

Report to Brettenham Parish Council. Thursday 9th July

I am sorry that I am unable to attend this evening but I am in London for a few days. If you wish to raise anything with me please get in touch.

Finance

The newly formed Cabinet has not really done a great deal to address the budget gap since it was formed in May. We wait with interest to find out where necessary savings will be found. The administration has however committed £5m extra from the Capital Budget to build a new 'heritage facility' in Ipswich to accommodate material from the Records Office. This, which is currently in Bury St Edmunds, is now very old and is running out of space. The new 'iconic building' will be jointly developed with University College Suffolk, will be on the waterfront and will include café and shop facilities.

The Cabinet has also agreed to spend an additional £800,000 from the Capital Budget on improvements to the Corn Hill in Ipswich and a similar amount from the revenue budget to support the Raising the Bar initiative.

On Call Firefighter recruitment drive.

As part of an on-going recruitment drive across the county, Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service held an Experience Day across the county at fire stations in Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft on Saturday 4 July.

Although it is now too late to participate in this event, firefighters from all walks of life are needed.

To be an on-call firefighter, you must: have a strong desire to support the local community; be enthusiastic about working as part of a team; have a reasonable level of personal fitness; live or/and work within five minutes of your local fire station; if employed, make sure your employer gives permission to release you to respond to emergencies; be available to respond to an emergency during a set number of hours each week (on average, on-call firefighters are paged to attend an emergency situation 2-3 times a week). While the Experience day events are taking place at Ipswich East, Lowestoft South and Bury St Edmunds fire stations, on-call firefighters are required throughout Suffolk.

I appreciate that Brettenham is too far from a fire station for residents to qualify, but you may well know someone elsewhere in the county who would be interested. For further information call 01473 260588 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm).

Scamnesty in Suffolk

Every year, more than three million people in the UK fall victim to scams, losing hundreds and sometimes thousands of pounds to fraudsters.

To raise awareness of this increasing problem Suffolk Trading Standards, in partnership with BBC Radio Suffolk's Mark Murphy Show, is launching Scamnesty; a month long initiative that encourages people to report potential scams and help prevent others from falling victim. Throughout July, Scamnesty bins will be placed all across the county; here people can discard any suspicious letters/leaflets/mail they suspect may be fraudulent. Everything placed into the bins will be analysed and the information shared with Trading Standards and partner enforcement agencies in the UK.

Look out for the bins at libraries, council buildings and Citizen's Advice Bureaus. A full list of locations can be found at www.suffolk.gov.uk/scamnesty The closest bin to Brettenham is at Hadleigh or Lavenham library.

Brettenham

Brettenham has been quiet from my perspective since we last met.

I recently attended a meeting of the Remote Member Broadband Group. The message was that by November this year a good deal more information will be available for remote areas as British Telecom completes its scoping exercise for the second contract. This contract, which will be completed between 2016 and the end of 2017, will reach an additional 50,000 homes and bring coverage up to over 95% of homes in Suffolk. This means that only 15,000 'hard to reach' homes will not have a high speed service by the end of 2017. It is hoped to be able to identify these homes by the end of this year and to begin seeking a different solution to improve their broadband speeds.

It is possible that some homes in more rural parts of Brettenham will fall into the 'hard to reach' category. Irritatingly this runs contrary to the information we received earlier, and also is not the impression that was formerly given by the map on the Better Broadband for Suffolk website. However the message to everyone is to wait until further information is received later this year before considering signing up for expensive alternative solutions. I will make sure that the Parish Council is informed as soon as further information about second contract coverage is available.

The commitment to provide a solution to anyone in Suffolk unable to receive a signal of 2 mbps or more at the end of this year (2015) still stands, and the mechanism for arranging this will also be made public in the autumn/early winter. Taking up this option will not affect the provision of high speed broadband to a property at a later date.

Jenny Antill