

## **COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT 2017**

It is difficult to report about local issues without mentioning some national topics. A year ago we were looking at the prospect of devolution, combined authorities and The Referendum. Now we are entering negotiations to leave the European Union and local authorities are reinventing themselves along with changes in the government's approach to funding local services. In Suffolk talks are still going on about devolution, about generating more revenue locally (such as through retention of business rates), Waveney and Suffolk Coastal decided to merge in 2019 and Mid Suffolk and Babergh are working closer together, they will both join the County at Endeavour House later in 2017.

On a more local level, considerable resource has been spent on resurfacing roads over the past year; these investments are intended to reduce temporary repairs and diversions in the longer term but may have been frustrating for local residents. The system for reporting minor defects such as potholes is working well and in most cases responses have been prompt. Speeding and lorries have also been a concern, and the County has helped the parish to obtain Vehicle Activated Signs.

I receive regular complaints about heavy vehicles using Redgrave and other rural routes as a cut through. This is a difficult problem for the County to address, and local monitoring is very helpful. Suffolk County Council participates in the East of England Regional Freight Quality Partnership which reviews national problems and ways to work with the road freight industry to reduce nuisance.

Redgrave is likely to have some housing growth and residents will be aware of local proposals in response to the District's Call for Sites. Funding the needed infrastructure is a large challenge for both District and County Councils. The County's strategic planning team has been working closely with Districts over the past year and will continue to do so.

Neighbourhood plans are becoming more popular in Suffolk, three are now adopted (Lavenham, East Bergholt and Mendlesham) and 14 others have started the process including Rickinghall-Botesdale and the Diss Area. The County Council has initiated a guidance document (currently draft) on Neighbourhood Planning to help clarify roles and responsibilities.

Protecting our natural and historic environment is a high priority for the Council. Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service (SBIS), hosted by SCC, has published a list of 'priority' species and habitats to help assess the biodiversity impacts of development projects - go to <http://www.suffolkbis.org.uk/biodiversity/speciesandhabitats>.

And as we move into summer, look for Suffolk's 'Fab 40 Adventures', a range of seasonal activities designed to help families get outdoors and active in the County, <https://twitter.com/suffolkfab40>.

Thank you for your support and participation in local events over the past year.

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