

**REPORT TO ALDEBURGH TOWN COUNCIL FROM
COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD SMITH, MVO 12 SEPTEMBER, 2016**

I write this on the day of the fiftieth anniversary of the withdrawal of rail passenger services on the branch line from Saxmundham to Aldeburgh, 10th September 1966. How things might have differed if Aldeburgh was still connected to the national rail network and perhaps the parking problems at peak visitor times might have been eased, if only slightly...

It was on parking matters that I arranged to see Tim Passmore, the Police and Crime Commissioner, at Police headquarters in Martlesham on 2nd September. I promised the Town Council that I would lobby the PCC over the lack of PCSO provision in the town, with the concurrent lack of enforcement of car parking regulations. In the past, indeed until 31st March this year, you have been prepared to cover half the cost of a PCSO on the understanding that this Officer would be based mostly in the town and I know you have received monthly reports about crimes in the town as well as the number of parking tickets issued.

I also agree with your view that the current request to pay the full salary cost of a PCSO, if one is to be dedicated to Aldeburgh, is unreasonable, although unfortunately this position has been somewhat undermined by the decisions made by both Bury St Edmunds and Southwold Town Councils to pay that full cost. Your position is the one I put to Mr Passmore and I explained very clearly to him the traffic and parking problems experienced in the town, especially at peak periods. He listened and certainly understood the situation. He told me he would review the situation.

Please do understand that policing matters are outside my remit as your County Councillor, but as I know and like Tim I have had access to him on your behalf, and I have done my best to put forward the

Town's case for the continuation of having a dedicated PCSO with a 50% contribution from your budget. I await the result of his review.

The matter of the revised 40mph speed limit on the B1122 between Aldringham and Aldeburgh and the lowering of the 'buffer zone' 40mph to 30mph as motorists reach the town's built-up area is, I'm pleased to report, moving forward. Following the acceptance of the proposed change by the County's Speed Panel, the proposal has joined a queue for implementation with other similar schemes throughout Suffolk. I have been emphasising that unlike many of these other schemes, I have available, as I promised to do, the funding required to implement this change in the Highways Budget under my control, and that therefore this scheme should have priority.

I think I am having some success as the initial stage towards implementation has now happened. The first formal notice has been issued to interested parties, including yourselves, asking that "formal representations, specifying the grounds on which they are made, must reach enquiries@suffolkhighways.co.uk by... 26th September..." These representations cannot be regarded as confidential as they may be inspected by any interested party. This process gives me hope that further stages will follow through the Autumn and early Winter, with implementation in time for next year's peak season. But I don't want to give any promises as objections to the changes proposed will very much slow down the procedure, as well as increasing its implementation cost.

There is one other piece of Highways news. Leiston Road between Golf Lane and Linden Road was due to be closed for carriageway repairs between 25th and 31st October. When I was notified of this, I immediately spotted that this was half-term week, and that the town would be busier than normal with visitors and traffic. I put in an objection and am pleased to report that the road works have been postponed to a later date. This is one small instance of how I do try

very hard to safeguard the best interests of the town and I am pleased I was successful in this case. There will be inconvenience when these necessary works are carried out, with the road being closed between 9.30am and 3.30pm each day (a diversion will be in place), but they at least will be done outside a particularly busy week for Aldeburgh.

I shall be presenting the certificates and medals to Aldeburgh children who have completed Suffolk Libraries *Summer Reading Challenge* in the newly-refurbished library on 21st September. This is always a most enjoyable occasion when due tribute is given to the young readers, who have all read at least five books during the Summer (this year on a Roald Dahl theme to mark the centenary of his birth), but it is also an opportunity to mark the efforts and thank those volunteers who aid the children year-round by hearing them read and helping them in other ways. Aldeburgh Library, especially in its refurbished form, is rightly held in high esteem by the town, and I too am proud of it in my current capacity of SCC Cabinet Member with responsibility for Libraries. The very active Friends' Group is one of the most dedicated in Suffolk and has helped assure the future of the Library, not just as a place to visit to borrow books, but as a vibrant community hub.

At the County Council work continues apace to fix a budget for the next financial year, 2017-18. Finding the necessary savings against a continuing backdrop of reducing grants from central Government is again challenging. But rest assured that my party will keep its election pledge, made four years ago, that the basic Council Tax that you pay for County services will not rise and next year you will pay the same amount as you did in 2010. We are proud of our good house-keeping, on behalf of Suffolk's residents, including all Council Tax payers in Aldeburgh.

Richard Smith, MVO

Richard.smith@suffolk.gov.uk 01728 602714