

TVBC Annual Report for North Baddesley. 2017/18

2017 was a year of change at TVBC. I became the leader of the Liberal Democrat Group on Test Valley Borough Council. I was first elected in 2003, and am a member of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, whose role is to investigate the policies of the Council and their implementation.

I am honoured to have been chosen by my Liberal Democrat colleagues as the first woman leader of our group. There is a change of leader of Test Valley Borough Council, both I and Cllr North are new to our post and change of this nature generates opportunity for new ideas to emerge, and my group are very willing to engage with Cllr North and his colleagues constructively and positively. Test Valley will be better governed if the talents of all its Councillors, are united: effective communication between Councillors and then between the Council and its residents is the key to effective local government"

In October Saints superstar Matt Le Tissier joined me, and HCC Alan Dowden and school children, from North Baddesley Infant and Junior schools, to plant 4,000 daffodil bulbs alongside the A27 Botley Road in North Baddesley, to put a sparkle of colour on the site.

I believe this encourages the school children to look after their local environment. It allows the schools to get out in the local community and show what they can do. It is also about improving the local environment for business and residents. I am very grateful to Matt for his support with this project.

The precinct at Fleming Avenue has received a make over. I

worked closely with the TVBC Estate Department and it was agreed that work to improve the whole area would be carried out. Many residents still rely on being able to get their daily purchases from the local area. The newly opened Beadles Tea Room is attracting people into the precinct and this was the perfect time to make the area attractive. As the ward councillor I want to encourage TVBC and local business to sponsor bulb planting and introduce colour through floral displays in the summer, I have already secured the support of Cheaters of Ramsey who have recently opened a branch in North Baddesley, if the area looks bright and inviting, more people may come and support the local facilities.

In February at the full council I moved an amendment to freeze the council tax for 2018/19.

We had a balanced budget in January 2018. We have a balanced budget for February 2018 with a recommendation for £1.123m to be added to

the Capital Receipts Reserves. Presently we have almost £23million in reserves with £72million cash reserves invested in banks and financial institutions.

The report recommended a 3.67% increase in Council Tax.

£240,000 taken from the £1.123m would be required to freeze the council tax for one year - Leaving £883,000 still to be added to the reserves.

Significantly, we are in a position to do this with no impact on any of our services.

This would have been a small gesture by TVBC but would have shown support for those residents who are struggling.

The amendment was rejected by the Conservative administration.

The Outline Planning application for 300 dwellings at Hoe Lane came to the Southern Area Planning meeting on 30th January 2018. The debate centred around the access, and the impact on the highways. I moved for deferral of the application for further negotiation between TVBC, HCC and the developers on highway access provision and also to gain some contribution towards Health Services. This was unanimously supported.

TVBC have recently run two events in Romsey and Andover about the role of a councillor as a community leader. The ultimate aim is to encourage residents to consider standing for election.

Cllr Celia Dowden

Ward member for North Baddesley

Leader of the minority group at TVBC