

## **January Report for Hawstead**

**Travellers.** SEBC has authorised a Traveller family to park up on a site off Compiegne Way on a temporary basis. This will not become a permanent site. The family has made a planning application for a small, private family site, which will be considered by the Development Control Committee in February.

There are no authorised sites for them to go to and to prevent unauthorised encampments while awaiting the outcome of the application, St Edmundsbury has identified this area as suitable for a temporary toleration agreement.

The conditions will include a limit on the number of vehicles, maintenance of site and payment for waste collection services, among others. The family have previously complied with such conditions. The toleration agreement will be linked to the time required for the planning application for the permanent site to make its way through the committee process.

The pre-emptive injunctions which St Edmundsbury secured on its town centre car parks and open spaces at Moreton Hall are still in place (and remain so indefinitely), meaning that these sites are out of bounds to any travellers. These injunctions have worked well.

**The Charter for Elected Member Development.** Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council, operating as West Suffolk, have become the first Councils in the country to gain a specialist accreditation for the quality and effective training and development programme for councillors. This enables us to have a greater understanding when it comes to representing our wards. I have taken full advantage of this training and have attended the vast majority of the sessions. Much has been learnt as a result.

**Football Ground on Moreton Hall.** Consultants are now looking at all pitches in SEBC to see if there is a way forward following on from the withdrawal of funding by the Suffolk FA. The aim remains that the new school on Moreton Hall will have excellent playing facilities, including the best artificial surface. Bury Football Club is also exploring ideas. A move for them from Ram Meadow to the athletics track area by KEGS as suggested in the press is not an option. There are not sufficient parking facilities, and the area is not large enough anyway. It is possible that if there was an upgrade of facilities at Ram Meadow, the FA might give some funding..

**Theatre Royal and Apex.** Following on from the news that the Theatre has lost its Arts Council funding, the Theatre and Apex have been looking at ways in which they could work together to save costs and provide a more cohesive cultural offering for the Borough. For the next six months they are to investigate a joint management team to see if both could save money whilst preserving or improving the performing arts in the region. The trial will begin at the end of this month.

**Development Control.** New government regulations came in to force at the end of November regarding the S106 payments that developers have to pay. Developments of less than 10 units will no longer be required to pay into S106 funds.

Following our trial of new workings for Development Control, we are now undertaking a review of the current practices to determine the way forward. Our aim remains to streamline the system as much as possible and thus increase efficiency for all.

**Public Service Village.** The next phase of a project to create a public service village in Western Way, Bury St Edmunds, first approved as a concept for the public service village eight years ago. Initially, the relocation of staff from both councils, to new shared offices at West Suffolk House took place in 2009. Since then, the building has welcomed new partners, most recently the West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group.

Now a business plan is being developed over regarding the relocation of the council's depot from Western Way to a shared site at Compiegne Way with a new Waste Transfer Station and the County Council's Household Waste Recycling Centre, currently located at Rougham Hill. This in turn will create an opportunity to expand the public service village to include other partners such as the emergency services which could get underway in late 2016.

**OurBuryStEdmunds BID Group.** Town centre shops, offices and other businesses have voted to pay 1.75 per cent of their rateable value in order to keep the OurBuryStEdmunds BID group.

In the past four years the BID, headed up by its chief executive Mark Cordell, has delivered major events including the annual Whitsun Fayre, the Food and Drink Festival, and the Christmas Lights Switch On. The Group works to bring

more money and businesses to the town and will now continue this good work for a further 5 years.

**Home Start.** SEBC is supporting the new Home Start charity in West Suffolk. The charity offers help to families going through bereavement, separation, financial difficulties or other problems. Volunteers are needed with parental experience who are able to donate a few hours a week helping families by talking through their own life experiences and pointing them in the direction of help that is available. Training will be given. To find out more, contact [office@homestartmidsuffolk.org.uk](mailto:office@homestartmidsuffolk.org.uk), or phone 01379 678552.

**USAF Mildenhall.** The closure of this base will cause major repercussions in the local area, but all agencies will be working together to suggest and develop ways of minimising the impact in the local community.

**West Stow Country Park.** SEBC is looking at new ways of boosting both the appeal and income of the 125 acre park for future leisure opportunities. A camping and caravan site is one possible development. The Council has launched a market engagement exercise and hopes to discuss ideas with community groups, voluntary groups, as well as commercial operators.

**Car parks.** There will not be an increase in off street car parking charges in 2015-16 but there will be a full review of all charges beginning in June 2015 following on from the completion of occupancy and capacity reviews and the Pay on Exit feasibility investigations.

The Free from 3pm parking will continue for another year. This initiative has successfully increased footfall.

The cost of parking at the Shire Hall car park will be increased to £1.80 for up to 3 hours and £3 for all day.

**Angela Rushen**

**January 2015**