

## **Report to Brettenham Parish Council 12<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

### **Devolution**

When I last reported Suffolk had sent an expression of interest to the Government hoping that the county would be an early participant in any devolution proposals.

It rapidly became clear that Suffolk's aspirations did not exactly chime with those of the Government. The Government it seems is unwilling to entertain any devolution solution from Suffolk that does not involve Norfolk and therefore we were obliged rapidly to go back to the drawing board. A group of Norfolk and Suffolk leaders met Government with its jointly developed devolution ideas on 4<sup>th</sup> November. The focus was very much on the promotion of economic growth in the region.

The response from Government was favourable and now we have to work up a more formal bid for consideration.

If we are among the areas selected to take devolution forward at this stage then there will be a quite extensive period while the structure of the new ways of operating are worked through. Apparently this could take months, if not years, to complete. Four layers of local government are not inconceivable.

If you are interested in more detail on this matter there is quite a lot of information on the Babergh website.

### **Education.**

Following on from the improved GCSE and SATs results that I reported on last time, there has been further confirmation that our schools are moving in the right direction.

The Suffolk County Council risk rating process identifies good practice in schools, and also those schools that would benefit from support. In 2015 some 11% more schools have achieved a positive rating. There has also been a significant fall in the number of schools that are identified as potentially needing support.

There is also good news on the Ofsted front. Four Suffolk schools that were previously rated as “Requiring Improvement” have now been assessed as “Good” following Ofsted inspections earlier this year. This included St Mary’s Church of England Primary School in Hadleigh.

Suffolk County Council is continuing to take an active part in the Fairer funding campaign which aims to get a better level of central government funding for our schools. There is now a commitment from the Prime Minister to consider how a fairer system can be introduced.

### **Review of the future of the Fire Service in Suffolk.**

This was considered and approved by the Cabinet this week and the consultation will commence on 16<sup>th</sup> November. Information with regard to how to participate will be available on the consultation page of the SCC website. I have forwarded to your clerk a fact sheet which summarises the situation in detail.

The review is taking place in the light of funding constraints at the council, and also a 30% fall in the number of 999 calls in the last 10 years. The general approach is improving the availability of on call firefighters, greater collaboration with blue light and other partners and a service re-design to reflect falling call volumes.

Brettenham

Following the last meeting I sent your questions concerning potholes to David Stiff who is in charge of the Babergh Highways Team. I believe that his answers are in your minutes. I forwarded him details of the road in question (Lower Farm Road) as he requested on 9<sup>th</sup> October but have not heard any further from him.

I hope that councillors will enjoy a very happy Christmas season and a prosperous and healthy 2016.

Jenny Antill

November 2015