

Occold Parish Council 10.1.2011

County Councillor Report

New Scrutiny Arrangements

I reported to your last meeting that the County Council were looking into how we were going to scrap the existing scrutiny system and replace it with something a little more fit for purpose. We have had a meeting regarding any proposed new arrangements.

One idea I am hoping to make sure does not see the light of day, is the idea to pay every member of the new scrutiny committee (10 members) a special responsibility allowance of £3600.00 per year to sit on this panel. I felt in these times of austerity we should set an example, and to pay extra allowances for a member to sit on a panel will inevitably open a complete can of worms regarding all committee places.

New Strategic Direction

Last month we took the vote that agreed that we have found substantial “community capacity” in our County to be able to move forward with “divesting” our services. We have noticed how ever a distinct change in language and attitude regarding this issue from those at the top of the tree at S.C.C. during my now quarterly meeting with the Chief, she did suggest that using the word “Divest” may have been a mistake! During the national press interest in this issue the County Council were very gung ho regarding the potential of “outsourcing” every service, we have now had a mellowing of this position, now we have entered a time of sober reflection I trust this will generate more light than heat, There undoubtedly is capacity to save money and make services more responsive and accountable, In pursuing this we must build from the grass roots up and not impose from the top down, I think this message may now at last being listened to.

Demand Responsive Bus Reminder

The County Council has launched a demand responsive Bus service for our area. This new service will be able to be booked by telephone to enable passengers to access more services by public transport. It is envisaged that passengers will telephone to book a space on the 12 seater Bus to connect to out of range transport services from i.e. Mendlesham, Occold, Debenham or Stowmarket Station. Contact 01449 616000 This service went live last month.

County Starts Cutting

From all the details emerging from recent documents from SCC it appears that a number of services are being earmarked for the axe way before we embark on our “Divestment” venture. One area of extreme concern is that the waste department are considering closing 7 out of our 18 household waste sites, no one will commit to the exact sites that May close but no site is being ruled out at present. This move is very concerning as any closer is likely to impact on the instances of fly tipping and cost us more in the long run.

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