

REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD SMITH, MVO

TO ALDEBURGH TOWN COUNCIL

11 APRIL, 2016

Mr Mayor, Councillors, Ladies and Gentlemen

For the second month, a short report as I resumed my duties following knee surgery only last week, but I am pleased to report that I am doing well and glad to be back in harness.

You will all have read in the press about Devolution and the possibility of an elected Mayor for the East of England, covering Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire. In some ways, you know as much as I do about this subject as the terms and conditions seem to change on a weekly, if not daily, basis. I have concerns about the possible outcome – I will need persuading about the need and role of a Mayor and the creation of a Combined Authority, which would work as a fourth tier of local government, but I am not getting too worked up about it all, nor taking a firm stance until we understand what the offer from Government actually is, and I would advise you to do the same. An extra County Council meeting has been pencilled in for 30 June, and this will be one of many held by each County, borough and district within the three counties, and the outcome cannot be predicted! I understand a programme of public consultation, certainly involving Town and Parish Councils, will follow. But the situation continues to evolve and prediction about anything is highly risky!

In my column in next month's Aldeburgh Times I will be announcing my policy for spending my Locality Budget over the next year, and am happy to give you early news of what is planned. I have a total of £15,750 which must be spent by February next year, or lost as funds cannot be transferred over after a County Council election, as will

happen on 4th May 2017. I intend to award grants to local organisations, who do not have to be registered charities, but must be properly constituted organisations with a bank account. They need to operate within the area co-terminus with my County Council Division (Aldeburgh, Leiston, Knodishall, Aldringham and Thorpeness). I will award at my discretion the following:

8 grants of £1,000

5 grants of £750, and

8 grants of £500

As long as they meet the criteria – mainly that being for capital purchases rather than on-going revenue purposes, and not a repeat of a former grant, I will be very happy to help – and look forward to receiving a large number of applications. I do emphasise the final decision is mine, which is then checked to ensure it abides with the guidelines by a senior County Council Officer.

Finally, may I thank you for your invitation to join you on Mayor's Sunday. I am pleased to accept and much look forward to the occasion.

Richard Smith

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