

## **July Report for Hawstead.**

**Shared Services.** The single pay structure for SEBC and FHDC employees is now complete and has been operating since June 1<sup>st</sup>. All Council employees now get the same pay for doing the same work.

The merging of ICT between SEBC and FHDC is nearing completion. Current work involves finishing off upgrades of desktop and office systems and this is scheduled to be completed by September.

The restructuring of office staff in smaller departments is still on-going.

**Theatre Royal/Apex.** We continue to explore collaboration with the TR. Sudexo predict that they will be able to contribute £250,000 towards the running of the Apex by the end of their 7 year contract, which would serve to reduce the grant from SEBC from £750,000 to £500,000.

**Parish Conference.** The recent Parish Conference was a success. The prevention of rural burglary and provision of better broadband were discussed. Three parishes took up the advertised challenge to pitch for a budget for a local community project, and as a result, Wickhambrook has been awarded a grant for £500 to put on an old fashioned Harvest Horkey in the village.

**Vision 2031.** This has now entered its final consultation period which will last until August the 9th. Any new comments raised will be sent to the Planning Inspectorate for consideration, along with the final draft of the Vision which was approved by Full Council on the 16th of May.

**Development Control.** New planning regulations regarding permitted development, such as extensions to property, without the need to formally apply for planning permission have been brought in by the government. It is a temporary relaxation of rules for 3 years and all work must be completed by May 2016. However, details of how this will work in practice have yet to be fully explained. We know that the size limits before planning permission will be required will double from 4 to 8 metres for detached houses and from 3 to 6 metres for all other houses. The homeowners wanting to build larger extensions will need to notify the Planning Authority who have 42 days to make a decision on the proposal. They will notify all neighbours, and a consultation period will then follow. If there are no objections the development can go ahead. If there

are objections, the PA will make a decision about whether the impact on the amenity of all adjoining properties is acceptable. No other issues can be considered.

There are also relaxations to the change of use of buildings, for example from agricultural to a 'flexible' use.

There is a wealth of detail involved in all these regulations. I refer you to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order 2013. for much more detail.

**Station Hill Redevelopment** Hopkins Homes is consulting with members of the local community on the masterplan for the future regeneration of the Station Hill site in Bury-St-Edmunds, together with detailed proposals for Phase 1 of the wider development. The proposals include provision for approximately 300 residential dwellings across the site with 135 dwellings in Phase 1. For details go to the website at [www.stationhill.co.uk](http://www.stationhill.co.uk)

Also, the masterplan for a development of about 900 homes between the Mildenhall and Howard estates and Fornham All Saints was unveiled last week..

**Village of the Year Competition.** I was again pleased to be a judge of the Village of the year on June the 14<sup>th</sup>. The winner was Gt Barton with Ixworth coming second. Barton will now go forward to the Suffolk final in August.

**Government Spending Review.** On June 26<sup>th</sup> the Chancellor announced the outcome of his Government spending review which will affect our 2015/16 funding. It means further reduced government grant in 2015/16.

This year SEBC made up the reduction by passing on to parish councils the amount they had hitherto received so that PCs were not affected. We were about the only Council who did this. In future there will be no Council Tax support grant from the government. However SEBC intend to phase this in so that we will pass on 75% of the grant for the first year, then reducing it by 25% per year. This will give PCs some guarantee of certainty for the next 4 years. It will mean that PCs will have to utilise their own reserves after that in order to maintain their level of services.

Council Tax is to be frozen for another two years but SEBC would have been endeavouring to do this in any case.

The government have also announced additional infrastructure funding for transport and housing and we shall be pressing for as much as possible to help boost local economic growth.

**Bury Town Football Club.** SEBC have given Bury Town Football Club a loan to promote their development on the Moreton Hall site. The benefit of this loan to SEBC means that the FC will move from Ram Meadow to Moreton Hall. Thus freeing land to make another 'heritage' entrance to the town.

**General news items.**

- Bury Business Festival will be in September.
- The Arts Festival in May 2014 will revert to being held over 10 days as opposed to this year's 4 days.
- There is now an app that can be downloaded promoting tourism in the Borough. It also promotes different streets.
- The popular and well-used skate board park on Olding Road is to be refurbished in the autumn
- The car parking review is looking to introduce more low emissions parking spaces, and the issue of permits at 2 of the Borough car parks. We are undertaking a feasibility study for pay-on-exit parking.
- The A board review is still out to consultation due to the on-going Street Vending Policy review.
- The Borough is keen to help with litter picking in the villages. We provide the equipment and will collect the resulting litter.

**Angela Rushen**

**July 2013**