**North Norfolk District Council – 2020/2021 Annual Report**

This past year has been devastating for us all and NNDC has been proactive in trying to offer much needed support to all local residents and businesses. This pandemic has meant many of us having to overcome a set of new and unique challenges and Officers found themselves leaving their daily duties to help residents in this emergency. Hubs were set up across the District and Ludham was a part of Stalham – these hubs had officers offering support and advice for the local community groups and aided in providing medication and food parcels to vulnerable residents. NNDC’s COVID19 hotline number has been available for any resident who had concerns and queries and needed one-to-one support. In addition, our COVID19 support page on the website offered all the updated advice and information on the business grants and other important aspects. Local members have been proactive in distributing information and working with local businesses and individuals; chasing up any issues which they had.

Residents in North Norfolk have been very responsible this past year and the fantastic support from community led schemes and mitigated measures from both NNDC and NCC has meant that this area has been below the national average of COVID cases. We have, sadly though, lost far too many to this pandemic.

NNDC has issued out Government Business support grants and its own tailored grants to local businesses across the District. As of April 2021, officers have issued out nearly £120 million in various business grants which amounts to nearly 30,000 transactions. NNDC has been recognised nationally for its quickness and efficiently in awarding the grants and funding. NNDC has worked closely with New Anglia Growth Hub, offering added support and advice for business schemes adapting in these times. Funding has been available for this.

During the pandemic, we have undertaken a new waste contract with SERCO. There was of course an added pressure when establishing this contract during this time, but it has been very successful and SERCO have done a very good job despite the issues they have faced. North Norfolk saw many more tourists last year and with this, is the increase in littering and waste. SERCO, along with our Environmental Protection team, have been proactive in coordinating more collections.

NNDC has tried to continue being innovative and improve its functions and resources for residents. New planning software came out late last year, making the experience of commenting and engaging with applications easier and more convenient. Like any new system, this has experienced teething issues and I have been assured that these issues are being addressed and resolved. Planning has been a continued aspect throughout this year and we have seen an increase in applications. For Ludham, there has been 34 NNDC validated planning applications (dated: 1/04/2020 – 29/04/2021). We are also very close to welcoming our new Leisure facility in Sheringham; The Reef. This ambitious project will be opening in August. This is a huge project for the Council and is on schedule and within Budget.

North Norfolk and especially the Broads and Coastal areas will undoubtedly be having many tourists again this summer; staycations being the popular and safest option. NNDC will be working on appropriate measures very similar to our “You’re Welcome” scheme in Summer 2020.

Cllr. Adam Varley