

## **REPORT TO HADLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL – 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

### **Cllr Mick Fraser – County Councillor for Hadleigh Division**

Dear Mayor and Town Councillors,

#### **Town Council Elections**

May I take this opportunity to congratulate you all on your recent election success and wish you all the very best for this forthcoming council.

#### **Hadleigh Traffic Management Working Group (HTMWG)**

On Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March, I chaired the inaugural meeting of the newly re-formed HTMWG. I was delighted by the response to my call for volunteers and by the attendance on the night, with thirteen residents and local councillors joining in. These attendees represented local groups including: The Hadleigh Society; U3A; Chamber of Commerce; and Steering Group. Cllr Dr Siân Dawson and Cllr Penny Cook represented the District and Town councils respectively.

Using this range of interest and experience it is my belief that we will have a stronger voice when expressing our roads safety concerns, or ambitions to Suffolk County Council. Also, to decide what minor works we might do ourselves and where best to spend the Local Highways Budget. At the meeting our agenda points for discussion included: setting up an Highways Self-Help Group; the A1071 by-pass junction with Aldham Mill Hill; pedestrian safety along Benton Street; and pavement safety for the disabled around the town.

The next meeting will be on 4th June, where I have invited our Suffolk Highways Engineer and Cllr Mary Evans, the Cabinet member for Highways and Deputy Leader, to attend and answer questions from the group. It would be useful for one or two HTC councillors to attend as I believe combining the three tiers of local government along with residents will produce some affective community engagement.

#### **Highways Community Self Help**

Yesterday 15<sup>th</sup> may I attended the start-up meeting of Suffolk Highways Community Self-Help. This initiative will provide funding, training and resources for towns and parishes to carry out minor maintenance tasks themselves or procure services to do them. I believe that a volunteer town group could do some good works for the benefit of us all and I would like to build this upon existing groups such as the HTMWG and The Tidy Towners.

It would be most helpful if a Town councillor could be dedicated to coordinate between this group and HTC. An example of a project that might be tackled could be the repointing and refurbishing of the brickwork on Toppesfield Bridge.

#### **B1070 Gallows Hill/Bridge Street/Friars Road Resurfacing**

Suffolk Highways teams have resurfaced a stretch of Bridge Street/Gallows Hill/Friars road during 8<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> May. It is regretted if any disturbance was caused by these works which were mostly carried out overnight at hours between 19:00 – 05:00. These works were

undertaken as part of Suffolk County Council's 4-year roads resurfacing plan, where approximately 1,000 miles of roads will be resurfaced.

### **Suffolk's New School Travel Policy**

September 2019 sees the implementation of Suffolk's new school travel policy for 5 to 16-year-old children. The new policy assesses a child's eligibility for Suffolk County Council (SCC) funded school travel to their nearest suitable school. Children who will be starting at a new school in September 2019 will be eligible for SCC funded school travel when they live over 2 miles (under 8 years old) or 3 miles (over 8) walking distance from their nearest suitable school that would have had a place available for them.

The new policy is being phased in to protect travel arrangements for children who are already receiving SCC funded school travel under the current policy. This means a child can continue to receive SCC funded school travel to their current school if they continue to live at their current address.

Parents of children who are eligible for SCC funded travel must also now opt-in (apply) by 31<sup>st</sup> May each year so school travel can be provided in the following school year. Eligible families are now being asked to do this because research by the county council has shown that some families, although eligible to SCC funded school travel, do not use their seat. Consequently, they are funding seats which are unused.

### **More Places for Specialist Education in Suffolk**

Suffolk's SEND Sufficiency Plan (2018) identified that the number of children and young people with SEND will increase by 18% between 2017 and 2020. This compares to an overall growth in the school age population in Suffolk of 4%. Working together with parents/carers, education providers, partners and children, SCC wants to create more specialist education places in the county to give young people the best possible start in life with the right level of tailored support for their learning. Suffolk County Council's Cabinet has agreed a financial investment of up to £45.6 million to support the development of many local specialist provisions for children and young people with SEND.

The recommendations for the investment followed the work by a cross-party Policy Development Panel (PDP) which was established to review the county's local offer and identify suitable specialist education places. The work of the PDP involved a comprehensive analysis. They visited a variety of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities settings in and around the county, considering the views of service users and their families, partners and education providers on the best way to grow Suffolk's specialist education offer both in the short and long term to meet future demand.

A green light to move forward with the work of the PDP was given at the Cabinet's Committee meeting in January this year. Further work has now been done by the Council's Capital Strategy Group to provide an overview of the required level of investment for individual projects. The £45.6 million investment will create over 800 new specialist education places in the county. This will include three brand new special schools and 36 specialist units attached to existing mainstream schools. A significant number of these specialist units will be opened by September 2020.

Suffolk County Council learned on 3rd April that it has been successful in its bid to the Department for Education for the new school in Ipswich, which will offer up to 60 places for children and young people aged between 7 and 16 years old, who have complex communication and interaction needs, including autism. The school will be co-educational, catering for girls and boys and will offer day facilities only. At present, it is expected that the school will open in 2022. The next step for the council to undertake is securing a sponsor for the new free school.

### **Climate Emergency Declaration**

There was an interesting motion put forward by the Green Party at the last full council meeting in that: "Suffolk County Council declare a climate emergency and, also aspire to make the county carbon neutral by 2030". There had been threats of protestors disrupting the proceedings like those who stuck themselves naked to The Houses of Parliament earlier in the month. Fortunately, this didn't materialize. When the vote was taken, it was almost unanimous across the council chamber (1 against).

You might ask what is the point of this motion and there was some scepticism to it? I stated that SCC should show leadership and be an example by installing and encouraging others to use renewable energy, recycle as much as possible and avoid waste wherever necessary. By doing nothing we won't achieve anything!

### **Searching for Suffolk's environmental superstars**

Nominations are needed to celebrate Suffolk's green champions at this summer's 10th Creating the Greenest County awards. The awards are a chance to shine a light on anyone who inspires others to make Suffolk a better place for its residents and its wildlife. This could be someone in your workplace who has persuaded you to ditch single-use coffee cups for a reusable mug, or an organisation which has transformed its business operations to be carbon-neutral.

In the last three years, since the awards were last held, there has been a huge shift in attitudes and understanding about better caring for our environment. Many individuals have taken it on themselves to lead the way in creating change, voluntary organisations have formed to help transform their local communities, and businesses are taking their environmental responsibilities even more seriously.

I have nothing further to report.

Yours Sincerely

*Mick Fraser*

Cllr Mick Fraser  
Hadleigh Division  
Suffolk County Council