

District Report for Edwardstone Parish Council January 2024.

Given by Cllr Bryn Hurren.

Firstly the annual debate on our budget setting for 24/25. With a predicted deficit of 1.4 m, this has become controversial again because along with everything else, we have to review the level of cost and income from running our car parking service, this is at the moment subsidized by the council tax payers to an amount that is not entirely clear, until councilors have all the facts before them.

We are told that the cost to Babergh DC, to run, police and repair all our car parks, is just short of £480,000 but we are not quite sure of the income we get through long term parking charges and fines etc. My group at full council has asked for more details to enable us to make a balanced decision on behalf of our residents and council tax payers.

There is no such thing as free parking, it is either funded by the users or the rate payer as a whole, who may not be a user or even have a car at all. Is that justified??

The main share of our costs to run the car parks is the government levied Business rates which currently stand at just short of £300,000. While I personally support free car parking for the user for 90 minutes to help churn and trade in the market towns, this is becoming ever harder to balance without the DC having the finances to facilitate it and keeping other services and general benefits, such as grants and subsidies as well.

More controversially nationally is the great post office scandal, that I am sure that now the real truth is coming out will be sorted out quite quickly after over 20 odd years of hurt for the innocent Sub postmasters and mistresses. We can but hope that the chain of brilliant branches in our villages, town and cities will survive the Fujitsu/government incompetence and cover up. Please everyone go into your local and see how much the foot soldiers can offer and do for you.

Good news across BMS is that we have managed to build 128 new affordable homes in 2023, this is as a result of exception sites put forward by communities, windfall sites from private development sites and new homes we have built on our own council owned land.

One piece of bad news is that we have had to sell 9 as a result of the dreadful, still in place right to buy legislation from a long bygone era. Still a really good effort with a net gain of 119 homes. As part of our extending the future housing needs requirements well into the future of our long term Joint Local Plan, BMS has invited landowners/developers to submit land that might be suitable for housing development, to approach the council and engage with us to fulfil our housing needs into the future. This process is called, A call for sites and will run until spring.

It is hoped that this process will guarantee us housing land into the future.

It is very important that with our JLP stage one in place, that we decide our own future development and not let it be decided by government inspectors at appeal.

On local Edwardstone matters, the new noticeboard is now safely in place at Sherbourne St My locality budget for your village of approx. £400.00. is available until the end of March 24 As a result of questions, our bio-diversity officer is Richard.parmee@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

Bryn Hurren. Ward member for Box Vale.