

Elizabeth Gibson-Harries report to Redlingfield AGM

I was happily re-elected to Mid Suffolk District Council in May for my second term, I am most grateful for the chance to serve the Hoxne Ward again. 2011 to 2012 has been a year of great change centred on the integration of Mid Suffolk with Babergh District Council. We have had to scale down the Heads of service from 68 to 34 between the two councils and the cuts in staff continue with level 4 and 5 the people you would talk to if you rang the council for advice. It means a loss of experience in the council but also a temporary drop in productivity in the meantime. It is to become more efficient and make financial cuts to fit the decrease in income from the Government.

New legislation in Planning and Licensing are working their way through to parishes and the Localism Bill touches both, I am hoping to get an officer to a ward meeting soon to explain the relationship as in theory the hard work done on Parish Plans may become obsolete, we are trying to find a way that upgrades to the PP can make it acceptable rather than start again.

The Brome recycling service was saved almost entirely due to the efforts of local people, but the future is not certain unless more recycling material is taken to the centre, the value in this makes the service financially viable.

There are exciting plans to regenerate Eye Airfield, at present they are just plans and have no funding or status but the plans include housing and employment as well as cycle paths and open spaces. I am keen to see a future for this plan as so much money has gone south of the Council to Stowmarket and the environs that we need investment in the north too.

Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils as well as Mid Suffolk and the police have an agreed protocol on the issue of Gypsies and Travellers which is in the process of being re-written. All parties are looking for land for more transit sites in the area to take the pressure off our village greens

There are voids in sheltered housing in Hoxne and Horham, these are very acceptable homes for the elderly that need a regular eye kept on them so if you know of someone that might benefit from one of these very pleasant units do contact me or Mid Suffolk.

I am very concerned at the length of time that the ambulance service takes to get to our rural part of Suffolk and because of the some parishes are looking into volunteer to the First Responders service. We do need to help ourselves as much as we can and if we can have trained people on call locally we might well save lives or help with a better outcome for patients. If you are interested please let me know.

On the 4th May we are holding a Warmer Homes exhibition in Hoxne Village Hall. Concerned about fuel poverty we have decided our best approach is to show people what is new and affordable in the conservation of heat and fuel rather than attack the bigger issue of the cost of fuel. Our local MP is charged with this duty.

Hartismere Hospital is to be officially opened on the 30th June in the meantime a chance to see around the new building before the services move in is arranged for 27th April from 11.30am to 1pm. If you are interested please go to the Main Entrance where you will be taken on a guided tour. We are so fortunate to have been able to keep the hospital site as a community health and treatment centre when so much of the other medical services in the area are going.

Thank you for the chance to work for the ward for another 4 years.