

Derek Davis District Council Report - October 2018

Council Housing

You may remember last night I left a little teaser about some good news on the council housing front in the Shotley area.

Well, the long-awaited plans to demolish the old prefabs in Queensland Shotley to make way for a new batch of affordable rented properties, have taken a big step forward.

A total of eight, two-bed homes will be built on the two sites where numbers one to three and number 16 are currently sited.

Babergh, working with Icen and Ingleton Properties will soon be putting in planning permission, yes even we have to go to the committee for approval, and I will be speaking for the application as I believe it will greatly benefit our residents.

I will also be pressing for a condition to be imposed ensuring those with connections to Shotley and Erwarton get priority when bidding for the homes.

Pier Petition

I have added my support to the #protectourpier (POP) group's petition calling on the directors of the Benefit Society to drop their appeal against Babergh's planning committee's decision to refuse planning permission to build two buildings housing a café, offices, workshop and a visitor centre to be built straddling Shotley pier.

More than 200 people have signed the Changes.org petition, which you can also find on the Bristol pier, Shotley page on Peninsula News. Please feel free to read, sign and share, perhaps the directors will eventually get the message regarding our community's feelings on this needlessly contentious issue.

Like the POP group I would much prefer to see a new, smaller application put in just to restore the pier as it was originally envisaged, with a couple of kiosks at one end to help pay for the upkeep of the pier. This would have been far more acceptable, more likely to have got permission and satisfied potential grant funders.

Sadly, I can see a situation where even if the Benefit Society wins its appeal, then it will not have wide-spread support from the community the project started with when we first got it off the ground and that will make financing the £3million estimated total cost of a commercial development, even more difficult.

New Customer Service Access Point Opens

Like many councillors, although not enough of us, I was one of those that voted against moving from our headquarters in Hadleigh to Ipswich's Endeavour House.

I still have my doubts it was the right things to do, and having witnessed the severe disruption and loss of staff it caused, I'm still to be convinced.

However, in my role on the cabinet, I have tried to mitigate some of the problems, in particular with customer service problems. After a successful pop up Customer Service Point at Shotley, which worked well due to the hard work and dedication of the customer service team that travelled from all over the district to give our residents face to face contact, a more permanent point has been set up at Hadleigh library. This will complement the access points at Sudbury and Stowmarket, although you will still not get personal service at Ipswich.

Stars of Babergh

By the time you read this, the winners of the Stars Of Babergh Community Awards will have been announced.

There were so many worthy nominees it must have been a devilish job for the judges to narrow it down.

I was delighted to see a number of my nominations were shortlisted, these include Norman Bugg, Manish Patel, Shotley & Erwarton Good Neighbours, and Shotley Rose, while I know others on the peninsula put names forward too.

Without individuals, groups and businesses like these, are community would not be as wonderful, caring and thriving as it is.

Councillor Award

Talking of awards, I was delighted to see our Independent Group Leader Clive Arthey, shortlisted for a prestigious Local Government Award.

Clive, one of Babergh's longest serving council members, was nominated by Cockfield Parish Council in the Place-Shaping and Environment category.

I know he is chuffed to be nominated by residents, rather than any politically-motivated group and it is well deserved.

As Independents we are focused on local issues still while seeing the bigger district picture, but as individuals do need a little steering sometimes and I know myself, and my colleague Alastair McCraw, as relative newbies, have flourished under Clive's guidance and advice.

If you have an issue you would like to discuss, please contact me at

derek.davis@babergh.gov.uk or 07824167196. My Facebook page is: Derek Davis – independent Councillor