

## Annual Report 2024

As usual a busy year representing you at County, District, Town and Parish council levels.

Last year I was privileged to be elected as leader of Norfolk County Council, a very big role but one that I have enjoyed very much. It's a bit like standing under a waterfall at times but very rewarding. However, my most important job is representing you, the people who elected me as their local councillor and I will continue to do that as long as you keep voting for me. I try not to bring politics into being one of your local representatives and am happy to work with and help anyone as your councillor.

One of the biggest changes that has happened over the last year has been the acceptance by the County of a Devolution deal for Norfolk. This will bring £600 Million ponds to Norfolk over the next 30 years for economic development and will give us local control over things like the Adult Education budget. The ambition is to tailor skills to the jobs we need here in our county, so that our young people have proper career paths and well-paid jobs. We need better infrastructure in roads, electricity and water. We want to attract new businesses to our county and improve the quality of life for all residents. With more control over how taxpayers money is used locally, we can spend it on what we need, not on what is dictated by government.

There have been a lot of issues surrounding water recently, either too much or too little! I have been working with Anglian Water and the Environment Agency on how we join up all the bodies responsible for water management, so that we can have a plan for the future. It is not just about responding to issues, it is about preventing them happening.

The work to the Wherrymans Way continues. Phase 1 is going through the approval process and will reinstate the first two bridges on Hardley Flood. This work has been delayed because the dredging of the Chet and reinstatement of the banks had to be allowed to settle, then be reprofiled and checks had to be made to ensure wildlife was not disturbed during this process, we now have the go ahead to proceed. Phase 2 will follow, which will reinstate the other two bridges. The footpath will then be reopened along its entire route. This is to be welcomed after so many years of fighting for the reinstatement of this important and internationally famous route, which can then be enjoyed by locals and visitors alike.

The survey funded from my members budget to look into crossing options in Brooke on the B1332 has been completed. I have chased for the results to be shared with the Parish Council as soon as possible, so that local people can have their say and we can look at options for funding improvements for school children crossing this busy road. In the meantime, if anyone wants to fill the vacancy for the school crossing patrol person, please contact the County Council.

The work to reduce the speed limit on the A146 at the Hellington bends is finally starting. The legal notices have been posted and I saw the surveying team out on site recently. I know that there is concern about other stretches of the A146 and parishes are asking for more traffic calming measures. My highways team are looking into what can be done to improve safety, especially for pedestrians and people trying to catch the bus along this busy road. We are also looking at crossing options, especially for school children, in Thurton.

I am pleased to report that the Road Safety Community Fund bid we made for Hardley Road/Langley Street Langley, has been successful and the reduction in the speed limit will now be designed and implemented this financial year.

Pedestrians, speeding and busy roads is a common theme across the area. I am happy to help fund surveys and support speed limit reductions, where highways say they can be

CLlr Kay Mason Billig cont....

applied. The limitations on this are almost always cost and the ability for the police to enforce any new restrictions. I am exploring options with officers for alternative sources of funding for some of these schemes, as just to wait for them to come up next on our ever-increasing list of highways improvements, can take years. So we are looking at alternative pots of money that we can bid into to speed up implementation of local schemes.

We have had a few issues with the new roundabout on the A146 with several accidents recently. The signage will be improved to help make the roundabout more visible and I hope that this will prevent any further incidents. The police confirmed there was no single reason for these accidents, it seems mainly due to driver error.

If I can help in any way, you can contact me at [kay.masonbillig.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:kay.masonbillig.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk)