

DClr Peter Patrick - June Report

John hi.

I am sending this to you as requested by Jill. I have to go to London for most of the day tomorrow. It's ordinarily pretty tiring, but I gather we're also likely to be facing journey dislocation, so I'm not sure what time I'll be home. Please record my apologies if I don't attend the Meeting. I am hoping to be at the Red Lion on Wednesday morning with Teresa (my wife), to support the Pier Project.

As usual, most of my activity has continued to be as Cabinet Member for Finance, and we have considered the final outturn of Babergh's finances for the year ended 31st March 2018 against the budget set early last year. There have been some considerable variances, mostly involving our income from Business Rates, all helping to reinforce the sense of unpredictability in Local Government finance. Babergh's position remains fragile, in marked contrast to that of Mid Suffolk, with whom merger would have been extremely beneficial.

I have also been appointed to a committee set up specifically to consider the future of our 'Public Realm' services. This follows my involvement with the Leisure Strategy which, after lengthy deliberation and consultation, came up with the agreed plan to build a new swimming pool at Hadleigh and develop the fitness facilities in Sudbury. 'Public Realm' covers areas such as parks, grass verges and, specifically in this instance, public conveniences. I'd be most grateful to hear of any comments or recommendations with regard to the toilets at Pin Mill owned and operated by Babergh and maintained by our contractors, Id Verde. It is suggested that they might be moved to the car park. Would that be sensible? Would the PC consider taking over the running of the facilities?

I was somewhat taken aback by the virulence of the criticism of Cllr Davis in light of his support in Planning Committee for the proposed development of houses on land next to the Woodlands estate. I'm sure he acted entirely properly. The problem is that we need homes, especially accessible to younger families. Where else is it suggested that they be built?

I spent a happy hour over a cup of tea with Jill, on 24th May. I look forward to working with her. Two interesting snippets of info: a) the shop opposite the Red Lion has reopened. I do hope it is well supported. And b) Rosie is retiring. There's a slight sense of tectonic plates moving. I hope to see her before she finally departs, but I know she'll be sorely missed.

I'd be grateful if you could distribute the above to the PC in time for the Meeting. I did send notes for the last Meeting, which were aimed for the Annual Meeting, but I'm not sure if anyone saw or heard their content.

Kind regards to all.

Peter PATRICK
Cllr Berners Ward, Cabinet Member for Finance Babergh DC