

**Appendix C – County Cllr. Penny Otton’s Report to Full Council –**

- For information on local support during the Cost-of-Living Crisis, visit: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/suffolk-advice-and-support-service/> Latest SCC COVID information is available here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- For information on supporting Ukrainian refugees in Suffolk, email: [refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk)
- SCC Financial Budget - SCC is currently going through its process to approving the budget for 2023/24.
- The Conservative budget proposes a 3.99% increase in tax, broken down into a 2% rise in the Social Care Precept and a 1.99% increase in general tax. The Council aim to make most of its savings through increasing the number of unfunded vacancies amongst the Council’s workforce. Our Group believes that impact council services have faced this year requires the Council to increase general tax by an additional 0.89%. We have proposed how we would spend the additional funding to protect services from the rising demand and costs.
- GLI Budget Amendments – Funding Vital Services - Our Group has proposed amendments to the Conservative budget for 2023/24. Initially, we would propose to increase the general tax closer to the Government-recommended amount, which will be a 0.89% increase. This equates to a £9.94 annual rise, or a 19p weekly rise for a Band B property and would generate just over £3.3m. Currently, SCC is not on track to achieve Net Zero by 2030. Our Group proposes to invest in a Carbon Budget Officer, to help develop a clearer pathway towards Net Zero. In addition, we propose to facilitate a county-wide review into Suffolk’s speed limits. On the frontline, we will use £1m to actively recruit Occupational Therapists and Social Workers, as well as invest more into Suffolk Libraries to help maintain their necessary services through the cost-of-living crisis. In addition, we would invest £1m in providing wider capacity of community transport to be used to help achieve Net Zero through EV vehicle usage.
- Carbon Budget – SCC is Not on Track - At the beginning of January, the Scrutiny Committee met to discuss the Carbon Budget. This year’s carbon budget shows that SCC is not on track to reach Net Zero by 2030. Current forecasts show that SCC will still be producing 10,000 tonnes of CO2 in 2030 – that’s still half of what we are emitting now. Our Group believes more needs to be done to improve the accuracy of calculating all of SCC’s emissions, which is why we have proposed a Carbon Budget Officer is employed to provide a sole focus on improving the reporting of carbon emissions.
- SCC’s Further Investment in Trees & Hedgerows - SCC are planning to invest £110,000 in managing and inspecting trees and hedgerows. The money will be used to ensure that trees and hedgerows are given the best chance to thrive. Currently, the Council has planted around 50,000 trees and hedges this planting season. This comes as the latest science indicates trees can capture nearly twice the amount of carbon as previously thought. Our Group believes this highlights the greater need to plant more trees, and more importantly how crucial it is to not unnecessarily cut trees down. For more info, visit: <https://phys.org/news/2022-12-uk-woodlands-carbon-previously.html>
- Network Rail - at last we have had an update from Network rail, although I didn’t see much in the way of progress of the actual work.
- Highways – I am pleased to read that the verge and fencing at Norton Toad will be completed in line with permission.
- Possible restrictions at new re-cycling centre. I will liaise with SCC Highways and the Parish Council on this matter.

**Appendix D -**

**District Cllr. Harry Richardson’s Report to Full Council –**

- Council tax freeze for Mid Suffolk - Budget proposals for Mid Suffolk District Council published today include a council tax freeze for residents, despite rising costs and increased demands on services. [More information](#)

## Appendix C and D – Minutes of 11.01.2023

- Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils take action over housing issues - Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are taking action to improve their Building Services - which maintain their council housing - and urgently resolve a number of issues. [More information](#)
- Ground-breaking at Gateway 14, Stowmarket, for The Range - Construction of a state-of-the-art distribution unit for garden and leisure products retailer The Range is officially underway at Gateway 14. [More information](#)
- Freeport East Receives Final Government Approval - Freeport East has received final Government approvals today allowing it to move forward into the delivery phase. [More information](#)
- ‘Magic tables’ bringing joy to Mid Suffolk’s care homes - Interactive tables with therapeutic effects for people living with dementia are being trialled in Mid Suffolk’s care homes. [More information](#)
- Full business case to be developed for Stowmarket wellbeing and leisure hub - progress of the Stowmarket health, wellbeing, sports, education, and leisure facilities will be presented to Mid Suffolk District Council cabinet in February, with approval being sort for the next phase of the business case. [More information](#)
- Supporting the elections this May - As you will know, the local and parish elections are due to be held on Thursday 4 May. There are still positions that need to be filled to ensure the elections are run smoothly across the districts. If you want to get involved, or know someone else who is interested, [email the Babergh and Mid Suffolk elections team](#) to find out more.
- Voter ID - The UK Government has introduced a requirement for voters to show photo ID when voting at a polling station, which will be implemented in the upcoming local and Parish elections in May. [More information](#)

### **District Cllr. Austin Davies’ Report to Full Council –**

- MSDC Meeting - Mid Suffolk District Council was updated on the business conducted at the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee as well as the Mid Suffolk Overview and Scrutiny Committee covering work on homelessness, refugee housing and cost of living support. The current lack of a formal link between Suffolk Association Local Councils (SALC) and MSDC was raised (the CEO later confirmed that MSDC are in discussion with SALC). Changed the Council Tax Reduction (Working Age) Scheme and which will come into effect on 1st April 2023. Up to 100% maximum deduction for all legacy benefit households and introduce a simplified scheme for universal credit (UC) customers that will allow ‘passport’ claims to be automated based on the UC financial data without additional verification. Create a transitional protection scheme to support those households who would be worse off under the simplified UC scheme. Financial position in the first 6 months of the year was reviewed. MSDC remains in a sound position with our overall dept reduced on £6 million. While other councils are being forced to put up bills in order to balance their books, Mid Suffolk is proposing to freeze its share of council tax – absorbing rising costs, rather than passing them on to residents.
- Community Governance Reviews - Council was asked to agree the recommendations of the Community Governance Review Working Group. Norton, Beyton, Tostock and Stowlangtoft Parish Councils are to remain unchanged. Thurston Parish Council should be increased from 11 to 13 councillors.
- Planning - support Thurston Parish Councils case in the Supreme Court case against MSDC/Bloor homes.
- Gateway 14 - The ‘Range’ warehousing ground has been broken.
- Locality Fund - Support given to the purchase of a new zip line at Norton village playing field. Accepted a request to help Tostock village hall refurbish a side room which can be made available for hire. Aided the purchase of a new gate for the children’s play area.