**WARD REPORT January 2025 Cllr GORDON BAMBRIDGE**

**UPPER WENSUM WARD**

Happy New Year

**1/ The Local Plan** is still paused until national government makes clear how we accommodate the increase in target numbers for housing under the new rules -We are likely to have some updates on this during January.

**2/ Consultation** on charging for car parking in the district. Is now ended we are looking forward to it being an item on Council, Cabinet and Scrutiny meetings - I am still placing parish views with the relevant cabinet members or officers.

***Repeated from last report***

*Of course as your local member I pass on all comments directly and un-edited.*

*Those who have followed this matter will be aware that car parks in Breckland cost the council almost half a million pounds a year in management and maintenance, plus business rates. My personal opinion has always been that this is a burden which should be borne by the user and not the rate payer. Breckland are aiming that the income should be ‘cost neutral’  but that any excess be used in the town for which it is earned.*

*I am happy to discuss this with groups in your village including the parish council. But my feeling is that this council tax money is better spent on that additional services Breckland provides.*

**3/Flooding,** has been prevalent over the country, but seemingly less so in Norfolk over Christmas period. I have had some close calls at home last week, and will be attending 2 IDB meetings next week, the regional Flood meeting at County Hall on 31st and the ADA Environmental meeting in Peterborough on 5th Feb.

I represented this district, and by default this ward, at the two meetings in London before Christmas where problems we are suffering from were brought to national attention

I normally produce a written report for each meeting which in presented to Breckland via the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, but it can also be made available to parishes and if thought valuable to your local newsletters. Please ask or check that website and download.

**4/ Meetings.** Can I remind you that key public interest events at Breckland are broadcast live on YOUTUBE and include many meetings such as all Full Council meetings, Planning, Scrutiny and Cabinet. These can all be viewed on the Breckland Youtube channel at any time.

Key decisions discussed at cabinet this week were Breckland’s medium term budget including the good news we expect to produce a neutral budget again next year.

Council will be 10.00am on 16th and the main budget setting meeting on 20th February. Planning for 14th January is cancelled, OSC is 30th January at 10.00am.

**5/ Highways.**We are all aware of fast progress along the A47, and somewhat more problems with the Western Link, but these roads are important to all of our ward so please - if you have concerns do contact me. I know it is not a Breckland matter, and you may have better contacts, but it does help with my lobbying if I can be up to date with problems

**6/General** Perhaps I can remind you that with 15 parishes in the ward and frequently several have meetings on the same evening, plus an increasing number of Breckland or outside body meetings held during evenings which have important implications for us all, and I attend on behalf of us all, I cannot attend every meeting of your parish councils. What I can do is meet with councillors or parishioners outside of the parish council cycle, either in your parish or in Breckland. I have had four such meetings since my last report. Some with the added bonus of inclusion of specific Breckland officers in attendance.