

Mr/Madam chairman, Councillors, Ladies and Gentleman.

Firstly can I thank you for inviting me to your meeting and asking me to say a few words this evening.

As you know, though I am frequently “double booked” I do try and attend all the Parish Council meetings in the Ward – that’s 5 Parish Councils as well as my Daventry meetings. I do strongly believe that although the Ward is called Brixworth Ward, my role is not restricted to Brixworth!!

A brief introduction to those who don’t know me – I’m Ian Barratt, District Councillor for Brixworth Ward. I’m also the longest continually serving Parish Councillor on Brixworth Parish Council and was Chairman for 5 years and now I have taken on the District role.

I sit on the Planning Committee, the Licensing Committee and I am members of various working groups.

Planning is a real issue at present. I had hoped to report to you the details of the new Local Plan which will affect every village, but as you may know matters are dragging on. West Northants Joint Core Strategy plan is the plan for the region and I was optimistic that the status of villages would be protected and new housing would be centred on existing large population centres. You may have heard of SUEs – the Sustainable Urban Extension – that were to absorb much of this extra housing. However, the Planning Inspector who has to approve this plan has ordered a re-think about where the housing is going and Northampton Borough Council has turned down the Hardingstone 1000 house proposal. So where will they go? Some sustainable building can benefit a village – one village in the Ward would like the principle of a few affordable homes to be built to invigorate the village, but we’re talking of half a dozen and if the village wants it.

So the local plan waits – Daventry can’t complete a local plan when we don’t know the guidelines the larger West Northants District will require. In the meantime, we have development taking place with perhaps less protection for villages than we would like and opposing it at present can be very difficult

So what about the money side of things? A band D household council tax total is about £1450 a year in this District. The County Council has the lion’s share, which you would expect as they fund Education, much of Social Services and so on. Parish Councils have around an average of £60 a year – just over £1 a week, say, and the Police get nearly £200 a year per household. The District Council is left with around £125 a year from a band D household. That’s only 9% of your Council Tax bill, £2.45 a week or so. We really do aim for good value for money. Partly due to the reduction in central funding, we have been unable to freeze the District Council part of your Council Tax but we have nonetheless kept our increase below 2%.

For this you get Planning matters dealt with and Building Control to make sure they are safe, licensing of taxis, scrap metal dealers, street trading, gambling A leisure centre in Daventry ( though it’s a bit far to go, granted) , Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths, and marriages and naming ceremonies Housing Services – advice on benefits and getting a house, Environmental, Cultural and Heritage, - your dustbins and dog waste and many litter bins emptied by Daventry District Council ,

dog warden, pest control, fly tipping on public land, removing graffiti on public land, nature reserves (reservoir) and nature trails, providing free parking at Daventry, Care and repair service (shared with South Northants) Community Grants, though funds are very limited, providing premises at the Council Offices for Daventry District Credit Union and the Job Centre, partners in the new Crematorium near Rugby, Daventry Country Park, Daventry District & South Northamptonshire Community Safety Partnership deal with antisocial behaviour incidents – neighbours, incidents in the street, run the over 50s forum with consultation and activities, running a food hygiene rating scheme, food safety training and investigating complaints about food poisoning.

And the costs of running it – staff and buildings and so on.

Other Initiatives include organised activities in Country Parks, Commemoration of the start of WW1 – offered free poppy seeds for the community to plant and so on.

Some of these services are chargeable, but it's not bad to have all these services available for a basic £2.45 a week!

And to finish with a plug for Daventry District Cyclefest in Daventry Country Park on Saturday, June 7 from 11am to 3pm. There will be guided bike trails, displays, free bike check-ups and so on – full details are on the website.

Please remember I am always available to help with a problem myself or to point you to someone else who can. I know you have an excellent Parish Council who are more than capable of dealing with everyday problems people may have, and I am always willing to back them up in their work.

I've probably said more than enough, (I call that the Councillor's disease!!!) so I'll shut up now and look forward to listening to the rest of your meeting.

Thank you

Ian Barratt