

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2012**

The Port of Felixstowe held its Annual Reception for local councillors and businesses in early January. The Managing Director gave a view of prospects for 2012, the new terminal and the forthcoming Thames Gateway.

The annual Haverhill Mayor's Charity Event was held at the Haverhill Arts Centre and was a lively affair.

I thoroughly enjoyed the project launch of the Hudd Music Hall Archive at Shelley's restaurant. Roy Hudd, actor, performer and author presented Suffolk New College with his unique collection of Music Hall & Variety memorabilia.

I was invited to say a few words at the Holocaust Memorial Day at UCS. The enormity of the holocaust makes it difficult to reflect adequately upon it.

The Mayor of St Edmundsbury's Chinese New Year Fundraising Dinner was fun. A delicious dinner and traditional Chinese dance made this a memorable evening.

The Vice Commander, US Third Air Force Mildenhall, hosted a Winter Open House at his home. It was an opportunity to meet and talk with personnel who were engaged in operations.

A delightful civic service was held at St Mary's Parish Church Hadleigh to celebrate the accession of Elizabeth II. School children sang a selection of WW1 songs and the vicar spoke of the day the queen ascended the throne.

I was very pleased to welcome Sandra Howarth, the Regional Fundraising Manager – East of England, Cystic Fibrosis to speak at Full Council. She gave clear understanding of the disease and how improvements in treatment are increasing longevity.

I spent an interesting day at Ipswich Crown Court, at the invitation of Judge Devaux. It was my first time in a court house and watching procedures and witness statements was fascinating.

## **COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT MARCH 2012**

The budget was debated and agreed at Full Council on 9<sup>th</sup> February. A summary of the savings and messages are:

- Freezing council tax for second consecutive year
- Savings focused on reducing management costs, cutting bureaucracy and protecting frontline services
- Lowering the bar on senior public sector pay
- We're investing more of our limited resources in services that help vulnerable people earlier – so that they remain independent for longer and do not become dependent on more costly support in later life.
- These budget proposals follow months of consultation with the public, partners, councillors, staff and unions.

## **Summary of Proposals for 2012/13**

- £12m – improved efficiency and removal of unnecessary processes
- 18m – In-depth review of Adult Social Care – more focus on early intervention, personalised budgets and specialist care leading to a more effective support for older people
- £1.5m – reduced management costs
- £1m – targeting resources in children’s social care to reduce demand
- £0.7m – Rationalise office accommodation
- £0.5m – share of profits from Eastern Facilities Management
- £0.2m – work with District and Borough Councils to reduce costs of Suffolk-wide waste services
- £0.2m – removal of duplication between adult and children’s social care services
- £0.3 - redesign of home-to-school transport
- £1.8m – previously identified savings

**Total - £26.2million savings in 2012/13**

### **Landmark House**

The new office building that will be shared by the county council and the police - Landmark House – is due to have staff moving in this July. The project is part of SCC to reduce office accommodation across Suffolk and work more closely with other public sector organisations. The Landmark House project is set to save the county council and police a total of £500,000 a year.

### **Suffolk Norfolk & Essex to develop economic links with China**

The three county councils in the east have signed an agreement to work together and create long-term opportunities for local businesses to trade and operate internationally, in particular with China.

The agreement will see all three county councils work together over a two-year project to target and attract new inward investment from China, focusing on the region’s strengths in the energy sector. The new agreement builds on the partnership already established between the three counties in April 2011. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed that pledged working together to provide the skills base that businesses, in the energy sector, will need to realise their growth potential.

### **Jubilee Celebrations**

SCC will make it easier for people to arrange street parties in celebration of the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee in June. The application process, for road closures, has been simplified.

Celebrations will centre around an extended weekend on 2, 3, 4 and 5 June, and party organisers are urged to contact the county council as early as possible.

An important point was missed from 'Martlesham Monthly' referring to the bunds at Adastral Park abutting A12. The soil mounds are principally for noise mitigation.

**PATRICIA O'BRIEN**