

Report to Walsoken Parish Council

April 2024

Without doubt my busiest year so far! From the problems of obtaining places for children at the Downham Market Academy, to the efforts to bring some context to the proposed Wisbech Incinerator, to the unexpected closure of the bridge at Stowbridge, to the ongoing fight to keep the Welney Wash Road closures on the action map of all concerned.

The DMA challenge was eventually a success, all efforts re the incinerator were fruitful, however the outcome appeared somewhat inevitable (with Environment Agency licensing still to be determined), the bridge action quickly got up to speed and, although a significant issue for local business especially, working solutions were arrived at, and will be in place when it is eventually necessary to close it again. With regards the Wash Rd, I have now secured over £100k to significantly upgrade the signage and communications, and further work is being undertaken with Cambs. County Council, to ensure a seamless delivery of accurate and up-to-date information.

The issue of secondary schooling in the west of Norfolk again came on the radar in October, and I have worked since that point to support parents affected – I must say with some excellent assistance from a group of parents. Although not now as broad an issue this year, I am now working to raise awareness of the wider problem of capacity along the border, and this work continues, very much with the support of Liz Truss.

These local challenges in addition to my work on the member working group for Norfolk Devolution, the advisory group on the procurement contracts in respect of highways maintenance, and duties relating to the role of Member Champion for the Rural

Economy. Throughout the last 12 months I have continued to serve on the Planning Regulatory and Infrastructure & Development Select Committees.

Closer to home, I have continued to work with colleagues in seeking some sense and reason relating to the incinerator proposal – currently the subject of the granting of a license is under examination, and I am unsure whether FDC or CCC will launch a Judicial Review of the permissions granted.

I have also worked to support Cllr. Houghton in his efforts to improve access to training and education for young adults in the area, monitored and had input into the proposed development adjacent to, and relying upon, the A47 – to ensure that every opportunity to look to deliver at roundabout at the Broadend Rd junction is identified, with the addition of lobbying BCKLWN to ensure that they do not support such extensive housing delivery without these necessary infrastructure improvements.

Cllr. Chris Dawson

Norfolk County Councillor, Marshland South Division.