**WARD REPORT NOVEMBER 2024 Cllr GORDON BAMBRIDGE**

**UPPER WENSUM WARD**

**Council matters**

**1/ The Local Plan is still paused until national government makes clear how we accommodate the increase in target numbers for housing under the new rules - it is likely to me New Year before any movement on this**

**2/ Consultation on charging for car parking in the district. You can comment on line at**[**breckland.gov.uk/carparks**](http://breckland.gov.uk/carparks)**from 4th November and during November and to 15th December.**

**There will be public engagement  events I all market towns during November the nearest to this ward will be Dereham Library Thursday 21st November between 11am and 5pm.**

**Of course, as your local member I pass on all comments directly and un-edited.**

***Those who have followed this matter will be aware that car parks in Breckland cost the council almost half a million pounds a year in management and maintenance, plus business rates. My personal opinion has always been that this is a burden which should be borne by the user and not the rate payer. Breckland are aiming that the income should be ‘cost neutral’  but that any excess be used in the town for which it is earned.***

***I am happy to discuss this with groups in your village including the parish council. But my feeling is that this council tax money is better spent on that additional services Breckland provides.***

**3/Flooding, for parts of our ward flooding is a key concern. In fact, in Norfolk, we had over 700 reports of inland flooding last winter. These have many causes but when I was elected to this ward in 2003 I was advised that we were in the front line of susceptibility to flooding so have always had this in mind, and quickly joined a local Internal drainage board.**

**Inland flooding is caused by many natural events or actions of individuals or organisations. Rainfall, or what was known as ‘Acts of God’ we can do little to control, but George Freeman MP is to seek to introduce a Bill into Parliament to amend the Town and Country Planning Act to seek to influence where we can on such activities. I will be joining his group to discuss this and have made a number of suggestions to be considered, most gleaned from what is happening here in Upper Wensum Ward.**

**I will also be attending the Drainage Summit in London next week, hopefully to meet with the Flood minister of the new government. The meeting in Norfolk in January discussing areas within our county and hopefully with an international corps of experts to learn from. And the meeting at Thorney in Cambridgeshire in February which is where the linking of environmental matters which is increasingly relevant are discussed.**

**I normally produce a written report for each which in presented to Breckland via the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, but it can also be made available to parishes and if thought valuable to your local newsletters.**

**4/ Meetings. Can I remind you that key public interest meetings at Breckland are broadcast live on YOUTUBE and many meetings such as all Full Council meetings, Planning, Scrutiny and Cabinet. These can all be viewed on the Breckland YouTube channel at any time.**

**For example, an item on 11th November Cabinet is regarding Custom and Self Build Houses which is a more interest in rural areas that urban perhaps? The 24th November OSC will include an item on Car Park Strategy. The Planning meeting for 19th November will have its agenda published 12th Nov.**

**5/planning Breckland Planning is now entirely in-house and is moving to a new IT format and this work is drawing to a conclusion. It should improve matters with speed and efficiency going forward but they are still in the process of change which may have meant some holdups, sorry about that, but if you or parishioners are having a problem do let me know and I can chase things along.**

**6/General Perhaps I can remind you that with 15 parishes in the ward and frequently several have meetings on the same evening, plus an increasing number of Breckland or outside body meetings held during evenings which have important implications for us all, and I attend on behalf of us all, I cannot attend every meeting of your parish councils. What I can do is meet with councillors or parishioners outside of the parish council cycle, either in your parish or in Breckland. I have had four such meetings since my last report. Some with the added bonus of inclusion of specific Breckland officers in attendance.**

**Matters which are ongoing include the various highways matters, nutrient neutrality,**