

# ANNUAL Parish Report 2016

## Councillor

Penny Otton

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**SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL BUDGET;** this was again agreed with a zero increase in council tax; but with an extra 2% to cover increase in cost of adult care.

**FIRE SERVICE;** as a result of the proposed reduction in fire engines in Bury Ipswich and Lowestoft we put a motion to council to have these put on hold. This was debated for over 2 hours ; when put to the vote it was lost by 35 to 36

**HIGHWAYS;** the new assistant director for highways is Mark Stevens. The issue of road repairs continues to be a problem.

**A14; HIGHWAYS AGENCY;** I now have a new contact; Caroline Delahunty; [caroline.delahanty@highwaysengland.gov.uk](mailto:caroline.delahanty@highwaysengland.gov.uk) and at last the direction sign and chevrons have been re-instated.

**BUS SERVICE;** the new contracts for community bus service have been agreed for Mid Suffolk area is to be run by ASPIRE. Suffolk County council will no longer issue timetables so they can be downloaded from [www.suffolkonboard.com](http://www.suffolkonboard.com) and printed to be given out or left in public places.

**SCHOOLS;** I am of course concerned that the government has decreed that all schools must become Academies; i.e. no longer the responsibility of the county council with no requirement for parent governors. The county council will still have responsibility for school transport and providing school places!!

Any new housing developments must take into account the need for extra school places. I am pleased that all of the 30 places for Rougham primary were filled with no refusals.

**KIER PROPOSAL;** following the major concerns at this I am pleased that the application was withdrawn, however we need to be aware of any movements through the village.

**POSSIBLE VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGN ;** I have passed the clerk details of companies that supply these. I have been helping 3 other villages with the cost of the installation via my small highways budget.

**HGVs;** at that meeting I got a question to the cabinet member asking him whether Suffolk will be doing a review of HGV routes. As we know this is causing some real concern.

**MEETING WITH HIGHWAYS OFFICERS;** I met with them on 3<sup>rd</sup> June to catch up on any outstanding issues and TRY to get some moved forward; including the work on Thurston Road, Drinkstone road as requested by Sue Harris, and the signs as requested by Roger Whyatt.

**BEYTON SWIMMING POOL;** with a group of concerned residents who are trying to have the pool re-opened as a community facility we have been in discussion with Marc Rolph business manager at Thurston community college. A business plan has been developed and they are now looking for financial help to get the renovation of the boiler and other work done.

**CLOSURE OF MAGISTRATE COURTS;** there was unanimous agreement to object to the proposal to close the court in Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft.

**THURSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE;** at the liaison meeting it was agreed to look at the problem of buses and traffic congestion outside the school. Particularly at end of school day. I met with all concerned and it was agreed to ask David Gibbs; SCC school transport to ask that the busses waiting on Norton Rd be contracted to arrive a little later so they can park in the college car park. This has now been agreed so we wait to see if this helps. I am sorry to report that this is still a problem.

**GYPSY AND TRAVELLER TRANSIT SITES;** the call has gone out for landowners to put forward suitable sites. These still to be resolved.

**FOOTPATHS;** the annual report of the Suffolk Access Forum was given in September; I asked whether SCC would be willing to indemnify local communities in the same way they do for clearing snow, to take on cutting/ clearing footpaths. As yet no response! The Suffolk Rights of Way Improvement Plan includes; "developing and managing work to improve health, inclusion, green access through safer routes to school"!!!

**DEVOLUTION PROPOSALS;** following the chancellor's announcement this is going full steam! However there is already a vote against by Cambridge county council. I have grave concern at the idea of a directly elected Mayor who will have so much power with little democratic accountability. All council have to vote on the plan by June followed by some sort of consultation then back to the councils around September with elections for the Mayor in May 2017

**LOCALITY BUDGET;** I am pleased to have been able to give some support to a project at the College run by a Charity which helps students get into the world of work.

**VAS SIGNS** Hopefully these are now up and running I have used my small highways budget to pay for the posts. These will hopefully reduce the amount of speeding in the village