



Contribution from Aldeburgh



PRESENTATION TO MAYORS' MEETING BYSTRE

Initiatives rising from the Charter which have arisen in Aldeburgh.

VILLAGE / TOWN PLANNING

In the County of Suffolk new building work is carefully monitored by the District Council and must conform to the guidelines laid down. Every application is sent to the Town Council which recommends whether or not it should be agreed or refused.

Their recommendations then go to the District Council who make a final decision - sometimes visiting the site first. Every new building must fit into the style and ambience of the existing buildings. Old buildings are listed and graded by Central Government and any alterations to them are strictly controlled, even the colour they are painted must be approved. There is an "envelope" around the village outside which no development is allowed. This means that each village maintains its architectural identity and villages do not suffer from houses sprawling over their boundaries encroaching on their surrounding countryside.

VILLAGE SOCIETY

Our village consists of a great variety of social classes and has some very wealthy people living in it as well as some quite poor people. However if something arises which affects us all the whole village acts together to achieve what it considers to be right. Our school playing field is too big and too far away from our primary school and the County Council who owned it wanted to build some apartments on a part of it. This would have obscured a very beautiful view of the marshes and the river and after a public meeting was held, the whole Town raised the money to buy it from the County Council, raising 150,000 pounds in nine months. It now belongs to a trust which holds it for 999 years for the Town.

Another contributory factor to our society is that 20% of the houses in Aldeburgh are 2nd homes belonging mainly to people who live in London. They visit regularly and are absorbed into our society, many of them becoming permanent residents when they retire. Their financial input contributes greatly to Aldeburgh's economy and to the success of the many societies such as the Golf Club, the Yacht Club, Music Clubs etc as well as the businesses in the Town.

Each year we welcome visitors from all over the world to the Aldeburgh Music Festival in June and this gives the local people interest and experience as well benefiting the economy. This festival was started by the composer Benjamin Britten 53 years ago.

VILLAGE AND NATURE

Nature and the environment are very important to us particularly to our fishing industry which is sadly declining due to restrictions placed by the EU on the amount of fish which can be caught. We are fortunate to have several nature reserves in the area which are particularly attractive to bird watchers and the beach and the beautiful countryside attract many walkers and artists to the area.

We are very conscious that nature develops slowly and these areas are carefully protected and maintained. The District Council employs a Countryside Manager and assistants for this purpose. There is not enough time to speak about all aspects of the Charter at this meeting but our main concern is to protect the identity of our village, to preserve and maintain it and to support our local businesses, which are an integral part of the life of Aldeburgh.