

## 2020-21 Annual Report for Bacton Ward

(Bacton, Cotton, Finningham, Westhorpe and Wyverstone)

### Councillor Andrew Mellen

The past year has been dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions that this has placed on all our lives. In terms of Council meetings, almost everything has been online since March 2020, although one or two Parish Council meetings were held in person last summer. At the beginning of the crisis I was able to obtain funding from the District Council to help start up a Foodbank to assist vulnerable households in the area – this is being run by the Bacton Benefice churches and is continuing to provide help.

**Locality Funding:** Over the last year I have distributed my budget of £ 7,350 as follows:

Parish	Amount	Purpose
Bacton	£ 1,250	Parish Council – contribution toward speed signs
Bacton	£ 1,250	Village hall renovations
Cotton	£ 1,000	Village hall – play equipment
Finningham	£ 1,000	Friends of Finningham – new storage shed
Westhorpe	£ 850	Parish Council – contribution toward speed signs
Wyverstone	£ 1,000	Village hall – improvements inc. new door
General	£ 1,000	Renovations for local scout troop hut – (Mendlesham)

\*Please note that distribution of locality funding is a response to applications for funding as they come in, so funds may not be spread equally across the five parishes in my ward. Any community group can apply, not just parish councils.

I have attended or sent a report to all parish council meetings during the past year and have done my best to answer queries from parish councillors and residents whether verbally at meetings, or via e-mail or phone. The vast majority of queries I get are about planning: applications, decisions, conditions, policy etc. As I sit on one of the planning committees at the Council, I am getting a much better handle on the issues and how to assist residents with their queries. Unfortunately, there have been several decisions made, on both individual dwellings and larger developments, which have not gone the way I and the community would have wanted. As we move closer toward having the Joint Local Plan agreed and in place (hopefully by the end of 2021) there should be much more consistent decision making and this will enable communities to have certainty about future development.

I am also regularly contacted about highway and speeding issues. Although I try to help where I can, these are County rather than District issues. Having said that, I do work very closely with County Councillor Andrew Stringer where our patches overlap in Bacton and Cotton. I am pleased to report that, after a long process, we are well on the way to getting the speed limit in Rectory Road in Bacton reduced to 40mph

My priorities remain those which I advocated before being elected: Listening to and responding to residents; making our communities more resilient; promoting walking and cycling as the first choice for short journeys, and helping residents to live harmoniously with each other and the environment.

I am always available by phone or e-mail.

Andy Mellen

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