

## **District Councillor's Report September 2018 for Creting St Peter Parish Council**

### **Locality Grants**

As I mentioned last month, each member of the District Council has been allocated £6250 to spend on local projects. I have received four bids for projects in Stowupland and passed these on for payment to the bidders. I'm sure that more will be coming in soon. I (along with many other District Councillors) have also allocated £250 from my budget to The Mix, following the theft of their catering vehicle, to enable their projects to continue whilst they wait for a replacement vehicle. But I have not yet received any bids for projects in Creting St Peter. Please think about any potential for a project in Creting St Peter. The bid would need to be for a specific project or purchase of equipment and cannot be used on general running costs of an organisation. Please get in touch with me if you have something in mind.

### **Homelessness Provision**

The Foyer in Hillside, Combs Ford has been brought back into use and will more than double the Council's provision of accommodation for families and vulnerable people in Mid Suffolk who find themselves without a home. The Foyer, previously owned by Flagship Housing, has been unused for over a year. Mid Suffolk District Council purchased the building and have carried out repairs and alterations to provide housing for 17 vulnerable families and individuals while the Council investigates their housing needs and requirements. The Foyer will provide a mix of single, double and twin rooms.

### **5 Year Housing Land Supply and the Joint Local Plan**

The 5 year land supply details are being tested at planning inquiries. I attended the first day of the inquiry into the refusal of an application for a housing development of 49 homes in Woolpit; the appellants scrutinised almost every development proposal claimed by the District Council to be deliverable within the next 5 years. The appellant's witness sought to persuade the Planning Inspector that MSDC have only a 3.4 year supply of housing land. The decision on whether or not to allow the development will hang almost entirely on what figure the Inspector accepts as housing land supply. His decision is expected to be given in mid to late October.

### **Development of 18 homes on land opposite Holy Trinity Church in Stowupland**

This outline application gained approval from the Planning Committee in May 2018, subject to certain conditions, including completion of a Section 106 agreement. However, before the Section 106 Agreement was finalised, MSDC claimed a 5 year supply of housing land. One of the material considerations that officers and the committee took into account when evaluating the application was the lack of an adequate supply of housing land. This application is being re-evaluated and MSDC have programmed for the application to be considered by committee again on 26 September.

### **Council House Letting**

Officers have been carrying out a project to devise new ways of working to reduce the time between a Council property being vacated and new residents moving in. This has very been successful resulting in a reduction from around 50 days in Spring 2018 to 20 to 25 for the last couple of months. This has been achieved almost entirely by better programming and coordination of workforce.

### **District Council ward boundaries**

The Boundary Commission's final draft proposals are now available. These show Stowupland included in a two-member ward which also includes the parishes of Haughley, Wetherden and Old Newton with Gipping and Dagworth. One of the reasons for the review was the recent and predicted growth of housing in Stowmarket. However, the new warding arrangements are based upon the premise that there will be very low growth in the ward covering the four parishes. Clearly, in Stowupland alone there could be an increase of some 700 electors. This would be a huge percentage increase from the present figure of around 1700. Significant increases in the number of electors are also likely in Haughley and Old Newton and the cumulative effect may be enough to trigger another review.

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