

Councillor Paul Hopfensperger

Report to Howard Estate Association of Residents and Tenants (H.E.A.R.T.) Monday December 16, 2019

This past month has been rather taken up by the General Election and so due to election purdah, I have not been able to get too much done. As soon as we are back after Christmas, I will get back into full swing with my list of tasks.

1. Litter Bin at the end of Clay Road/Marham Park Footpath & Path Update



Following on from last month's update on the footpath between Marham Park and Clay Road, I am delighted that after many e-mails and telephone calls, the dropped kerbs, streetlamp and bollards preventing vehicle entry have finally been completed (would you believe that cars were driving on the footpath to get to Marham Park from Clay Road!). The light itself was not working last week, but I hope it will be shortly, if not already working. I have now had confirmed that a Bury St Edmunds Town Council combined litter/dogs mess bin is to be installed at the exit of the path. This will be installed imminently. It could not be installed during election purdah hence the delay.

2. Update on Empty House on St Olaves Road

As many of you will know, there has been an empty house on St Olaves Road for many years now with residents complaining of the state of the house and the fact that it could contain vermin etc. One of the West Suffolk Councillors has been dealing with this and it is a slow legal process which has to be followed. Following requests at last month's meeting I requested an update from one of the locality officers and this was her response:-

"Further to our conversation on Monday evening, I have been in touch with the Housing Standards Team who are involved with this matter.

They have reported that they are now in contact with the owner and are working with them to provide advice on options for selling or renting the property.

This is a positive step forward as the owner is engaged and able to make a fully informed choice about the property rather than decisions being made on their behalf which could mean a lot of red tape and could take even longer to resolve.

I will keep you updated of any further developments, but if you have any specific questions please let me know and I'll ask the team."

I will keep you updated with any further progress as and when I receive it.

3. West Suffolk Full Council – 17/12/2019

Tomorrow night, Tuesday December 17th at 6:30pm, is a meeting of the West Suffolk Full Council which is always held at West Suffolk House in Beetons Way. As I have mentioned many times over the years, ANY members of the public who live in West Suffolk can attend the meeting and ask any question they wish to either the Leader of the council or one of the Cabinet Members on business pertaining to the work of West Suffolk Council. Not many people take up this offer, but it is there for you to use, and it shows how decisions are made by the council.

A full list of meeting dates can be found here:

<https://democracy.westsuffolk.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1&bcr=1>

4. Visit to Gatehouse on Christmas Day

Formed in 1986, Gatehouse aims to help those in material and emotional need throughout West Suffolk. Their services and activities are based in Bury St Edmunds and help raise awareness of the causes of social injustice by undertaking voluntary projects in social welfare by providing practical help for disadvantaged families and individuals throughout the area.

They have 4 separate projects:

1. The Memory Café – Dementia Hub
2. Furniture Re-use/ Recycling Store for individuals and families in need
3. Gatehouse Day Centres for Elderly with Mental health issues and social isolation
4. Bury St Edmunds Foodbank
5. Gatehouse Christmas Project

I am delighted this year in my role as Deputy Mayor of Bury St Edmunds, that I will be visiting the annual Gatehouse Christmas Project on Christmas day, where teams of dedicated volunteers will be feeding those in need this Christmas.

Further information on Gatehouse and their work can be obtained from the Chief Executive Amanda Bloomfield on 01284 754967 or by e-mail to info@gatehouse.org.uk

5. Suffolk County Council Boundary Review

As many of you know, currently St Olaves Ward is currently one of the Town/West Suffolk wards which make up part of the Suffolk County Council Tower Division and you are represented by two Suffolk County Councillors. Further information on the current setup can be found here:

<https://www.paulhopfensperger.com/st-olaves-ward>

However, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is carrying out an electoral review of Suffolk County Council. The commission will recommend division boundaries that mean each councillor represents approximately the same number of voters. It is currently anticipated, that Tower Division will change from the current two councillors to just one, and the area covered will change considerably.

The LGBCE will aim to ensure that the division boundaries reflect the interests and identities of local communities, as well as promoting effective local government. They are currently minded to recommend that 70 councillors should serve Suffolk County Council in the future, 5 fewer than there are currently. If you wish to have your say, you can do so here:-

<http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/eastern/suffolk/suffolk-county-council-0>

The consultation will finish on January 13, 2020 and the final recommendations will be known by September 30, 2020.

The next Suffolk County Council elections will take place on Thursday May 6, 2021 and the elections will be based around the new County Council Divisions created/amended/kept the same by this boundary review.

6. Standing for Parliament – Thank you to those who voted for me!

As you are probably aware, I stood as an Independent Candidate at the recent General Election on Thursday December 12, 2019. I stood for a number of reasons, and I am happy to discuss them with you when I see you in person. However, just one of the reasons was to highlight the many issues raised with me, by you all at the monthly H.E.A.R.T. meetings, from my Facebook page – “We Really Love Bury St Edmunds!” and via other sources. In particular, the infrastructure issues throughout the town which are simply not being addressed. Neither of our two Suffolk County Councillors or our MP have so far shown any inclination to assist us in our quest to get a cycle path/bridge over the A14 from the Howard Estate to ASDA, or to get a Rail Halt installed in Beetons Way. These and other issues were flagged as very important to residents as I travelled around the constituency during the election. None more so than at the hustings at the West Suffolk College STEM Campus where one student came up to me afterwards and said that the disruption caused by late trains and having to walk from the Bury St Edmunds train station to the West Suffolk College STEM Campus in Western Way is affecting

his attendance record and so his final result at college. This is simply not good enough and needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

The election was totally different from any of the 12 previous Town/District/County elections I stood in previously, and I really learned a lot.

Thank you to the 1,694 people who voted for me. I was absolutely delighted with this figure as I was hoping to get over the 1,000 mark. Having looked online, including me, only 3 people have stood as Independent candidates for Bury St Edmunds in the past, and I received more votes than the other two put together. They are as follows:-

Year	Candidate	Votes received
2019	Cllr. Paul Hopfensperger	1,694
2017	Liam Byrne	852
2001	Cllr. Michael Brundle	651

What was pleasing to see that on the winning Conservative Party Candidate election literature, there was no mention of infrastructure on their first leaflet, but by the third, there was! Hopefully my election leaflet had some small affect in influencing that.

I will never give up trying to address the infrastructure problems in the town and will bring it up again tomorrow at the Full Council meeting of West Suffolk Council, along with the impending environmental disaster we all face if nothing is done to address the Climate Crisis.

I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and I look forward to seeing you all at the January meeting.

Paul J. Hopfensperger

16/12/2019

Cllr. Paul Hopfensperger

Independent Councillor for St Olaves Ward - Since 2005

Bury St Edmunds Town Council and West Suffolk Council

Deputy Mayor of Bury St Edmunds

IMPORTANT FOOTNOTE

If anyone has any questions on anything or issue(s) to raise with me then e-mail is always the best way to contact me (NOT Facebook Messenger or Facebook posts or Twitter which are not GDPR compliant).

I must have your consent to pass the e-mail on to 3rd parties help address your issue so please put:
“You have my permission to pass this e-mail onto whoever you deem necessary to address this issue”
or similar. Thank you.