Annual County Council Report to Beighton and Moulton St Mary Parish, 8th April 2017

I have spoken in the past about the Tym reports – the Norfolk employment growth study and looking at the economic impacts of the NDR. Asking the question of Norfolk: What does it want to do with itself? Expand and become better trained and more efficient or remain a somewhat slow-paced County, living at a more relaxed pace and filled with a population with low self-esteem? Events have in fact made that decision for us.

The opening of the remaining section of the A11 has transformed access to the County and encouraged outsiders to view Norfolk as a potential business centre. From Norwich Business Park back down the road and then along the A14 to Cambridge this has become a technology corridor.

Unfortunately this has been slowed by our lack of a skilled work force. Hence our concentration on Apprenticeships from schools and from local businesses. I am pleased to tell you that I have got Acle Academy signed up to recommend our scheme to its pupils.

At County this year we have had to face the decision to turn down the proposed Devolution scheme, which would have involved linking with Suffolk and accepting an overall Mayor. We have continuing problems with Children's services. Three new chiefs this year alone! The problem seems to be poor middle management. The new chief seems to getting behind this and has been recognised by Ofsted as moving in the right direction.

During May we had a change of control within the County, moving from the Rainbow Alliance to the Conservatives with an overall majority of one. This has meant a change of policy as to financial control. The recent budget has shown that we have cleared all old debts from Children’s Services and Adult Social Care. At a cost of about 20 Million. They start with a clean sheet but with clear instruction that they cannot have any more overspends. They will have to provide regular, comprehensive accounts to show this. It is called living within one’s means!

The building of the NDR is running to plan but has suffered extra costs largely due to the railway’s insistence on piling around certain stretches of the line.

Beighton has had problems over the year with Broadband coverage. This has been an on-going problem for several years. It always seems that however reports can be made about future promises, the goal posts seem to change and new promises are made. We now do not mention specific dates but we do feel that we are now getting closer to getting a better service.

Highways problems are getting resolved, but manhole covers need to be changed so that they do not cause vibration when lorries go over them. This has been reported.

We have provided new stickers to support speed reduction in the main road. This is to help in speed reduction, mainly of sugar beet lorries to Cantley.

Speeding of sugar beet lorries is still the main problem in Beighton. Pressure on the Company is almost constant. They make promises but lorry drivers still seem to ignore threats. We must continue to pressure the Cantley factory.

Brian Iles, County Councillor for Acle and Marshes.