

SOUTHWOLD AND REYDON SOCIETY

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As the New Year starts, we can look forward to a mixed bag of opportunities and threats facing our community. How they develop will have a significant impact on Southwold and Reydon well beyond 2017. We will keep a close eye on the following, listed here in no particular order:

- The St Felix housing application will be the severest test yet of the protected status of the local Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). We will attend the planning committee when the plan is finally considered and hope to speak about why we oppose it.
- The Southwold Neighbourhood Plan will soon be published prior to the local referendum and its assessment by the Planning Inspectorate. We hope the Town Council have found robust ways of protecting our built and natural environment.
- More immediately, we will also see how far the campaign to reduce the massive increases in business rates proposed for the shops in Southwold High Street has succeeded. The increases will put the viability of many of the independent shops at risk and is yet another threat to the character of the town.
- New affordable housing will be developed at Duncan's Yard in Southwold and at Green Lane in Reydon, with priority for those with a local connection who also meet the criteria of housing need. Reydon Parish Council will soon publish the results of their housing survey as one step to ensure the needs of local families are fully considered.
- As new private housing of good quality is developed on the site of the former Southwold service station, we await news of the purchasers of the old fire and police station sites and their plans for these key gateway sites.
- Another key piece of news will be the developer chosen by the NHS to establish the new care home in Reydon on the site next to the Sole Bay Health centre. This will include four NHS beds with care to supplement the work of our new community health team. Both the health and care provision are much needed given the ageing profile of our population.
- Another important health issue will be the decision over the future of the Minor Injury Unit at Beccles. Sadly, we have little cause for optimism that this will be retained and we may well have to campaign for an accessible service to prevent more pressure on Accident and Emergency at James Paget.
- We will also see the publication of the first draft of Waveney's new Local Plan which will set out the proposed planning framework for the next twenty years. This will include how much new housing is to be allowed in Southwold and Reydon and how this is to be balanced with the protection of the AONB.
- Finally, we will soon know if the merger of Waveney and Suffolk Coastal Councils is to go ahead. If it does, we will be part of the biggest District Council in England and we will want to see the promised cost savings and improvements in services.

John Perkins, Chairman and Philip O'Hear, Secretary