk house to store energy created from solar panels. Other practices being rolled out is the siting of further EV chargers around the district where we have taken up many government grants to support the supply and installations. Our environmental team have been with working businesses across the district to support the use of greener working practices.

The new Mildenhall Hub opened for business middle of 2021 incorporating a new school, health facilities, Police, social services, council offices as well as top leisure facilities featuring swimming pool, gym and exercise rooms. The time has now come to demolish the old Mildenhall swimming pool along with the old college heath road Forest Heath offices.

Currently there are several consultations at the moment.

Firstly we are consulting on new taxi and hackney carriage polices whereby the maximum age of vehicles will go from 10 to 15 years, they will also not need to be wheelchair accessible. It is also looking at merging the 2 old Forest Heath and St Eds licence areas.

Local town and parish councils have been asked their views as whether there are any boundary anomalies in their respective areas that need looking at.

This Tuesday 17th May Councillors will be asked to permit the next stage of the new West Suffolk Local plan to go out to consultation. This part will contain preferred sites for future development.

This year saw a new grass cutting regime begin. .3 week cutting cycles on amenity land has been introduced.

West Suffolk is currently administering the £150 council tax rebate scheme where there are 63,000 A-D eligible households. Most of the Direct Debit payers have been reimbursed and there is also a scheme for those that pay by other means.

All the councils in Suffolk have joined together in supporting the government homes for Ukrainian refugees scheme. West Suffolk are helping by doing property, DBS and safeguarding checks for potential available homes in the district. Our district has had the highest number of homes offered in Suffolk.

Finally with the use of my locality budget I have funded £750 towards the community bench and £200 towards the jubilee celebrations in Moulton.

I have a new budget for this financial year so any local groups that need help let me know.

I continue to be available to help with any West Suffolk issues either phone, email or come and see me in the shop.

Roger Dicker