

Annual Report District Councillor 2022-2023– Cllr Margaret Maybury

Lavenham Ward

The last twelve months has seen a variety of highlights and lowlights across the Ward with financial gains and perhaps, losses, incurred.

The coalition cabinet for Babergh came and went with alterations across the board. Controversial appointments last May ended with no Conservative experience being used as Chair of a committee or within the Cabinet. This situation has continued.

The Cabinet system was retained after a Council vote with a series of policies written but perhaps not put to good use. Public lavatories for instance (a definite public need) have never been refurbished as my policy of 2018 requested. However, Lavenham Parish Council saw the light and refurbished theirs; a project which did not go smoothly but hopefully is now rectified.

Member allowances were increased to £6,000 pa; Cabinet, Chairman of Council and Committee Chairman allowances were raised as was officer pay. Council tax was raised by 1.99% pa; rents for our tenanted properties was raised by 7%. All-in-all not a good outcome for the cost-of-living crisis hit residents as costs to residents have remained high.

Ward success has always risen to the top with financial support funding being awarded for “warm spaces”; CIL payments being received by the individual parishes; plus various external and internal grants being gained for worthy causes throughout the Lavenham Ward.

I have been delighted to use my Locality Budget for good causes around the Ward which benefit a cross section of the community. These included this year, a kitchen refurbishment for the Bowls and Social Club at Great Waldingfield to help them continue their community works; installation of accessible gates at Branchlines, Great Waldingfield, for suitable entrances to the woodland which enables all to enter and enjoy nature around the wood, ponds, orchard and green space beside the impressive church of St Lawrence, Great Waldingfield; and the incredibly successful Community Pantry at Great Waldingfield, which, in conjunction with the Rector, the Revend Faith Marsden, I researched and set up the Friday event. The Community Pantry

attracted other benefactors too and the most amazing volunteers who each week provide active support to others.

The joy of the Seventieth Jubilee Celebrations of HM Queen Elizabeth II was celebrated Ward-wide with street parties; beacon lighting; choir singing; church bell ringing; and much other partying. I was delighted to attend over ten events in three days to share with all the joy of the occasion.

For Great Waldingfield a low light and a great sadness was the unforeseen deaths of a mother and daughter in tragic domestic circumstances. The village has tried to overcome the tragedy but it still lingers in the hearts and minds of residents and will for the foreseeable future.

The death of HM Queen Elizabeth II was felt throughout the Ward. Suitable recognition of the event led to books of condolence being set up throughout the parishes, due reverence paid and community sharing of grief.

Personally, I am grateful to the Ward for the most compassionate support I received on the death of my husband at the beginning of the year and since. Thank you to you all.

I always like to recount to others (any that will listen from near and far) the depth of community spirit within the Ward, the help shown to a neighbour and the long list of social projects which cover the Ward's needs and more, which has led to recognition in the form of an honorary award of the British Empire Medal for one Lavenham resident, plus an invitation to the Coronation of King Charles III for the same resident.

Lavenham Ward is always well represented at national and local events, a feat I am very proud of. Well done to all.