



The Diary.

As we approach the “summertime” the thoughts of longer days, more relaxation and less stress are with us and help us to get over the winter and continual bad news both on the political and economic front, in this once wonderful country of ours. I have had very few comments over the past weeks about my income from the work I do on the Council, was that because most were surprised at the figures I published last month I ask? But I did get a number of comments from all four villages pledging support for what I am doing in all areas.

I recently joined Council colleagues for a visit to Bury St Edmonds home of St Edmonsbury Council. The town has been “renovated” over the past 10 years and the context of bringing the areas up to the twenty first Century yet retaining all of the character of its history is quite exceptional. I hope we can achieve something like this in Wellingborough.

Some weeks ago I was reminded that thirty years ago I was on the first Waendel Walk from Wellingborough and as many will be aware May 8th was the start of the Waendel weekend. I was therefore, asked to join the front of the parade on the Friday of the Waendel Weekend, it was an honour and pleasure with walkers from Norway, Holland, Finland and many parts of England. The Castle area was transformed into a feast of colour and energy over the weekend. May of course is Mayor making month when the new Mayor is formally elected and makes the Declaration of Office. Not only is the new mayor Peter Morrall a most interesting and sumptuous character but he is also unique in Wellingborough's history as he is the first person who has been an Officer of the Council, to be elected Mayor. I hope he has a successful year.

Council Meetings

The Zero Budget Based (ZBB) groups are now into their second phase of inquiry and progress is being made to review all of the Council services and costing but it is so different from the commercial world I have lived in all of my life. I have never been particularly enamoured with Consultants but I have to say that the lady helping us with this work is absolutely superb.

The new Council has now commenced and this year I will be sitting on the following Committees:

- 1) Planning
- 2) Licensing
- 3) Development
- 4) Audit & Performance
- 5) Partnership Review
- 6) Market Traders Advisory Group
- 7) Budget Strategy Group
- 8) Standards

My external appointments comprise:

- 1) West Northants Joint Strategic Planning Committee (Observer)
- 2) Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) (Observer)
- 3) A43 Northampton to Kettering Stakeholder Group

Public Inquiries

The Public Inquiry into the Core Spatial Strategy (CSS) Minerals and Waste Development Framework (MWDF) which began at the Saints Rugby Ground on 31st March was suspended after three days. I understand that the reasons relate to the type and quality of information the Inspector was expecting in comparison to that which was being offered by NCC.

The Public Inquiry into the application for some 3,000 homes in Wellingborough North starts on the 2nd of June. After I have written this missive I shall be drafting my formal notes to the Inquiry. This of course requires some research and not surprisingly throws up some interesting facts. First of all the applicant Northants LLP declared a loss of some £2,38 million last year following a loss of some £300k the year before. Secondly would anyone wish to be a partner of this company on a building project that may run into billions. I am told by all of the so called “experts” that finance has no bearing on a Planning Application. Unfortunately this is no ordinary application, part of the requirement is a contribution from the developer towards Infrastructure, at the last rough count this ran into nearly £100 million and included schools, Health Centre, shops, Church and roads. So if the money only comes from the profit of the sales of the houses it is therefore impossible to meet the criteria of Infrastructure first!

Sywell Aerodrome

I recently flew over the north east end of the runway area to observe the destruction of the woodland as mentioned in my last missive. I have numerous pictures, unfortunately they will not print very well in B/W but if anyone wishes to see them I can e-mail them. I am in discussions with the Forestry Commission (FC) and will report back later but I will guarantee that the destruction is unbelievable and let us not forget that the FC is a public body and therefore they are the trustees of our property. There is no reason whatsoever why this woodland should have been felled and I am sure that it amounts to criminal damage and hopefully the culprits will pay for such an act of vandalism.

June the 4th is, as most will know, the Local Elections day I am a supporter of the Conservative Party and will therefore be voting for John Bailey.

As ever if you have any queries please contact me and remember, I cannot help you if I do not know of your problem.

Jim Bass

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