

County Councillor's report to the Lavenham Parish Council meeting – Thursday 1st June 2017

New Look County Council

Following the County Council elections, the Conservatives have 52 seats out of 75. Labour have 11, Lib Dems have 5, Greens 3 and there are 4 Independents. Green, LibDems and independents have agreed to form a single group of 12. The aim is to hold the Conservatives to account as effectively as possible.

The group will give us access to a researcher and to all committees so that we should have a good idea of what is going on without having to rely on spin from the ruling administration. Within the group we will share information but no one will tell anyone how to vote, unless it be by persuasion. When I was on Babergh Council, independent councillor Clive Arthey and I formed a similar group of two. It seemed to work well.

The cabinet system that the county currently operates excludes the knowledge and viewpoints of most elected councillors, even back bench Conservatives. On Thursday 25 May the council voted unanimously to introduce various cabinet committees to discuss particular areas of county business. The committees will include members of other parties in proportion to their councillor numbers but will only be able to advise the cabinet rather than make decisions. This is not as good as a proper committee system but is a great improvement on a pure cabinet system.

Water Street weight restriction

I have been chasing this with highways and am arranging to meet the highways engineer in charge of the project Graham Taylor on site next week if possible. I will let you know when I have a firm time and date.

Pollution

During my campaign a resident requested I do some pollution monitoring in Lavenham. This may be worth doing in Water Street. The kit is cheap - £60 for 10 tubes and only requires a volunteer to erect it. If it is something the parish council wish to take up I can help.

Potholes

On the county council highways pothole reporting site, there are currently 21 reports of potholes in Lavenham. I reported several during the campaign, particularly on Shilling Street. Reporting any pothole as and when it occurs on this website does lead to action. So the secret is to use that website to report every single pothole on there, however small, so that there is no excuse for the contractor to fill one and leave another one next to it. A volunteer "pothole warden", who is responsible for entering them on the site might be a good way to sustain this going forward.

It just remains for me to say that I look forward to working with the parish council and all members of the Lavenham community in the years ahead.

Robert Lindsay
County Councillor for Cosford
June 2017