

## **District Councillor Report November 2023**

I apologise for not being able to attend your Parish Council Meeting, there is an extraordinary Full Council meeting to determine who is the successful bidder for South Norfolk House (the previous offices of South Norfolk District Council) of which I am required to Chair.

### **Food waste and recycling**

The government has finally published its plans for simpler recycling. In essence, every council will be forced to provide three bins which can include a garden waste bin on a chargeable basis. The three bin strategy must include a comprehensive food waste collection service operated on a weekly basis where it can be justified.

Running a bin lorry is expensive. Each lorry costs nearly £150,000 to run when you take into account the cost of fuel, maintenance, staffing and repairs. And adding a completely new fleet of vehicles to collect food waste weekly we would need 14 of them at a purchase price of £200k each! Before we consider the impact on the depot. This is an important decision.

On one hand the Government says they will pay us for the new burden. But it's clear that the government's contribution will only provide a fraction of the total cost. We know that £85,000 is the sum of money that raises Council Tax by one percent. If the government isn't going to give us complete cost recovery then we need to think really carefully about how we meet the requirement for food waste.

We have 66,000 residential properties. 85% of our residents live in the built-up areas or within 250 metres of them. But 15% of our residents live in the open countryside on 83% of the land. These rural isolated homes for the most part have large gardens with composting facilities and often a whole menagerie of pets, livestock & domestic fowl.

If we restricted weekly food waste collections to the suburban parts of the District [85% of taxpayers] we might only need five or six bin lorries for the task instead of 14. If we go everywhere, is it really worth sending a collection vehicle down isolated country lanes and long gravel drives for the possibility of collecting half a pail of food scraps at an extra cost of nearly a million pounds a year?

### **Car Parking**

We are waiting for the detail of the car park review from Officers. Cabinet and Committee chairs re-emphasised the importance of the free first hour to allow the small shops to compete with the supermarkets. The issues are complicated by new Parking Apps, Charges for the Electric Bays, tap-in, tap-out as well as the need to save for resurfacing one day.

### **Nutrient neutrality**

The Nutrient Neutrality paperwork has now been signed so we should be issuing permissions again very soon provided that developers start buying their 'credits' – about £2400 per house in South Norfolk.

## **Village Clusters**

We still await the final decision regarding this proposal and I am aware that some developers of land submitted have gone ahead and applied for planning permission. I anticipate that most will be accepted.

## **AD Plant Bressingham**

I have nothing new to inform you of, the refused application and enforcement should come before The Planning Inspectorate in December but it could course be delayed as there is 1 more application that I anticipate will be refused.

## **Pylons**

The campaign against the pylons continues to rumble on with no clear outcomes. We know that National Grid have started drilling bore holes on the designated route and sometimes without permission. The next round of consultation should start in April 2024.

Interestingly I was recently sent an article from National Grid stating that they intend to lay a cable in the sea from Suffolk to Kent, only shows that it can be done.

**If there is anything that I might be able to help you with please send me an email.**