

## ANNUAL PARISH MEETING, COCKFIELD 12th April 2018

### Joint Working and Partnerships

I have used the same heading as last year, but the way things have moved on perhaps it should be Babergh/Mid Suffolk merger. You will remember how Suffolk councils are working together as pairs. The pairings at Waveney and Suffolk Coastal in the east, and St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath in the west both applied for full merger to create East and West Suffolk Councils. That involves dissolving the two existing councils and creating a new one for the combined administrative area. You may remember a proposal for Babergh and Mid Suffolk to merge was the subject of a referendum in 2011, which was supported by a majority of Mid Suffolk residents, but rejected by Babergh. Things have moved on a bit since then, with both councils now operating a 'Cabinet' system where strategic decisions are no longer made by politically balanced committees or the full Council. It seemed we no longer required a referendum, and Cabinet members could make the decision to dissolve the Council and create a new one. There was concern amongst councillors about how we had arrived at a situation where the Leader and six like minded councillors could ignore the referendum result and commit the Council to dissolve itself. A telephone survey was carried out to inform Cabinet's decision, but councillors have now secured an undertaking that a new referendum must take place before full merger. This also gives the opportunity for further consideration of a 'unitary option' for local government in Suffolk.

### Move to Endeavour House, Ipswich

After a slight delay, Babergh and Mid Suffolk councils completed their move to Suffolk County Council headquarters building, Endeavour House in Ipswich, at the end of last year. I remain concerned about the future use of the Hadleigh buildings and the impact on Hadleigh businesses who benefitted from such a large employer so close to the town centre. Proposals have now been drawn up for conversion and redevelopment to provide housing.

### District Electoral Review

Babergh had asked for a reduction from 43 councillors down to 31. After consultation on the initial proposals last year, the Boundary Commission has now recommended 32 councillors, with Cockfield in the proposed two councillor Lavenham ward grouped with Lavenham, Great Waldingfield, Little Waldingfield and Chilton. The new wards will be in place for the 2019 district elections.

### Council Tax

You will have received your Council Tax Bills for 2018-19 and will doubtless have noticed the largest increase in recent years. Suffolk County Council's element has increased by 5% to £1242.54 for a band D dwelling, Suffolk Police up 6.8% to £188.82, Babergh up 3.25% to £158.86 and Cockfield Parish Council up 21.3% to £108.55.

### Local Plan

First consultation on the new Joint Local Plan for Babergh and Mid Suffolk took place

last year. The proposals for Cockfield include a new settlement boundary for Howe Lane, and an adjustment to the boundaries at Cross Green and Great Green to take in recent approvals. Both have also had potential development sites submitted. Cockfield is now included in the 'Hinterland Villages' category which identifies the village as supporting the 'Core' villages of Lavenham and Long Melford. Suggested growth options in the draft plan for Hinterland Villages range from 5% to 15%, but this is a total across the district and does not have to be accommodated proportionally. There will be further consultation this year before an Examination in Public, and adoption of the plan in 2019.

#### Land adjacent to Mackenzie Place.

I am pleased to have been able to work with your Parish Council, Babergh housing and planning officers, Orwell Housing and the County Council to secure a scheme that aims to satisfy the needs identified in the 2014 parish survey. Work on site should start later this year with a mix of housing types to provide for a developing community in the coming years. The development will also bring benefits for Crowbrook and Mackenzie including extension to the speed limit, better linkages to other parts of the village and improved recreation provision.

#### Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

CIL was introduced last year and is a levy on new development. We have now adopted a CIL Framework document to set out the way the scheme will operate. CIL contributions will be distributed as follows: 5% to administer the scheme, 15% to parish (25% for parishes with Neighbourhood Plans), remainder to be split 80% / 20% between Local Infrastructure and Strategic Infrastructure. This should provide a significant local 'pot' from which Parish Councils (and other local providers) can apply for funding. Proposals may well be able to combine any remaining S106 monies, parish CIL and district CIL. Payments to parishes will be six-monthly and Cockfield's first payment will be made next week. Looking forward, there will be significant parish CIL contributions for Cockfield, particularly from the development at Crowbrook and Mackenzie, to help fund the Parish Council's ambitions for continued improvements in the village.

#### Waste and Recycling

Plastics recycling hit the national press with stories of collected recyclables being rejected. In Suffolk we are amongst the best in the country and have both mechanical and manual sorting of the material sent for re-processing. We are confident it is sorted to the highest standards, but removing contamination costs us money so please make sure you put the right things in your blue bin, and they are clean, dry and loose. I prepared a more detailed report which was published in the March edition of Green Links.

#### Dukes Meadow

I am working with the Parish Council to try to secure the transfer of BDC land at Dukes Meadow to Cockfield PC.

## Electric Vehicles

Babergh has installed its first charging point for electric vehicles at the Kingfisher car park in Sudbury.

Clive Arthey