

How wonderful it is to once again be reporting on one of our community leaders being nominated for an award.

Manish Patel and his family and wonderful staff have been shortlisted for their outstanding customer service, not just during lockdown, but all the time.

Shotley Premier Stores and Post Office have been shortlisted in the 2020 Babergh Innovations, with their distribution of Diwali to every home in the village as a thank you for supporting the Patel family's shop for 25 years, listed in the nomination.

### Shotley Homes for Shotley People

Good to see progress being made on the new homes being built in Queensland with demolition work completed to make way for eight two-bedroom flats. As part of the scheme, I was able to secure three of those homes just for Shotley people even if they are not top of the banding. The rest will go to people in the district, depending on banding.

Separately, number 14A in Queensland, which was rebuilt following a lighting strike, will be available to bid on via Gateway Home Choice as from Thursday.

### Swimming Pool

Much has been made of a decision made three years ago to not pursue an agreement made by developers to spend £40,000 on a survey to see if it was worthwhile trying to save the former swimming pool at HMS Ganges. While I applaud the organisers of the petition I just can't see anything changing and plans to demolish the building, which was in a very poor state, are well advanced. The developers have offered to find another plot of land to build a new pool, and/or leisure facilities. That would mean the community really stepping up, organising a group to fund raise and project manage, and while it is easy to sign a petition, it is another matter finding enough volunteers to spend the time and raise the money for such a scheme.

I will of course support any such group, and I know from first-hand experience that Shotley does have a good record in drumming up volunteers.

### Public Realm

There were many good reason why we on Babergh's cabinet approved plans which will see the management of public open spaces, playgrounds, and litter bins move in-house. Public realm services will be directly managed by the

council from November 2021. The change will follow the end of the council's current contract with Idverde in October 2021.

Bringing the service in-house will allow for consistent service standards and increased flexibility. It will also enable the council to manage land more holistically to increase biodiversity, this includes planting wildflower meadows to replace strict grass cutting regimes where suitable, and creating wildlife corridors are all options currently being explored by the councils' biodiversity task force sub-group.

Congratulations

Finally, I would like to congratulate my fellow peninsula district councillor Alistair McCraw, who represents the Brantham ward, who was re-elected as chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It is widely acknowledged Alistair has done an outstanding ensuring cabinet members like me make the right decisions, for the right reasons to benefit the district. Another of our Independent colleagues to keep a senior post is Kathryn Grandon, who retains the role of Babergh chairman and I wish her well for the coming year and hope Kathryn is able to get out and about, as she is so desperate to fulfil her ceremonial duties.

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