

Since my last report, there have been several significant events. The most obvious were the election of a new national government and the first ever MP in the Waveney Valley Constituency. So I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Adrian Ramsay for his successful campaign and I hope that his election will have a positive impact on our ward and the entire Waveney Valley.

Recently, I attended the South Norfolk Community Awards, which saw our ward nominated in four categories – Norfolk Knights Wheelchair Rugby Club for the Connecting Communities Award, Susan Whymark Funeral Services Ltd for the Business in the Community Award, Harleston Information Plus for Community Organisation of the Year and Herbert Websdell for the Lifetime Achievement Award. While Susan Whymark Funeral Services and Harleston Information Plus took home the awards in their respective categories, as far as I am concerned all of our nominees were winners. I was personally lucky enough to spend the evening talking with Herbert Websdell and his daughter and have to say that I found his wide variety of service to our local community to be inspiring and humbling. I have often said that volunteering is the lifeblood of rural communities and while I would personally prefer for there to be more financial and other support offered from other areas there can be no doubting the importance of people like Mr Websdell and his late wife, Julie, in giving so much for so long.

Earlier on this month, I was able to help out the Waveney Volunteers for Nature with the scything at Redenhall Church graveyard. While it was hard work, it also proved to be great fun with a wonderful group of people who have excellent knowledge of the wildflowers found there. As many of you will be aware, I am involved in trying to improve the upkeep of the graveyard in Redenhall for the benefit of all those whose loved ones are laid at rest there. What is clear is that this can't be done without using the expertise of people like the Waveney Volunteers for Nature. Protecting nature and making the graveyard more accessible to people are not conflicting aims. They can be complimentary if knowledge and ideas can be pooled and we can make use of partnerships between the District Council, generous volunteers and even with caring local businesses.

I can confirm that further work on the graveyard in Redenhall has been ongoing throughout July and that the Waveney Volunteers for Nature will be returning on Wednesday 31st July and Monday 5th August. More than this I have been told that this work will be repeated later in the year and I am hopeful that this is the beginning of a more consistent and positive outlook on the upkeep of the graveyard. Despite this, there is more that can be done and so I am still looking for input and to hear from anyone willing to offer their time or their knowledge of the graveyard. Specifically, I would like to find a way to make an inventory of the graves and then make that information available to the public as I believe this is valuable local knowledge that should not be lost if we can avoid it.

As a result, if you can help then you can drop off a letter at Harleston Information Plus, and for this or any other issue, you can also contact me by emailing me at james.eddy@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk or, if you prefer, pop in to see me at HIP on the last Saturday of the month between 10am and 12.

All the best,

James