**County Councillor Alexander Nicoll: Report for the 2021 annual meeting of Wickham Market Parish Council**

The past year has, for everyone, been unlike any other. It has been one of great sadness and more widely one of struggle as Suffolk communities have sought to understand and live through a pandemic of a scale not seen in our lifetime. Against this backdrop many other subjects have continued to be addressed by the PC and community groups in Wickham Market and some of these, in terms of likely impacts, have been significant. Perhaps the one with the highest profile, aside from the impact of Covid 19, has been the continuing public fears surrounding the possible siting of two new nuclear reactors – Sizewell C – on the coast a few miles from Wickham Market. The physical impact of EDF’s proposals, if taken forward, impact much closer to the village with the building of the Southern Park & Ride site just north of the village and close to our neighbours in Marlesford and the likely proliferation of HGVs on our rural roads in addition to further congestion on the A12.

I objected in clear terms to EDF’s plans, on a number of grounds, and my objection and supporting statement can be viewed amongst the long list of public objections given under the Sizewell C section on the Planning Inspectorate website. I was closely involved in bringing EDF to the table in the village to address, principally traffic, concerns and at the time of writing Wickham Market PC, Suffolk County Council and others are assessing the EDF response to the traffic and related issues raised by a working group of local interests which has been engaging with EDF and its advisors since 2019. Many unresolved issues remain, and I know that the PC is not willing to sign off on any EDF proposals until they are assessed to be the best in terms of dealing with identified problems within and near the village. I support this.

Aside from Sizewell C I have vocally campaigned against a number of ill-considered planning applications likely to negatively affect Wickham Market and surrounding communities, especially in Pettistree and Campsea Ashe. In addition to obvious problems arising from developments which may be simply too large and poorly designed I have championed local concerns about how these developments impact upon existing, stretched, community facilities including schools, medical facilities and shopping and recreation amenities.

Wickham Market, one of six parishes in the Wickham Division, has one of the most developed community infrastructures and there are a healthy number of organisations and individuals who go more than the extra mile to support the vulnerable in our community and work hard to keep a diverse community spirit alive in the village. I have been proud to support a number of initiatives over the past four years including the ongoing efforts to return the fire-damaged George Pub to community use in the centre of the village.

Finally, community strength is ensured by a sense of connection and I have been closely involved in a project, led by Suffolk County Council, to introduce a new all electric taxi-bus service running between the station at Campsea Ashe to Framlingham via Wickham Market. The pilot for this project has been delayed by Covid 19 but should commence later this month and, if successful, will herald the creation of similar services more widely across Suffolk.