

Parish Council Annual Report – Felixstowe by Thérèse Coffey

Sorry I cannot join you at your Annual Meeting but I hope you will enjoy an update on how I have worked on some issues affecting your parish this year including on health, education and transport.

It has been my privilege to serve as your Member of Parliament since 2010 and I was delighted to be re-elected last June. I was also honoured to be re-appointed by the Prime Minister to serve in the Government as Environment Minister, working to implement our new 25-year environment plan, reducing our use of single use plastics and ensuring that we leave our environment in much better shape as we exit the European Union.

On health, I have continued to lead the way in scrutinising our ambulance service holding them to account on response times. Since my push for a turnaround plan the Ambulance Service has gone through significant change, recruiting more staff and investing in a new fleet of ambulances. There are still major issues with hospital handover delays. This is why I specifically invited NHS Improvement to my most recent meeting so they could hear first-hand the issues that the ambulance service is facing in trying to get crews back out on the road. I have asked the NHS Director responsible for the East of England, Paul Watson and Health Minister, Steve Barclay to meet me very quickly so we can accelerate solutions to issues that we know have been around for some time

I'm pleased that Ipswich and Colchester Hospitals will receive a huge £69 million capital investment to improve services for patients. The additional cash will enable the transformation of buildings and services as the two hospitals merge creating the new East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust.

On education, I continue to look at Ofsted reports for my schools on a regular basis and have met Headteachers to discuss performance. Following the Ofsted report into Felixstowe Academy, which declared it as 'Inadequate' and placed it into 'Special Measures I created a Parliamentary petition calling for AET to go. I met the National Schools Commissioner, Sir David Carter, who informed me he has written a Pre-termination Warning letter to AET. This is the first stage of the process that can lead to securing a new organisation to run the school.

The Government's new funding formula has now come into effect, which ensures that every school has a higher basic percentage of funding for every child. Suffolk has traditionally suffered because we have very high employment rates and have far fewer children than the national average receiving free schools meals, which means money has been diverted elsewhere. However, our average levels of household income is not as high as some other places where schools have traditionally been funded more generously – so the change to the formula has started to right those wrongs.

On transport, Suffolk's bid to the Housing Infrastructure Fund for significant improvement works along the A12 corridor has reached the next stage and Suffolk County Council has received an additional £2.45m worth of funding from the government to help repair Suffolk's roads following the recent winter weather. On Woods Lane, I pressed Bloor to extend their working hours which shortened the road closure.

On Sizewell C, we are still awaiting Stage 3 consultation. I was robust in challenging EDF during Stage 2 to do more work before the next phase of consultation, especially in relation to improvements to the road network.

Following the disappointing decision by Lloyds to close some of their bank branches, I wrote to the Chief Operating Officers of the last banks standing in other towns in Suffolk Coastal to seek assurances that they remain committed to providing a service.

I joined my fellow county MPs to help create a small piece of Suffolk in Westminster, as we came together to celebrate the first ever Suffolk Day. Being the sunrise county on the east coast, it is fitting that our now annual Suffolk Day will take place on the longest day of the year, June 21st.

This year I spent Remembrance Sunday in Aldeburgh and then in Halesworth for their evening service.

I attended a service to mark 65 years since the North Sea flood caused massive devastation to the East Coast. 50 people lost their lives in Suffolk. Since that fateful night a lot of work has been done to improve the protection along our coastline with major investment in our coastal defences and early warning systems.

Finally, last Summer I undertook a four-day constituency tour visiting 90 plus towns and villages across Suffolk. Most issues raised were local council matters, which I passed on to councillors. Due to the rapidly improving situation the issue of broadband and mobile phone signal were hardly raised at all, although I know there are still pockets of not-spots

Thérèse Coffey