

Report from District Councillor Peter Patrick – July 2018

I'd like to say that I am delighted that the CIC for the shoreline flood prevention has been established. Chris Knock is a goldmine – almost literally – and I wish you well. I have let my erstwhile colleague Tina Campbell know. She is Cabinet Member for Environment and attended the meeting earlier in the year in the Village Hall when the flooding cost was aired.

I continue to liaise regularly with Sally Chicken with regard to the Pier, and I hope that the planning application soon gets approval. Again, Chris Knock is helping to track down significant donors and I think the Board have worked wonders. Teresa and I attended a fund-raising coffee morning at the Red Lion before we went on holiday and the enthusiasm is almost overwhelming.

There have been some important decisions taken in Cabinet (my last was on 12th July), but tend to be Sudbury oriented. The new Communications policy should, however, affect the whole District, and it will be interesting to see whether the suggested cooperation with the Library Service to provide comms assistance in the Village Hall actually takes off.

I'm hoping to be able to continue to serve on a 'Task and Finish' Group which is currently working on a 'Public Realm' review. This basically deals with the Council-owned open spaces and facilities (lavatories in particular). We have just been considering what to do about the approx. 30,000 trees in Council ownership. Budgets are a problem, but we can't duck the issue of providing regular maintenance, particularly for trees on our housing estates.

There is some good news on the planning front. Our Planning officers have been able to determine that Babergh now has 6.7 years' worth of land supply for houses. In 2017 we could not find 5 years' supply – the statutory minimum – so our ability to apply our own planning guidelines was inhibited.

There is still work going on in the background to try to attract major funding for the Ganges site.

I'm afraid that we are now in the run-up to the Local Elections in May next year. As you know, the Ward boundaries will be changed, and it is suggested that the enlarged Berners Ward should have THREE members. It is difficult enough having two who do not co-operate politically. There is, however, the opportunity for wide political involvement. I regret that I shall not be standing again. It has been wonderful serving the good folks of the Shotley Peninsula, but I think you might be better served by someone living closer. You have generously given me the time to serve on the Strategy Committee and latterly in the Cabinet, where I have been able to bring my experience to bear. Those who will be seeking re-election to the reduced number of seats will be attempting to maximise their profiles, and the latest development is the admission to the Cabinet of Councillor Simon Barrett, the Conservative who was largely responsible for the defeat of Cllr Jenkins in December and who has recently been part of the Independent Conservative group on the Council. It's all very bizarre.

I shall of course try to serve you properly for the rest of this municipal year, and can still be contacted by anyone. Dina is a tower of strength.

Again, my apologies for not being with you yesterday evening. I thoroughly enjoyed the Annual Meeting and the chance to talk (I'm afraid I tend to need at least twenty minutes!). I hope to be better next time.

With kind regards,

Peter P.