

# **District Cllr Report Battsford and Ringshall Ward**

**Barking, Battsford, Great Bricett, Offton, Ringshall, Willisham**

**September 2020**

## **Green and Liberal Democrat Group**

The Green Group and the Liberal Democrat Group of Councillors have joined forces to become 'The Green and Liberal Democrat Group' in order to more effectively hold the current administration to account. The new group has 17 members, one more than the Conservatives who will need to rely upon the Independent member and Chairman's casting vote. Cllr Rachel Eburne is the Leader of the new group.

## **CIFCO Motion**

A motion put forward by Green Councillor Eburne to halt all future investment in the Councils' commercial property investment arm, CIFCO, failed by one vote. The Green and Liberal Democrat Group proposed that any remaining borrowing of around £13 million be used to provide housing within Mid Suffolk for rent or sale on the open market.

## **MSDC and out of county investments**

Council debated CIFCO's business and trading and performance report and business plan for 2020/21. Councillors questioned the directors on the current situation, raising concerns around the risks in investing in out of town offices, fitness centres, retail premises and car showrooms, given the current and predicted future downturn in the economy. The report showed that for 2019/20 there was a combined income to the two councils of £1.6 million and an 'impairment' of £3.5 million, which is made up of costs (such as professional advice) and a revaluation of the properties held.

## **Joint Local Plan**

A new timetable was agreed detailing the next steps for the Joint Local Plan. It is now likely to be published in the autumn, followed by a six-week consultation period. The plan is not likely to be adopted before late 2021 or early 2022 leaving the Councils vulnerable to speculative development in the meantime.

## **Sustainable Travel Action Plan**

Council approved a joint 'Sustainable Travel Action Plan' along with Babergh Council. This was proposed by Green Councillor Daniel Pratt and received cross party support. Its aim is to ensure that there is a sustained shift away from car use towards cycling and walking.

## **MSDC to install solar carport**

Babergh and Mid Suffolk are to share a £800,000 grant from the "Getting Building Fund" for the introduction of micro-generation and electricity storage solar carports in Sudbury and Stowmarket. The funding will provide 50% of the budget for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council to install multifunctional solar carports which will generate and store electricity and provide a point for electric vehicle charging. Two initial projects include one in Gainsborough Road, Stowmarket.

**Dr Daniel Pratt**

**Mid Suffolk District Councillor**

**Email:** [daniel.pratt@midsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:daniel.pratt@midsuffolk.gov.uk)

**Telephone:** 07775389193