**2017 Annual Parish Report - Barnham**

**Background**

I was pleased to be elected as your Borough Councillor at the end of October 2016. I have been a resident of Bardwell since 2004 and a Parish Councillor in Bardwell since 2006. My wife Pauline is the Parish Clerk for Bardwell.

In addition to being Vice Chairman of Bardwell Parish Council my local activities include being the Chairman and Treasurer of the Friends of Bardwell Church, a member of the PCC, the Tithe Barn Committee and Bardwell Cars on the Green Committee.

**Broadband**

Matthew Hancock (Minister of State for Digital and Culture at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport) accepted an invitation to a Broadband meeting in the Tithe Barn, Bardwell on the 3rd March 2017. It was chaired by Joanna Spicer County Councillor, supported by myself and Carol Bull St Edmundsbury Borough Councillor for Barningham Ward.

A brief presentation preceded the open discussion, eight Parish Councils were represented, which gave an opportunity for Matthew to learn first-hand about the localised difficulties affecting some parts of our rural area.

Whilst acknowledging the progress, and cost of Better Broadband Suffolk since 2012, principal concerns surrounded “not spots”, and delivery issues with BT Openreach.

It was a constructive meeting, and it is hoped that our Minister is able to assist in accelerating the availability of the service to those parts of our rural area which are considered to be “not spots”.

**Bury St Edmunds Masterplan**

The Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Masterplan is a project intended to shape the future of the town centre so that it works for people. It is not just about ensuring that it continues to attract shoppers and visitors for decades to come, but also that it is accessible, and a place where people can live and work happily. That includes looking at how the town continues to cope with growth and other future pressures such as technological changes, and responds sensitively to a larger number of people and cars.

A huge part of the town centre masterplan will be to look at those elements of the town centre that don’t really work, are perhaps a bit grotty or disconnected and that is where the public can play a big part.

The consultation closed on the 21st April 2017, and over 1,000 responses were received.

**Visit to the SCC Energy from Waste (EfW) and Materials Recovery Facilities (MRF) Gt Blakenham.**

Following specific issues raised with me about what can and can’t be recycled, why does the advice frequently change, and how is the brown bin scheme progressing (see responses below), representatives from 6 Parish Councils joined me on a trip to the (EfW) and (MRF) on the 18th April 2017.

1. The reason bagged textiles are no longer to be collected for recycling: I can confirm that this started in 2012 when initially the scheme performed well. However, from early 2014 the tonnage of bagged textiles began to decline and the amount of loose textiles began to increase. Loose textiles were a problem as textiles reprocessors will not accept them. This is because they want undamaged and clean textiles to reuse. That is why the special toughened bags were necessary. Normal carrier bags will not suffice. Viridor were therefore forced to remove the loose textiles upon delivery, (a task which increased operational costs), and then send this material for disposal, which is a further additional cost.
2. The brown bin (i.e. Garden Waste) collection requires an annual payment of £40 per bin (it is remaining so for 2017/18), payable by credit or debit card (for credit card payments there is a surcharge of 0.38% = 15p/bin). You can have up to four garden waste bin subscriptions for each property.

Since introduction April 2016 some 19,000 households (41%) are now paying for the service.

The rationale behind the subscription charge was an expected £500,000 cost increase to SEBC resulting from SCC reducing its “Recycling Performance Payments” (RRP), and the expected cost increases from a new contract for handling and treatment of organic waste.

Three options were considered:-

1. Carry on with the FOC service and fund the £500k shortfall.
2. Stop all together.
3. Introduce a subscription charge for garden waste only (food waste would be a contaminant).

Increasing SEBC’s precept by 1% only brings in £66k so a precept increase of 7.6% was necessary for this issue alone.

MSDC and BDC already had an “opt in” subscription charge for garden only waste.

**Cllr Andrew Smith**

**Ward Member for Bardwell**

**St Edmundsbury Borough Council**