

A report for parishes from District Councillor David Ritchie

November 1st 2021

Dear all,

The virtual Norfolk and Suffolk Coast and Estuaries Conference was a great success and much of the content can still be accessed through the East Suffolk Council Website. For the first time this was a joint conference with Norfolk so, as the chairman of the Suffolk Coast Forum, I was only one of the initial speakers. I spoke briefly of the need to adapt the coast for resilience – and having the money to do it! We have always had a changing and dynamic coastline. A sustainable future for the coast requires different solutions in different places. In Lowestoft we need hard defences to protect the town. We are building tidal flood walls on Hamilton Road and around the outer Harbour. Work is progressing on the final design for a 42.5-metre-wide tidal barrier to prevent future tidal surges from entering Lake Lothing and flooding the town. The Benacre Pumping Station, which pumps the Hundred River out to the sea, will need to be replaced with two smaller pumping stations further inland, this will also create 100 hectares of new inter tidal habitat. On the eroding coast where land is inevitably lost to the sea, we are finding ways for businesses to roll back their operations and for householders to rebuild inland.

When new properties are built, the developers are required to pay a per square metre charge known as the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Different rates are charged for various types of development. There are also several different geographic charging areas. There are also special rates for the largest sites as these sites, as well as paying CIL, have to provide roads and cycle ways, open spaces, land for community centres and other on-site infrastructure. So, on these large sites CIL rates are normally lower than for small sites or individual houses. On Tuesday I will be taking a new CIL charging schedule to the East Suffolk Cabinet for approval so that it can go out to consultation before being submitted for examination. The preparation for this has been a very considerable piece of work for my officers in the Planning Policy and Delivery Team. We have also discussed it as councillors on three occasions at the local planning working group. I am expecting the consultation and the examination to arouse some controversy. Developers will wish for lower rates and some parish councils may desire higher rates on the largest sites. The new charges are necessary so that we can help to provide the new infrastructure to accompany new development. I am optimistic that we have got it about right. But we will see!

On every fourth Saturday morning the new community centre in Bungay hosts a farmer's market. I was there last Saturday and can recommend the fresh vegetables from Clarks Care Farm. Cllr Judy Cloke is chairman of the trustees for the hall. If you have not been inside, pay it a visit. It is magnificent. The trustees have done an excellent job!

Best wishes

David Ritchie

One of the two District Councillors for the Bungay and Wainford Ward of East Suffolk Council.

Cabinet member for planning and coastal management at East Suffolk Council.

Chairman of the Suffolk Coast Forum

Chairman of the board for the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project.

Chairman of The Southwold Harbour Management Committee.

Chairman of the Local Plan Working Group.

Chairman of the Developers Forum