

Wendling - Annual Parish Meeting 18th May 2023

Dear Resident,

The last year has once again been a busy one. Having got past the worst of the Covid19 pandemic a sense of normality returned to Council proceedings.

The review of Breckland Council's Local Plan is now well under way. When complete this will contain a number of development policies which will be used to determine planning applications for many years to come. It is important that residents engage with any public consultations which will take place during this review period to ensure that their voices are heard.

As part of its Inspiring Communities work, Breckland Council has funded training for volunteers across the district for mental health awareness. This has created a network of people who can provide initial support before signposting people suffering from mental health issues to qualified healthcare professionals. Thetford became the first Mindful town and Swanton Morley became the first Mindful village with individuals who have completed a programme of training for this. I have undertaken this training myself which includes Mental health Awareness, Mental Health First Aid and Suicide Awareness.

In the grip of the cost of living crisis Breckland Council has, with Government support, provided hardship and family support funding for those most in need. As part of my casework I have managed to help a number of families receive additional financial support and I have signposted them to other professional bodies where they can receive additional financial help and guidance. As part of my work in this area I have tried to promote the good work of Credit Unions and was interviewed on radio Norfolk about this.

I remain concerned that there is a lack of funding available to provide Disabled Facilities Grants for all those people who have been assessed as needing adaptations to their homes. I recently supported a motion at Breckland which proposed an additional £200,000 to ensure that all applicants who have been assessed and costed get the help they need in this financial year. The proposal was to use money Breckland receives from the New Homes Bonus. Unfortunately, this motion was defeated. The Cabinet say that they are lobbying Government for more money and I and others will keep pursuing this.

You will probably have seen in the press that I have strongly objected to spending £35,000 on painting murals in Dereham town centre. I am of the view that this cannot be justified when so many families are having their household budgets squeezed. I sincerely hope that the Breckland's Cabinet will scrap this idea.

Finally, I want to say a big thank you to everyone who voted for me in the recent local elections. I have been overwhelmed by the level of support I received. I will do my very best to try and serve ALL residents during the next four years.

Yours Sincerely

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