

Having represented this ward or its earlier incarnation for some 20 years and this being an election year I have decided to stand for another 4 years if the people of Upper Wensum continue to support me.

The past year in Breckland has been very positive despite the whole community still feeling the effects of the tail end of the covid pandemic, we will probably have some fall out from that for a few years. Breckland remains a council producing a balanced budget and still levies a low council tax.

With 15 villages in the ward attending parish meetings has been less regular than I would have hoped, and for this I am sorry, but I am always willing to attend village meetings at other times or arrange to meet with parish clerks or councillors, or indeed members or groups of the public between meetings. These can be in the parish or in the Breckland offices. Inevitably we often get two or more parish council meetings on the same evening, nobody is at fault it just happens, but I will normally attend if asked.

Planning within the ward has ground to a stop on housing applications because of nutrient neutrality limitations, although planners from across the county are hopeful we will have some better ideas of mitigation by the end of this year.

Two things have arisen in this area.

1/ The proposed new town, which is the biggest public issue in our area, I am opposed to the principle of it on this site and have recorded that at Breckland, plus if it goes any further I will oppose the fact of it on two wide ranging grounds - infrastructure matters and environmental matters - if re-elected I will be speaking to all parishes about these.

2/ The introduction of Exception Sites policies. That is 'Local homes for Local people' two villages in the ward are already going down the road of considering these and any village could talk to Breckland about this form of housing provision.

Breckland are still able to provide some grants and match funding, so please raise any questions or place bids if needed. The big project funding is still mainly coming from the lottery as that is how it is set up nationally, but except for things like new halls this is not often needed in villages. I am normally supportive of community efforts and willing to write support letters for your applications.

During the election I have been publishing a daily blog of almost 100 promises Breckland have kept in the past year. I believe Breckland administration has fulfilled its manifesto promises.

I continue to support all the villages of Upper Wensum in practical ways and by promoting them within the council wherever possible.

Apart from the normal ward work I serve on Breckland Cabinet with responsibility for Housing and Homelessness. This means I am pretty much a full time councillor, Cabinet meets weekly in some form or another and I also attend many Breckland committee meetings.

Also like many other conservative councillors I meet with other organisations and levels of government regularly. For me I am pleased to meet with:- MP's and County Councillors as well as parish councils and both national and local organisations who influence how we all live. Plus I represent Breckland on:-

Norfolk Police and Crime Panel,
Norfolk Rivers Internal Drainage Board,
Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance,
Water Resource East Strategic Advisory Board,
A47 Alliance. (As substitute)

During my time as your councillor I have always regarded my prime job was to represent you to Breckland, I have a secondary duty and that is to represent Breckland to you. I do try and fulfil both these roles.

I hope we meet again after the election and will answer any questions anyone may have.

Gordon Bambridge
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