

Lynda Turner

District councillor's report for 2012

The past year has been fraught with difficulty in producing a balanced budget in the light of many cuts in government funding, but I am delighted to say that we have managed it for 2012-13 – however we must not be complacent, the following years are going to be even more difficult and hard decisions will have to be taken. On a positive note:

Shared Management: The shared management project between Breckland and South Holland has saved each council over £500,000 in the first year. It is unfortunate now that following the local elections a couple of weeks ago, the new majority party at Great Yarmouth is not inclined to add to the shared management structure – meaning we will have to find more from our budget than we might have saved should the three way agreement have happened.

LDf → N.F. Freresworth

Commitment to Youth and Older People: The election of a new Youth Council and the launch of the new Older People's Forum showed Breckland Council's commitment to democracy for all ages. Stuart Green, former Youth Councillor became the country's youngest District Councillor when elected for Dereham Humbletoft Ward, and Amy Head became Swaffham's youngest ever Town Councillor. Members of the Older People's Forum, which is the voice for those over 50, have taken part in a nationwide project called Ageing Well, and received accolades for their work and enthusiasm.

Grants and Community Involvement: Over £100,000 has been given in match and grant funding to over 200 projects, ranging from £30 to £20,000. Projects have ranged from raked seating for the Carnegie rooms at Thetford, allotments at Great Ellingham, the production and printing of their second book for the Attleborough Writers Group, and Jubilee and Pride grants for over 50 parties etc. including of course Shipdham.

370 runners took part in the Dereham 5K run, which this year will be the final event in the six week Breckland Torch relay, as part of our Olympic celebrations. Other successful events included the Breckland Book Festival with over 1000 participants. The highlight of this year is the Festival of Breckland, to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and London 2012. Workshops across the district enabled 100s of residents to then apply for grants for their parties, and a range of other celebrations.

As part of the Warm and Well campaign, those most vulnerable were identified and given packs of items to help them keep warm, and help was given with draft proofing kits, emergency heaters, and supplies of heating oil.

Investment: Despite the economic downturn the council continues to invest in property with a return of £2M per annum.

A busy year, with lots of positive activity and a commitment to ensure that your money is spent well and wisely. As part of the ongoing budgetary review, a series of consultations with the public will take place in the Autumn, to seek your views in what you consider to be vital parts of the service, and what you consider you could manage without. Thank you for your support to me.