

## **Report from the West Suffolk District Councillor, Sarah Pugh, for the Wickhambrook Annual Parish Meeting on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2024.**

In the last twelve months we have been getting used to the new, multi-party coalition of Labour, Lib Dem, Green, West Suffolk Independents and Independent candidates who now form the administration in West Suffolk District Council. They were all new to job and are taking some time to get their heads around the roles and workload that comes with being the decision making group. Equally, the Conservatives are getting used to being in opposition, just as new for them. West Suffolk Council staff are also having to adjust to the new order but on the whole we all seem to be getting on with things. The new Local Plan has been one of the biggest pieces of work the Council has undertaken and I have been very pleased to be part of that Committee. It is now in the final consultation stage before going to the Inspector for review and hopefully, approval.

I have been appointed to the Rural Services Network as the West Suffolk Council representative and it is a role I am really enjoying. The Rural Services Network comprises members from across the UK, mostly Councils, but also some independent bodies such as the RSPB, NFU, National Trust, First Bus, who lobby and campaign on behalf of rural communities across the country. Some of our current hot topics are the roll out of digital voice technology; lack of public transport; the rural economy and health provision.

I have been pleased to support a number of projects in my ward during the last year with contributions from my Locality Budget – the Wickhambrook Carnival being one - and I will continue to help when I can. My budget per village for the year ahead is £466 so don't go too mad please...

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me if there is something you need help with from West Suffolk Council. I may not be able to solve a problem but I can hopefully find the right person for you to work with.

Sarah Pugh

WSDC Ward Member for Whepstead and Wickhambrook.