

Report of Cllr Lynda Tumer District Councillor for Shipdham with Scarning April 2016

This has been a year of transition for your District Council:-

- Breckland Council continues to have the lowest element of District Council Tax in the country whilst maintaining key frontline services.
- The Council has a balanced budget for 2016! 17 due to efficiencies and income generation, particularly from its assets portfolio, which produces over £2M per annum, which effectively offsets requiring a higher council tax.
- During the year the Council has continued to review all its services and assets, maximising efficiency and minimising costs.
- The Council is going through a transformation programme, linked to its Corporate Plan, to address the future in digitalisation, commercialisation, aligning public services and organisational redesign. To this end, the DWP have already moved into the ground floor of Elizabeth House, sharing premises and costs - and it is working well.
- 'The work of Breckland Bridge, a company set up between Breckland Council and its partner Land Group, is well on schedule for the building of a cinema, Travel Lodge, and retail units in Thetford, which will not only generate income but improve the night time economy for the town.
- ' Other projects under Breckland Bridge include a small housing development at Mileham with starter homes, and a similar project on the old school site at Attleborough.
- The Council has continued to work very haDistrict Councillors with communities, providing grants ranging from £50 to £20,000, and is expanding its programme of work within Health and Wellbeing. Projects to enable those with dementia, and their carers, include Our Day out, where small groups get together to enjoy those things we take for granted - such as a pub lunch, reading and activities, and as one lady said, "this is the first time in 16 years we have been outside Attleborough -thanks to this project"

Current Activities and future plans:-

- Our two Leisure centres are also working on Health and Wellbeing, and now offer a very cheap monthly membership to carers, to enable them to have a short break and relaxation.
- The Council is working with many schools on helping them understand democracy as part of the curriculum, and councillors and officers are spending time in primary schools on this theme.
- The Council continues to work closely with the Armed Forces Covenant Board, ensuring that our service men and women are given as much support as possible, especially as they leave the services.
- There has been a change in Leader and Cabinet in the last couple of weeks, giving others an opportunity to lead portfolios and committees.
- The debate continues re devolution, to pass decision making and responsibility down to a combined authority - with an elected Mayor. Breckland Council has made it perfectly clear as ' have many of the other 23 districts involved in the East Anglia bid that we do not want a mayor - the debate goes on.
- 'Elections for the Police and Crime Commissioner a couple of local bye elections and referendums for neighbourhood plans take place on 5f" May.
- For residents probably the most important message is the ability to do "more on line". This means that residents can now pay for their brown bins on line, report far more on line, and be able to do so 24/7 via their computers, tablets and phones. it is totally accepted that a small proportion of residents are unable to access services digitally, or choose not to, and they will continue to be supported by officers over the phone, or by visiting Elizabeth House.
- The new website is now live, and residents will be able to easily report incidents such as abandoned cars, fly tips, etc. pay for things on line, apply for grants, taxi licences etc. all by a couple of simple steps. The website adapts itself for whatever medium the customer is using, i.e. mobile phone, tablet.

As always, if you have a problem we would be delighted to have the opportunity to try and resolve it: please drop us a letter, email or a phone call.

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