

A Report for Parishes from District Councillor David Ritchie

May 2nd 2022

Dear all,

On the 6th of April I gave a short speech to the senior executives, consultants, and managers who are working on the proposed tidal barrier for Lowestoft. This is part of the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project where I have been chairman of the board from the beginning. This is probably the largest engineering project that has ever been led by a district council.

Unusually for a large coastal town, Lowestoft is cut in half by a lake. The original parish of Lowestoft is to the north of Lake Lothing, with the parishes of Kirkley and Pakefield to the south. Lake Lothing is in origin, is one of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads. They were dug out by peat diggers in prehistoric times. The lake is still connected to Oulton Broad at its Western end. In the early part of the 19th Century the lake was extended to the East and opened to the sea. The lake then became the inner harbour - fuelling the commercial success of the town. The downside was that this opened Lowestoft to the possibility of tidal flooding. A tidal surge on top of a high tide can enter the lake and flow over the quay headings and flood the town. This happened in 1953 and again in 2013 when the town centre, businesses, and 165 properties were flooded.

Lowestoft is a successful town with some of the best sandy beaches in the country. With the opportunities for servicing and supporting the off shore wind farms the employment situation is already good. More job opportunities are being created all the time. The aspiration for a third crossing of the lake has been there for a hundred years. The Gullwing Bridge is now being built! But the project that underpins the long-term successful future for Suffolk's second largest town is the flood relief scheme. I have attached the latest newsletter with this report.

If you wish to see how well Lowestoft is doing why not attend the First Light Festival on the 18th and 19th of June. Having been cancelled for the last two years because of Covid it will be back this year, and I will be on the beach to see the sun rise over the sea.

Last month I took the Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document, SPD, to Cabinet for adoption. Tomorrow I will bring the Affordable Housing SPD to Cabinet. In the ever more complicated world of planning, these documents have become more and more necessary to help applicants, agents, developers, and planners (all of us) to understand what is required.

Over Easter Rachel and I both had Covid. Our Daughter and her family came to stay, they were all recovering from Covid. We managed alright – just about. Part of the new normal!

Best wishes

David Ritchie

One of the two District Councillors for the Bungay and Wainford Ward of East Suffolk Council.

Cabinet member for planning and coastal management at East Suffolk Council.

Chairman of the Suffolk Coast Forum

Chairman of the board for the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project.

Chairman of The Southwold Harbour Management Committee.

Chairman of the Local Plan Working Group.

Chairman of the Developers Forum