

ANNUAL REPORT - 2011 - 2013.
District Councillor Mrs. Veronica Falconer
Nacton Ward

The years do fly by and here we are again ending yet another year. Over the year tried to keep you up to date with various things that have been going on.

As mentioned in previous years, the latest edition of Coastline which came out last month, details most of Suffolk Coastal's highlights. A copy of this should have gone to every home in the District. Pages 6 and 7 highlights some of the Council's achievements.

The Nacton Ward Here in Suffolk Coastal we still enjoy a relatively safe, peaceful and relaxed lifestyle and despite all the doom and gloom that is going on. I hope and believe that will continue for a long time to come. The Ward has kept me extremely busy with Planning Applications for everything from extensions, numerous new builds, wind turbines, solar panel farms to discussions with future applicants for large developments at Trinity Park 300 dwellings, Purdis Farm 25 dwellings and the former Amberfield site 25 dwellings.

In addition, one has been keeping an ear and eye open for future development on the outskirts of the Ward that will possibly impact on this area – at present most of these are on the outskirts of Felixstowe - Innocence Farm - 200 acres with possible huge container depot with railway terminal, Tesco's development at Walton, another large convenience food store proposed along with improvements to Felixstowe Station and development of the Mushroom Farm at Trimley St Martin for 66 dwellings. A huge amount of our Greenfield land is fast vanishing.

Review of the Planning Services

In 2010, 13 recommendations on how the Planning Service could be improved took place and in November 2012 it was resolved that the Head of Planning Mr Ridley, be asked to provide further progress on these 13 recommendations taking into account Development Management, Building Control and the Planning Support Teams of both SC and Waveney. This he duly did but the wonderful new IT facility – Idox Uniform system - which is being operated by Waveney DC, who is a market leader in its field, is still not up and running due to various delays. The system will enable everyone to view all the Planning Applications, letters, maps etc. Hopefully this will start in June/July this year.

General – Suffolk Coastal

The Government has reduced the Council's spending power by £1,025,000 or 7% However,

1. For the 3rd year, SC is freezing its Council Tax.
2. S. Coastal's local economy is the biggest in Suffolk and its growth means the Council will get more Government money to support local projects.
3. Vital coastal defence works costing over £10 million in Felixstowe has been completed as well as defence work at Thorpness.
4. The pioneering partnership (which I have mentioned many many times) means that Waveney DC and S.Coastal's new business plan services will be more efficient and value for money. This partnership working has driven down the costs of the two Councils by over £7 million.

5. SC are working hard with EDF and SCC to ensure that if Sizewell C is built, jobs are maximised and there will be benefits to the communities.
6. The Felixstowe South Seafront development costing £20 million started last summer and will see not only new homes but leisure and more car parking facilities.
7. In this District we have one of Country's highest recycling rates. 58.2% of household waste is recycled or composted. Since July 2012, 92 tonnes of textiles have been collected through the kerbside service.
8. It is estimated that income from the New Homes Bonus could produce £750,000 in the next financial year. This is based on the number of new homes built and existing ones brought back into use.
9. Income from the business rates retention scheme will be in the region of £2 million. Money from these last two however, cannot be relied on in future years but it will allow SC to finance some new initiatives in the run-up to 2015.
10. Cleanliness of and repair of Public Conveniences has fulfilled 95% of its target.
11. Over the last few years many staff have left or been made redundant and the head count is now 319 of which 295 are full time workers. One can understand the reasons behind the possible Office move in the next three years to a more eco friendly and fit for purpose building.

Reduction in District Councillor Members.

As mentioned at the next Election we will be voting for less Councillors – at present there are 55 in Suffolk Coastal – Suffolk Coastal have made a recommendation to the Boundary Commission for 43 Members and the Boundary Commission will make its final decision for this District in July 2014.

Apprentices

Suffolk Coastal/Waveney last year started an apprentice scheme – at present there are 8 working for both Councils in a range of teams from HR to IT. The successful applicants will be supported to gain a Level 2 Business Administration or Customer Service apprenticeship. Permanent jobs are not guaranteed but their training and experience does improve their prospects and they are allowed to apply for internal vacancies. The Council employees benefit from their skills and enthusiasm.

Tourist Information Centre – Woodbridge

From March 25th this Service started operation from Woodbridge library

LDF

This subject has once again dominated a huge amount of District Council work. Consultation on Issue 3 and 5 and the Sustainability Appraisal finished last week and we now await the Inspectors decision. It has been an exhausting ongoing exercise.

SCC Elections will be upon us in a month's time and the year rumbles on -

Thank you all and I remain as ever your Councillor and will do the best for you and this Ward.

Cllr. Veronica Falconer
Nacton Ward.

