

**REPORT TO ALDEBURGH TOWN COUNCIL FROM
COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD SMITH, MVO 8 AUGUST, 2016**

Over the years many things have put Aldeburgh very firmly on both the national and international map. Of course, the Aldeburgh Festival lays claim to the international reputation, but undoubtedly it is the Carnival on each third Monday of August and the weekend of events that precede it which brings in an influx of visitors from far and wide. It is always an event which bestows great credit on the town, and its highly professional organising committee deserves to be commended for its efforts once again this year. I hope all goes off well over the next week.

Policing for the Carnival has always been a subject of some anxiety, although in recent years this has proceeded well under the wise guidance of the Safer Neighbourhood Team, headed so capably by Sergeant Mark Beresford. I have every confidence that the weekend events will be well-policed once again, but there is anxiety in the town about the longer-term policing when the present PCSO retires soon. The Police and Crime Commissioner, who bears responsibility for crime reduction, is independent from the County Council, but I know Tim Passmore well and believe he does a good job within the resources at this disposal.

In a recent conversation with your Town Clerk the worries about future police resources within the town, and especially the enforcement of car parking regulations, was close to the top of the agenda. I will seek a meeting with Mr Passmore and explain the worries that both my main towns have (as Leiston has similar anxieties, if for somewhat different reasons) about the future of PCSO provision. I cannot promise success but I can and will lobby him face-to-face, pointing out the need for the continuation of community policing which should not end at 6pm each evening.

The period of public engagement over the Devolution proposals continues until 21st August. Please may I encourage you to complete the on-line questionnaire at www.eastangliandevo.co.uk so that your views can be understood and recorded. I will have to make my final decision about whether or not I support the proposals at a County Council meeting on 20th October, when this project can be welcomed and implemented or disposed of altogether. I remain a mild sceptic, and I have yet to meet anyone who is a keen advocate of an elected mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk or of a Combined Authority which will become, in effect, a fourth tier of local government. I will make up my mind when the results of the public consultation are known.

I understand that Aldeburgh Primary School is considering converting to Academy status by becoming part of the Avocet Academy group, which already consists of a grouping of Leiston, Wickham Market and Pettistree primary schools. Whilst this decision is a matter primarily for the school governors, they will need to consult parents and the community before a decision is taken. So far they have not been in touch with me, which I find disappointing especially as I have always been very supportive of the school. I know that some parents are wary of this possible change and I will ensure that I update myself on the proposals by seeking a meeting with the Chair of Governors, necessary as the school is without a Head Teacher at present. I will report back when I can.

Some forward progress can be reported on the proposals to reduce the speed limit between Aldringham and Aldeburgh to 40mph and to abolish the 40mph 'buffer' as the road enters the town. Implementation is still 12-18 months away, and the process must include a period of public consultation and an exhibition of the proposals. I have also been chasing progress on parking restrictions in Church Farm Road, but these are in a queue and cannot be prioritised over other proposals across Suffolk. I realise how much they are needed, but again when the process starts there will

undoubtedly be objections from members of the public which will further slow down implementation.

I have had correspondence with a resident about the standard of the resurfacing work undertaken along in Cragg Street. I asked for investigations to be made, and they have shown that the work is sub-standard, but not dangerous. The firm that carried out this work is a specialist contractor who works all over England and they will not be back in Suffolk until next April, when remedial works will be undertaken at their expense. I have raised concerns about checking and signing-off works for payment which are clearly sub-standard. This is a particular matter of concern to me, as it is part of my Cabinet responsibilities to ensure the County Council receives value for money in all that it does, and I have another instance of poor quality finishing of highways works in Leiston, which also needs to be revisited and completed to a proper standard.

Ah! The joys of being a County Councillor! It can often be very satisfying, but is frequently frustrating...

I wish you all an enjoyable late Summer made notable with plenty of good seaside weather.

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