

## **DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S ANNUAL REPORT – 2014**

**Cllr. Veronica Falconer**

### **Good evening everyone**

I will briefly touch on some of Suffolk Coastal's achievements during the last year..

100 Empty properties have been brought back into use.

Suffolk Coastal continues to seek to secure affordable housing

They have developed a successful apprentices programme and have 7 at present.

Council Tax has been frozen for the 4<sup>th</sup> year

A significant level of saving has been secured through procurement – DC Leisure has saved in the region of £500,000 and SCD has saved approximately £700,00.

Port Health Licence fees have shown an £80,000 increase in income. The licence software that Port Health developed has been sold to other Ports around the country.

Suffolk Coastal was rated in the top 16 district across the country in terms of recycling.

A new shared Suffolk Coasts and Deben Vale AONB team has been established.

Parking at the Felixstowe South Seafront development is about to open.

1,500 planning applications were received in 2013/14 and permission granted for 700 new homes.

90% of Suffolk Coastal's food businesses are rated highly for hygiene.

After years of work on the Local Development Framework and building up an unbelievable pile of paperwork things have quietened down. The main planning issues in the Ward have been the permission to build a 60 acre Solar Panel Farm which is virtually finished just outside Levington with permission in the pipeline for a further 60 acres solar panel farm to be built just outside Waldringfield.

The majority of the planning applications determined in this last year have on the whole been pretty straight forward – the only one which has been an issue has been for outline planning permission for 300 houses at Trinity Park and a new round about near Straight Road on the old A45.

### **Deben Estuary Plan**

I have been on the Access and Steering Group Committees for a number of years and after much hard work by these two and a number of other Committees, the Plan is nearing completion. It will hopefully become a Planning Guidance Document to be used with the new Local Plan when planning issues occur on or near the River Deben..

### **Numbers of recorded Police Crime in the Ward by Village**

Brightwell	8
Bucklesham	17
Foxhall	12
Levington	15
Nacton	54
Newbourne	15
Purdis Farm	153 ( 101 of these were at Sainsburys)

Waldringfield 11

**Total: 285**

### **Community Resilience – Emergency Plan**

Many years ago there was a campaign to get Parishes to formulate an Emergency Plan for their Village in case of Fire, Petrol Station explosion, plane crash, power cuts, rail crash or floods. Some of the Parishes in the Nacton Ward were proactive but as a result of the Tidal Surge in December which highlighted the importance of a Plan, I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to get an Emergency Plan formulated. Could I please encourage you to put this item on your future Agendas.

The Environmental Agency are very happy to come and do a Hub workshop and explain fully the things you need to do as well as giving you a Starter Kit. In addition, their website [www.getpreparednow.co.uk](http://www.getpreparednow.co.uk) is a great help and shows other village's Emergency Plans.

### **Coastline Lite**

Over the years I have tried to keep you up to date with a fair number of the goings on at Suffolk Coastal District Council either by my Report or recommending that you read the Coastline Magazine that goes out about 3 times a year. From now on the Cabinet Portfolio Cllr. T J Haworth is submitting a electronic newsletter *Coastline Lite* which is being distributed to Parish and Town Councils highlighting various issues.

### **Community Enabling Scheme**

In the few weeks since each District Councillor was given a sum of £4,000 to allocate some or all for the year 2013/14, I have allocated £3,400 to schemes in Waldringfield, Levington and Bucklesham. £600 will be rolled over into year 2014/15 making the year 2014/15 budget £4,600. Please bear in mind that if any Projects in your Parish come to your attention, please ask them to contact me re some funding.

### **Suffolk Coastal District Council's Office Move**

The current building is too large and not fit for purpose and in a poor state of repair, hence much work is going in to exploring exactly what to do. The preferred option at present is near the old Girdlestone's site in Melton but the costs have got to be worked out and it must be justified financially.

### **Boundary Changes**

The Boundary Commission recently came back with their findings and took notice of Suffolk Coastal District Council's calculation of ward boundaries. It is likely there will be 42 seats. Brightwell, Foxhall, Purdis Farm along with Nacton will become the Nacton Ward. Levington, Stratton Hall, Bucklesham, Newbourne, Waldringfield, Hamley with the addition of Kirton and Falkenham will be the Kirton Ward. SC will be writing again with their comments and recommendation as can Councillors.

### **Police Control Room**

At Thursday's Full Council meeting the Conservative members resolved to call on Tim Passmore, Suffolk's Police and Crime Commissioner to strongly resist closure of the Police Contact and Control Room at Martlesham Police HQ. This is a critical part of front line policing which TP has pledged to protect. SC want TP to secure

major cost savings from administrative simplification and integration in partnership with Norfolk Police. The Labour councillors were unwilling to support this response to TP and voted against the proposal to suggest the best possible way of ensuring a quality, but affordable, police service for Suffolk. Watch this space.

**Finally**

Next year in 2015 there will be local District Elections – having given the matter much thought over the winter, I have decided not to stand next year. I will have done 12 years as your District Councillor and before that I was a Parish Councillor for 16 years. For the majority of that time I also did a full-time job and I feel the time has come for someone younger to take over.

I will be very sad to say goodbye to a very enjoyable, demanding and interesting chapter in my life and I know I will miss all the ups, downs and involvement enormously.

**Cllr. Veronica Falconer**  
**Nacton Ward**  
**April 1st 2014**