

Upton with Fishley Parish Council

Report to Chairman Parish Councillors and Residents 2018

Frank O'Neill - Broadland District Council Member for Blofield with South Walsham

Date: 3rd May 2018

This is my third Annual Report since elected to represent residents of Blofield with South Walsham. The Ward encompasses residents in the following parishes:

- Blofield to include Blofield Heath;
- Hemblington;
- South Walsham;
- Upton with Fishley and
- Woodbastwick to include Ranworth, Panxworth.

Election 2019

The next local government election is in May 2019. I shall not be standing again. As it happens I live in Acle. I hope that we shall have a replacement member for Blofield with South Walsham this time elected from within the Ward. I would also hope to support the candidate in the early days to ensure a smooth transition.

Devolution

A Government inspired project to do the same for the Shires as it has for the metropolitan Councils. Greater London Birmingham and Manchester being examples along with perhaps Cornwall.

Accept more devolved powers from Government and receive more money to spend on your community. What's not to like?

That is fine as far as it goes. The problem seen by too many was that HMG required large groupings. First they wanted all Norfolk and Suffolk councils as one grouping. Then that was not enough so they included Cambridge. Unfortunately Cambridge dropped out leaving few among the remainder with much taste for the project.

Had the project completed it would have resulted a new tier of local government (bureaucracy?) in which member authorities would battle for their share of the money. The project has gone quiet.

Working Together with South Norfolk

Broadland and South Norfolk Councils have embarked on a collaboration project to create one shared officer team to serve two autonomous councils.

It's not a merger but a way of working more closely together to provide both councils with increased capacity and resilience, greater financial stability and a local government that moves with the times and innovates while attracting and retaining the most talented staff for the future.

This way we are in control of our own destinies rather than face the uncertain future of reorganisation. All too often changes in structures are seen as the panacea to solve problems rather than thinking how the public sector, and for that matter the private sector, can work better together for the benefit of residents and businesses.

The Jury is still out but seems so far to be working fine for me.

Local Government Funding

This has been the first year for a long time Broadland has increased its share of Community Charge. The

increase represents £5.00 for a Band D property. This is the most that can be raised without a local referendum. My preferred option would be to go for a one off larger uplift and be up front about it.

Homeless Families

For years local authorities were the sole provider of social housing. Now third party Housing Associations and private landlords provide that service. This leaves the people who are genuinely homeless. To save the cost of providing private rented accommodation Broadland has begun acquiring own homes for this limited service with a view to a saving in cost.

Roadworks

NDR

On 17th April the final stage of the NDR opened for traffic. We must bow call it the Broadland Freeway Yes? No - we call it the Broadland Northway!

Although those living nearer to the City may find more immediate value it is to be hoped it will ease the amount of HGV traffic through the villages in my Ward.

A47 Dualling

I regard the dualling of the A47 from the M1 to Great Yarmouth as offering far greater benefit to the county than the dualling of the A11. To see the whole project completed may take many years. The Acle Straight offers particular challenges for engineers

However the Blofield to Burlingham stage is on the agenda but sadly the start date has slipped to 2021.

The Windle is a special issue for those North and East of Burlingham. Although the contract does not include works on that junction it may receive attention after the results of "sensitivity tests" are concluded in the Autumn/Spring. I trust the NCC elected member will be able to tell us of the NCC intentions.

The Greater Norwich Local Plan

This follow on from the current local plan called the Joint Core Strategy. Whereas the JCS identified the Norwich Policy Area as a separate issue for housing development the latest plan will focus on the whole area comprising South Norfolk Broadland and the City of Norwich. It will only be finalised after it has been approved by the Planning Inspectorate.

The Five Year Land Supply

Parishes in the Norwich Policy Area suffered unduly because we could not meet the 5YLS targets for the NPA. That had the effect of deeming our local plans inadequate and encouraged speculators.

The latest information is that the District Council can now show that there is a 5+ year land supply this means that the local planning policies are no longer out of date so due regard should be given to the allocation of houses in the villages within the NPA.

Community at Heart Awards

Last October saw our third annual *Broadland Community at Heart Awards* sponsored by Chartered Accountants Price Bailey.

The awards celebrate those in our communities who go above and beyond what is expected of them just to improve the lives of others. These are the unsung heroes of the district and this has been the Council's way of recognising their commitment to their community.

I do hope this is an event that is now settled in the calendar.

A Horse, a Telephone and a Frying Pan

A bloke has his feet up watching TV

All of a sudden his wife comes up behind and whacks him on the head with the frying pan. 'Why did you do that?' He asks

I'm just washing your trousers. In one of your pockets is a piece of paper with the name Claudette written on it!

'Oh that's nothing. Last week I went riding and my horse was called Claudette. I wrote it down so as not to forget.' The wife seemed satisfied and apologised

Three days later he's again watching TV and she comes up behind and again whacks him on the head with the frying pan. What's that for now? He asks

'Your horse is on the telephone'!