



Mid Suffolk District Council

Report for The Stonhams Ward – Annual Report

Merger

As you no doubt have heard the merger with Babergh has been put on hold. One of the major reasons was because the County Council have decided to consider unitary government. The County Council have engaged Respublica consultants to investigate the way unitary government might work in Suffolk. The review is also to consider how an enhanced two-tier system might work.

Move to Endeavour House

This was successfully completed in October/November and staff are well settled in now with the options of working from home, at the office or at any of the access points in Stowmarket and Subury. Most of the staff appear to be happy with these arrangements. We have also moved to having one phone number and one email as contact which, after a few teething problems, appear to be working very well. If anyone is having problems with this new system, then please let me know.

Needham Market HQ Site

There were two evenings held in Needham for anyone to go along and see what we have planned for the site. Two options have been considered for the site, consisting of a 100% residential development, or a mixed residential and retail development, each striking a different balance, with associated masterplans drawn up.

The proposals the Council are considering would see much of the existing offices – the non-listed buildings in particular – demolished and a new development built in their place and on the former office car park.

The Needham Market School Site

This consultation was held in conjunction with the HQ site consultation and most people who commented were for the change of use for housing although there were worries regarding the access.

Locality Budget

This year all District Councillors were given £6,500 to spend as their Locality budget. £250 from all Councillor's (Total of £10,000) went towards the purchase of a new vehicle for the Rural Coffee Caravan (<http://ruralcoffeecaravan.org.uk/>) which was stolen. The rest of my locality Budget went to:

- **Creeting St. Mary**
 - Antique Parish Map Digitisation - £350
 - Recreation Ground - £1000
- **Earl Stonham**
 - Hedgehog Creche - £500
 - Village Green Fence Posts - £350
- **Stonham Aspal**
 - Village Hall - £1000
 - Debenham 1st Responders CPR Kit for Stonham Aspal - £500
 - Recreation Ground - £1000
- **Stonham Parva**
 - Recreation Ground - £1650

I hope all those people have found the money useful.

New Council Homes

MSDC has built 29 new council homes this year, 23 in Great Blakenham a mixture of 1 bed flats and 2 or 3 bed houses, 11 of these being shared ownership, and 6 in Laxfield were opened in March, they consist of 2 x 2 bed



houses and 4 x 1 bed flats. These homes are lovely and spacious. There are more in the pipeline to be completed this year.

Ex National Westminster Bank Site (Stowmarket)

We have just completed the purchase of this building and we are market testing on its future use. However, we have made a commitment to the John Peel Centre to provide them with access to the High Street. A consultation has been arranged with the Stowmarket Society to gather views from the local community as to their suggestions.

Regal Theatre, Stowmarket

In February it was decided to invest some money along with the Stowmarket Town Council in the redevelopment of the Regal Theatre. This decision demonstrates we are committed to Stowmarket as our key town within the district, builds on the cultural and creative offer that already exists in Stowmarket and will enable the town to establish a more vibrant and sustainable town centre. The development is also anticipated to have a number of economic benefits for the town.

I have thoroughly enjoyed being your District Councillor again this year and I would like to thank the Parish Council's for their help and support throughout this year. If you have anything you think I should be aware of or anything I can help you with, please do not hesitate to contact me.