

## District Councillor's Report to 9 March 09

**Council Tax rise 3.5%** - I quote Cllr Derrick Hayley, portfolio holder for finance at Mid Suffolk District council "Setting the budget for next year has been a real challenge. We had the very disappointing grant settlement from Government and due to the recession, our income is also down. We had to look really hard at what we can do to keep the increase as small as we can. We have shown that we are dedicated to being efficient and for the third year running, MSDC has proven that they are top of the league when it comes to making efficiency savings and providing value for money for its customers – the residents of Mid Suffolk. Approximately 78% of Mid Suffolk Residents will pay Council Tax at the headline 'Band D' level and below for which the annual increase is £4.99 or less or *a weekly increase of 10 pence or lower*. Mid Suffolk only receives 10% of the total council tax paid. The total amount is split between the District council, the County council and Suffolk Police."

The amount of revenue received from the Government for 2009/10 is a cash increase of 0.5% and compared with 2008/09 is the lowest given to shire District councils. The increase for 2010/11 is expected to be 0.5% also.

In with the general running of the Council we still have to fund the reviews for potential changes put in place by the government for example the Boundary Committee Structural Review which as far as we are aware, although put back, is still on track. We of course await decisions now due July 2009.

**Now for some good news!** – Cul-de-sac Cross Green. Work is well underway to repair the pavements and hopefully a bay for disabled parking will be painted on the road shortly. I have been nagging for this work to be done for a VERY long time and it has paid off!

**Choice Based Lettings Update** – Since October 2008 existing and new housing applicants with Gateway to Homechoice have been put on a register. Applicants will be assessed on their housing need in line with the new allocations policy. Of 1900 existing applicants over 1100 have reapplied.

Customers can register on line themselves or contact a member of the Housing Options Team to complete the form over the telephone.

The system will be thoroughly tested and staff trained so there will be a slight delay in 'going live' with the new system. It is anticipated Mid Suffolk will commence from 13 May and begin advertising their properties and accept bids from 14 May 09.

**A new Bouldering Experience!** – A new facility has been launched at the Stowmarket Leisure Centre and a new Bouldering Wall has opened. I attended the opening ceremony and spoke to many participants and the course builder. Yes you did hear correctly! The routes to climb are changed regularly. Along with the climbing wall which is already in place this experience compliments both sports and seemed very popular.

**2012 Olympics** – I have attended two such events. The last one was at the BT's Adastral Park and was the Nations and Regions East Annual Summit 2009. 'Rising to the Challenge East of England'. Jonathan Edwards CBE, MP Barbara Follett and Ade Adepitan MBE, paralympian were among the speakers.

Not only is it clear that the Olympics are for athletes great emphasis was placed on the legacy aspect and the links to health, sport, disability culture and of course Tourism. To quote the chairman of NRE Cll Stephen Castle 'There is enormous potential but we need to make sure we deliver. Clearly it's a massive sporting event but the legacy is far more wide spread and needs to embrace the economy, education, physical activity, healthy lifestyles, volunteering, culture and tourism.

I will keep you informed as to how we can all get involved.

**Networking Business event Debenham** – I attach a letter which I am circulating inviting members for the business community in Winston Debenham and Aspall to email me if they would like to attend.

