

District Councillor Report 2018-19

Wortwell

So, my 28 years as your District Councillor comes to an end this week. Turnout in local elections is usually only about 40% and could be lower this year through public disillusionment with politics. But I'm urging people to vote in this election because you never know when you might need help from a District Councillor. For example, during my 28 years I've had to deal with unauthorised traveller incursions in both Denton and Earsham . And, just after I became a District Councillor, Norfolk County Council proposed putting a huge rubbish tip on Hardwick Airfield that would have meant rubbish lorries trundling up Tunbeck Road and through Alburgh to get to the tip. I spent 2 years fighting that proposal, which was eventually turned down by a planning inspector. So District Councillors do have to deal with major issues that affect people's lives, so do please vote.

At SNC, I'm most proud of having sat on the Planning Committee for 28 years and chaired it for 12 years. During that time I introduced the right for the public to speak on all planning applications coming to committee. SNC was the first planning authority in East Anglia to do so. We take it for granted now. In 1996 I chaired the 5 hour planning committee meeting that approved the construction of the new Norfolk and Norwich hospital. I also did 12 years on the Broads Authority Planning Committee and chaired that for 7 years. I've campaigned for many years for a roundabout at Hempnall cross-roads and am thrilled that that's now coming to fruition. And I've supported proposals for affordable housing in all 5 of the villages I represent, including the one at Oak Hill in Wortwell.

In terms of grants, I achieved over £5,000 from SNC to help install a new watering system for the bowling green and over £4,000 to help Alburgh PC to purchase the Homersfield picnic site. I've given Wortwell several smaller grants including towards new play equipment and towards space and water heating in this building. Your 2 new District Cllrs will be able to apply to the £50k fund at SNC as well as having £1000 each to spend within the 12 parishes in the new Ward. So don't be shy in asking if you have suitable projects in the parish.

I've dealt with hundreds of planning applications including recent ones next to The Bell. One thing to look out for this year will be the draft Greater Norwich Local Plan being done jointly with Norwich City Council and Broadland District Council with publication expected in the autumn. Several sites have been put forward in Wortwell including the fields between High Road and Low Road which is big enough for over 300 houses. There will be a consultation period of several weeks on this draft plan and during it you can decide whether you want to comment as a parish council or as individuals.

Finally, can I thank the Parish Council, its clerk and Wortwell residents for their support over the last 28 years. So thank you very much for having me for 28 years. Best wishes for the future and if I can help in any way you know where I am. I'm happy to answer questions.

Murray Gray
District Councillor, April 2019