

## **EBC Councillor report for the Annual Parish Meeting 2021**

It has been a most unimaginable 12 months due to the awful Covid 19 Pandemic. Offices and shops shut, and many closing down. EBC has been immediate in distributing financial help to those Businesses that qualified for receipt of grant money. Business Grants continue and since the start of the pandemic around £30 million of support has gone to help those eligible Businesses in the Borough. The infection rates rose to critical and EBC was ranked very high for affected areas throughout the country. The infection rates and death rates have slowed down considerably and with a high take up of vaccination it is hoped that normality may return soon.

Town Hall Offices were shut down and opening, in a limited way, should commence on April 12, 2021. Working from home and online video meetings has been the way EBC has coped with contact restrictions. EBC hopes that the residents will be vigilant and carry on the fight against Covid 19 and follow the guidelines put forward by the Government.

The EBC portion of Council Tax bills have risen by approximately £5 for a Band D property, and DCC, Fire Service, and PCC Taxes have also risen for the 2021/2022 period.

Councillor Sue Beardsley has been our Mayor for the 2019/2020 period and has agreed and continues as Mayor for the 2020/2021 period. In these trying times our Mayor been very busy doing excellent work representing Erewash and raising funds for Local Charities.

The Erewash annual auditor is Ernst and Young and their inspection confirms that Erewash is performing well and provides Value for Money to the taxpayers. We note that the Borough is fortunately still debt free and therefore has no interest to pay out of taxpayer's money.

There is still ongoing pressure to reduce spending due to cuts in our funding. The Council officers have successfully been able to shield the electorate from the full impact of this to ensure a fair and equitable arrangement for all. It has become increasingly difficult to find more spending cuts, without impacting services and the officers and staff have coped well with working from home communicating online. The Refuse collection team is also commended as they have continued to operate, as normal, during the lockdowns.

Further consultations will take place to confirm EBC's Core Strategy and the requirements for housing in the coming years as some Green Belt may be utilised to reach the Government Housing Target. The land north of Lock Lane in Sawley is recommended to be dropped from the options for housing growth.

All formal EBC events were cancelled which is a real regret as they were well received by the public. Charitable organizations and local charitable groups are commended for reaching out to vulnerable people with help and advice during this Pandemic.

There have been many successful projects in the Borough over the past year and we had considerable success in obtaining external funding for many of them. Unsurprisingly these are predominantly in Ilkeston and Long Eaton being the most densely populated areas.

We, your Borough Councillors, hope residents and families are well and safe during these unimaginable times and are always available to help the community.

Councillors Alan Summerfield and Abey Stevenson

March 2021.