

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

- COVID-19 - Latest SCC information is available here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- Latest Government advice is available here: www.gov.uk/coronavirus
- Biodiversity Recommendations to Enhance - Suffolk County Council will be doing more for the county’s natural environment, as it confirms plans to enhance the biodiversity of at least 30% of its land by 2030. Our Group had a major influence in providing recommendations to SCC which are now a part of the Council’s ambitions moving forward to enhance biodiversity. Examples include planting more hedgerows, improving highway trees, and developing nature-based flood management solutions. For more information, visit: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news/show/councils-commitment-to-further-enhancing-suffolks-natural-environment>
- Changes to Highway Code - Several new changes to the Highway Code are now in force as of the 29th of January. According to The Department for Transport (DfT) the new regulations are about recognising and protecting the most vulnerable road users and making the highway safer for everyone. Suffolk Roadsafe’s Quiz helps illustrate the changes that are necessary to know and includes a link to further information - <https://www.quiz-maker.com/QG20TF8NL>. For more Government information on the changes you need to know, visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-highway-code-8-changes-you-need-to-know-from-29-january-2022>
- Devolution Deal - The Government published its White Paper on Levelling-Up, within which it has agreed that Suffolk will be one of nine initial ‘County Deals’ up for negotiation. A new deal will potentially give local leaders more powers to make decisions for their communities for the first time, but I am worried this will reduce local decisions.
- Full Council Budget Meeting - County Councillors met on the 17th of February to debate and vote on the Council’s budget for 2022-23. Suffolk GLI Group highlighted the need to invest more in adult social care, as well as an innovative project to reduce the energy bills of those most vulnerable, considering the current energy and cost of living crisis. Both ideas were rejected information on Suffolk GLI’s Budget amendment, visit: [https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=\(17-02-2022\),%20County%20Council](https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=(17-02-2022),%20County%20Council)
- Warmer Homes Suffolk - Suffolk residents who are struggling to keep their homes warm can contact a new project, named ‘Warm Homes Suffolk’, which offers funding and free advice. The project can offer expert advice on reducing energy bills, energy usage and identify benefits that residents may be entitled to, to help keep their homes warm. Visit: www.warmhomessuffolk.org.
- Parking on Barton Road and on Norton Road outside of Thurston Community College: I met with the PCSO, Highways officer and the Clerk to witness the serious parking problems. Highways are suggesting double yellow lines.
- Locality Fund: the £500 for the notice boards has been approved and also £600 for audio / visual system for Cavendish Hall
- Various Street Lights. Following complaints the council and developers are looking at providing cowl covers and on the Persimmon site, which are temporary to be replaced with LEDs.
- H MARKINGS on Barton Road: I have chased this up with Ben Cook at highways, who wishes to speak to me. I hope to do so on Monday and will report to your meeting.

Appendix D

District Cllr. Harry Richardson's Report to Full Council –

- Mid Suffolk District Council – Mid Suffolk District Council has frozen its element of council tax this year. The 2022/23 budget, which was approved unanimously at the Full Council meeting on 24th February, allows continued investment in the council's strategic priorities, including the economic regeneration of the district, and tackling climate change. It also builds on last year's additional investment of £5.1m into supporting the district's communities, at no extra cost to Mid Suffolk's council taxpayers. During the debate, a Green and Liberal Democrat amendment to the budget was agreed which will fund two new zero carbon electric buses to deliver scheduled rural community transport for Mid Suffolk residents. Sheltered housing charges and garage rents also remain frozen at 2021/22 levels, but Mid Suffolk District Council tenants will see an increase of 4.1% to their rents to cover inflationary pressures and allow investment in improving the quality of council homes. This means average weekly social rent will increase by £3.45 from £84.42 to £87.84. For affordable housing, weekly rents will increase by £4.99 from £121.34 to £126.33.
- There have also been a number of initiatives launched in the previous weeks and so I have included below a summary of the major updates across the District:
- Bird Flu outbreak near Elmswell - The UK's Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer has confirmed highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1, commonly known as bird flu, at a small holding near Elmswell. A 3km Protection Zone and a 10km Surveillance Zone have been put in place around the infected premise to limit the risk of the disease spreading. All poultry keepers – whether commercial farmers or those with a small backyard flock – are required by law to house poultry, or otherwise, to keep them separate from wild birds.
- Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils respond to new 'County Deal' - The leaders of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have welcomed the news that Suffolk is one of nine counties invited to negotiate a ground-breaking devolution deal – bringing more control over areas such as transport, infrastructure and skills to the region. The Government's Levelling Up White Paper, published this week, outlines a blueprint for driving up living standards and improving opportunity and prosperity across the country. As part of it, Suffolk is one of nine county areas invited to negotiate a historic 'County Deal' - a new devolution model that, subject to negotiations, will give local leaders more powers to make decisions for their communities for the first time. This could include greater control over buses and trains, to deliver London style public transport or skills programmes which focus on the needs of local people to help them access the high quality, high paying jobs of the future.
- Additional funding to support districts' rough sleepers - Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council have been awarded £324K to provide specialised emergency accommodation for rough sleepers and those at risk of homelessness. The funding, from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government's Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme, will see the development of two new self-contained 'mbloc' emergency accommodation units in Stowmarket (Eric Jones House, Ipswich Road) and two self-contained units in Sudbury to house vulnerable adults at risk of living on the streets. These new energy efficient homes in Stowmarket and Sudbury – will provide dedicated long term emergency accommodation for entrenched rough sleepers – allowing their complex needs to be addressed in a more comprehensive way. Placements will allow people who have been historically excluded and marginalised, to get the help, support and life skills they need to hold down a secure tenancy and stay off the streets in future. Training, guidance and advice will be delivered by a range of agencies including health, social care and voluntary organisations, supporting the councils' goal of ending all rough sleeping by 2024.

District Cllr. Austin Davies' Report to Full Council –

- Report of the MSDC meeting held on the 24th February 2022 at Endeavour House:
 - During introductory statements, thanks were given to the MSDC staff who had worked hard to keep our services available during the various recent storms.
 - MSDC continues to prepare a proposal for funding under the 'levelling up' budget.
 - 1) Budget 2022 was presented with a surplus of £5.1 M which is planned to be spent by March 2023. By accepting the Green Party/Lib Dem proposal to invest £820K in creating a new electrically powered scheduled bus service for the poorly serviced, non-compete areas of mid Suffolk, the budget was passed unanimously. MSDC will not be increasing its council tax charge this year.
 - 2) Housing Revenue Account was discussed. Objections were raised to the 4.1% increase in council rents by the Green Party/Lib Dem opposition. Sheltered housing and garage rents will not be increased.
 - 3) Capital investment plan was passed, despite it including interests in carbon fuels. Gateway 14 is proposed to be included in the Felixstowe Freeport.
 - 4) MSDC agreed to the same auditor procedures as in 2021.