

Annual Report for Bacton Ward – Councillor Andrew Mellen (written August 2020)

It has now been over a year since I was elected as your District Councillor in May 2019, and what a strange and unusual year! Since March our lives have been dominated by the measures around the Covid-19 pandemic, this has changed how the Council works, what it is doing and how individual staff and Councillors interact with residents and communities.

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

Parish	Amount	Purpose
Bacton	£ 1,200	Parish Council - defibrillator
Bacton	£ 800	Football club - lights
Bacton	£ 250	WI – new hob for village hall
Cotton	£ 1,000	Village hall - improvements
Finningham	£ 1,500	Parish Council - Vehicle activated speeding sign and mounting posts
Westhorpe	£ 800	Village hall – various items
Wyverstone	£ 800	Village hall - improvements
Wyverstone	£ 250	VE day celebrations
Wyverstone	£ 750	Tree planting scheme

*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 now 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.

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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