

## Box Vale report for Boxford APM 26<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

Firstly, my sincere thanks to the many who have enquired and wished me well with my knee replacement operation, three weeks yesterday and all going brilliantly well and, hopefully soon, pain free.

On the local government front, the biggest bombshell to be sprung upon us in years arrived just a week before Christmas, with the government white paper to revamp and re-align the way we are governed and the wish to streamline local services with unitary councils and a mayoral upper tier to cover the Counties of Suffolk and Norfolk with a soon to be elected mayor.

In other words, a different two-tier system.

As it turns out the mayor will have far-reaching powers with staff and a budget to match and will liaise straight down from national government. The new unitary councils will do the spadework of running local services and delivering them to residents, businesses, towns and parishes alike. Will this provide contact down to the lowest level? We will see, it probably depends on your local elected councillor. I've come to rather suspect the motives of national government and it's politicians but this could draw more finance and better services into our area, just not sure that having a mayor across two very different Counties is the best way to achieve this.

Babergh District Council continues to punch way above its weight and size on green issues, such as bio-fuel on our vehicles, power generation from solar panels, waste reclamation, power from waste and encouragement of wildlife, flora and fauna and general diversity.

Also, now a slackening on rules for listed buildings and encouragement now for solar panels on business units and commercial buildings.

We are now having, as a nation, to provide a million and a half new houses in this parliamentary term of 5 years, in local terms this means 775 houses for BDC per annum, up from 446 last year.

My main concern is that most of these really need to be smaller houses that enable people to downsize from bigger properties or move up from smaller homes and the shelter of family providers.

Also, can we find the building staff and materials to keep up this rate of expansion?

Nearer to home, our Boxford Neighbourhood Plan continues to be upgraded and the handover of the Primrose Wood Meadow and access path across it are in the final stages of being enacted by the prospective owners after the solicitors have completed the legal process.

Also, very proud to see the Croft project coming into the ownership of the village and that I was able to play my part in enabling that with steering and financial help. Also on the new initiative to bring back the permissive path along stone st. My sincere thanks to all those that are making this happen. A brilliant initiative to benefit all and increase safety and connectivity.

So much more going on in Boxford than I have time to put in my report today but happy to answer questions now, after the meeting or at any time in the near future.

Just remains now to thank our new clerk Zoe and all councillors who work hard to achieve the very best for our lovely village.

All Love and Best regards to all who live in and around the village of Boxford.,