

Waldringfield Parish Council Report

Sorry I cannot join you at your Annual Meeting but I hope you will enjoy an update on how I have worked on some issues affecting your parish this year including on broadband, transport, education and health.

I was delighted to be re-elected as MP for Suffolk Coastal last May and it is my privilege to serve as your Member of Parliament.

The Government in conjunction with the County Council continue to make a large investment in broadband infrastructure. In 2010, just 31% of Suffolk Coastal constituency had access to superfast broadband, that has now risen to 74% and 95% of constituency will be covered by 2018. Waldringfield is already benefiting from existing fibre broadband services. If there are any residents who have broadband speeds of less than 2mb they can get financial support towards satellite broadband. I have continued to press the case on improving mobile phone signal and have met recently with Ofcom, Vodafone and Telephonica. Planning reform proposals in the Chancellors recent budget include measures to help to boost mobile phone signal. I have been appointed to the Government's Digital Infrastructure and Inclusion Implementation Taskforce to help lead on this agenda.

On health, I have continued to lead the way in scrutinising our ambulance service holding them to account on response times. Since my push for a turnaround plan the Ambulance Service has gone through significant change, recruiting more staff and investing in a new fleet of ambulances. One of the pledges I made at the election last year was to make Suffolk Coastal a dementia friendly constituency. My team and I were trained to become Dementia Friends. I met Felixstowe Dementia Action Alliance about how we can engage with the community.

On education, I look at Ofsted reports for my schools on a weekly basis and have met Headteachers, including Felixstowe Academy, to discuss performance. I have also worked hard pressing the Government for a fairer funding formula for our school children. In Suffolk £4,370 is spent per pupil every year, whereas in some of the best funded parts of the country £6,300 per pupil is spent. The Government have recently announced a consultation on changing the system which I very much welcome. Parliament now has a brand new Education Centre which I have encouraged schools to visit.

On transport, the specification for the new rail franchise for East Anglia was published, which included the criterion of meeting Suffolk in 60 from London. The new franchise will start in October. I have also been focussing on the Felixstowe to Ipswich branch line works. I organised an opportunity for the Chamber of Commerce to come to Parliament to discuss investment in Suffolk's roads, including the vital A14 corridor.

On Sizewell, EDF and China Nuclear Power Corporation signed an agreement for the development of Hinkley Point C, which includes a Heads of Terms agreement for the construction of Sizewell C. There is still much to discuss and I have been working hard to make sure we get great legacy benefits on infrastructure, accommodation and education and skills. It is planned that the stage 2 consultation will take place later this year.

The Coastal Communities Minister launched the Coastal Communities project in Felixstowe and Felixstowe and the Deben Peninsula became Coastal Teams with a £10,000 boost. The Government's Coastal Communities fund has paid for flood defences, including those in Waldringfield.

I spent Remembrance Day at the Home of 23 Parachute Engineer Regiment at Rock Barracks, as we marked Armistice Day with a poignant service of Remembrance.

I was pleased to be invited by the Prime Minister to serve as Deputy Leader of the House of Commons following the General Election. One of my major roles has been to bring in English Votes for English Laws.

Finally, last Autumn I undertook a three-day constituency tour visiting 90 towns and villages across Suffolk. The issue most frequently raised was on broadband and mobile phone signal along with local council matters, particularly on planning and roads and I have involved local councilors on these.