ANNUAL REPORT FROM YOUR DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

In her report two years ago Cllr Grattan reported on a successful year just concluded and outlined developments for the year ahead. At that time, we none of us realised precisely what this ‘way ahead’ was going to encompass.

The business changes outlined in her paragraphs headed ‘Transformation and Joint Working with South Norfolk District Council’ have proceeded apace and whilst each Council continues to retain its own autonomy they can proceed as one if so desired, on an individual project by project basis.

**What impact has COVID-19 had on our underlying services to Broadland Residents?**

It is sensible to digress at this point in order to describe the immediate and most far reaching impact that COVID-19 has had on the working practices of staff serving both councils. At the time of the outbreak staff were given the option to work from home whilst the accommodation available at both Thorpe Lodge and South Norfolk House was evaluated in terms of making it COVID proof. It rapidly became apparent that to provide accommodation for over 700 staff members which respected social distancing guidelines would be virtually impossible.

Fortuitously the popularity of working from home rapidly became apparent. All staff were consulted and as far as possible their wishes have now been accommodated. Staff work 2-3 days per week from home with the balance spent in attendance at their designated place of work. They have been provided, where necessary, with improved computer software and hardware, and telephone systems have been enhanced so that staff are able to communicate from wherever they are located. This has inevitably led to delays at times when we need to locate or contact specific people or teams but Members are monitoring this carefully and it is correct to say our concerns are being recognised and addressed.

**What impact has the collaboration made to Broadland residents**?

While the response to this totally unexpected upheaval was being effected the planned reorganisation of staff within One Team was being implemented and what has evolved is that each functional unit is ostensibly located under the same roof – for example the Planning Team is based in South Norfolk House while Committee Services is based in Thorpe Lodge. This means that when council members or members of the public phone in they may have no idea to whom they are speaking or indeed where that person may be located (i.e. Thorpe, Long Stratton or their home).

Councillors continue to work from home and all committees, panels and council meetings are currently held via Zoom. Some Appeals Panels require essential site visits for which new protocols have been introduced.

A whole new IT infrastructure is emerging which will be most immediately noticeable to residents in terms of a new website from June 2021 and also revised email addresses which will be introduced by degrees across the next few months.

**Where is Broadland ‘going it alone’**?

Very recently the Broadland Country Park has been officially opened. It is a very welcome area for exercise and relaxation, though to be fair to the residents of the Brundall Ward it is at the far end of the Broadland Northway / A1270.

Further extensions are being made from April to our Food Waste Collection Service, though again to be fair to the Brundall Ward residents, they will not one of the areas to benefit. From September 2022 however, all Broadland Residents will benefit from a new Waste Collection Service, which is currently under negotiation.

Also from April 2021 a substantially improved Housing Allocation System in coming on stream with easier access and greater flexibility where most needed.

**What did Broadland do for the parishes within Brundall Ward last year?**

**Brundall**

* Member’s financial support for the Pre-school
* Supported application for new pedestrian crossing
* Serviced 10 planning applications:

DECIDED 2
WITHDRAWN 2
ONGOING 6

**Postwick**

* Serviced 52 planning applications of which 42 concerned the Broadland Business Park.

Of the remaining 10, relevant to the immediate villages:

DECIDED 4
ONGOING 6

**Strumpshaw**

* Members’ financial support for the Air Scouts
* Serviced 24 planning applications:

DECIDED 14

WITHDRAWN 2

ONGOING 8

**Cantley**

* Serviced 13 planning applications of which 2 concerned the Sugar Beet Factory.
Of the remaining 11, relevant to the immediate villages:

DECIDED 8

WITHDRAWN 1

ONGOING 2

Thank you for welcoming us to your meetings.

SMP
5.4.2021