

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

- Cost of Living help and advice:
<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/family.page?familychannel=6>
- Benefits advice and support:
<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/adult.page?adultchannel=0>
- Council Budget for 2024-25 - At Scrutiny Committee on 11 January, we got our first look at the proposed budget for the financial year 2024-25. The council has projected increased spend for areas such as social care and SEND which are statutory services – this means that the council is required to spend this money by law. As a result this will lead to cuts in Housing Related Support for those at risk of homelessness, support for people with learning disabilities and autism, and to the Skills team, who support young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). The proposal is for 4.99% increase in council tax which includes the 2% for adult social care. A proposed 100% cut to funding for museums and arts organisations from April 2025, with the funding for 2024-25 coming from government Covid monies to provide a transition period. My group opposes the arts cuts and the other savings, which will hit the most vulnerable in our county. The budget proposals will be voted on during the Full Council meeting on Thursday 15 February. Since then there is a proposal to set up a grants application fund, but this still leaves many with a current shortfall.
- Closure of Bury Records Office - the proposal is to relocate to Ipswich which I cannot support as this means people from the west of the county needing to travel to Ipswich.
- Autism Strategy for Suffolk - At the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board on 18 January, the first draft of a Suffolk autism strategy was discussed, which will increase awareness and support for autistic people and make sure local services are accessible and meeting their needs. The strategy was commissioned by Suffolk County Council and local NHS providers and has been developed in co-production with Suffolk people with autism to reflect their views and experiences.
- Ofsted Report on Children with Special Needs - A highly critical report on How Suffolk CC is supporting these children and families has just been made public. The council will now have to come up with a PLAN.
- New Funding to Combat Serious Violence - Suffolk’s Safer Stronger Communities Board has announced a fund of £150,000 from the Home Office to support Suffolk’s Serious Violence Strategy. Organisations can bid for funding for specific projects which support the work of Suffolk’s Serious Violence Strategy, with allocation of funding managed through Suffolk Community Foundation. The Serious Violence Strategy focuses on young people and communities at risk of becoming involved in serious violence, and the funding for projects is available to charities, voluntary sector organizations, social enterprises, parish councils, educational settings and other public bodies from April 2024. Applications are invited for grants between £4,000 and £15,000 and organisations can apply by visiting: <https://www.suffolkcf.org.uk/grants/seriousviolencedutyfund/>
- ‘Good Journey’ Scheme for Visitor Attractions - Visitor attractions in Suffolk are invited to sign up for a new scheme promoting car-free days out in the county. Suffolk Growth Partnership and Suffolk County Council have teamed up with national organisation ‘Good Journey’ to create the scheme, which launches in March. Around 25 local tourism and visitor attractions are invited to join the Suffolk Good Journey scheme offering residents and visitors discounts and incentives to leave the car at home and explore more of the county on foot, by bike or using public transport. Participating attractions will be supported and will feature on goodjourney.org.uk which provides travel information and discounts to domestic and international visitors and there will be a marketing campaign to promote it. Visitor attractions and venues interested in joining Suffolk Good Journey can find out more details by contacting Loretta Jones at Good Journey on loretta@goodjourney.org.uk or info@suffolkgrowth.co.uk

Appendix C and D – Minutes of 07.02.2024

- Blue Badge Team - Change of Telephone Number - As a direct result of customer feedback, the Blue Badge phone number will be changing, and there will now be a dedicated phone line for Blue Badge customers. From 31 January the Blue Badge team will be answering enquires on 03456 066 077, this number will be visible online across the SCC Website, InfoLink and any future published materials. This is a change from the current telephone number, which is 0808 800 4005. For more information about how you can apply for a blue badge or assist someone to make an application, please visit <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/parking/blue-badge-scheme>
- Veteran's Car - anyone who has served in the forces , including national service can apply. They could then get discounted rail card, various discounts and advice.
- Flooding and Highways - A list of all flood effected villages has been developed with a hierarchy of those most effected and a programme of work to avoid future problems.
- Meeting with National Highways - I have asked why they are having a meeting in NEWMARKET not near where the work is impacting the local area
- Ixworth Road - having again asked Sam Harvey gain says if no news it will go to legal, (she said that last time!)
- Norton Road and Station Hill - response from Sam Harvey sent.
- Road Survey / Rail Crossing - having asked when this will be done but NOT during school half term, this has now been scheduled but does include the weekend of half term!!
- Thurston Community College - there is a vacancy for a school governor. I have also enquired about any news from DFE and as of yet Suffolk has not had any further reports.

Appendix D - District Cllr's Report to Full Council – Cllrs. David Bradbury and Austin Davies

- MSDC Meeting - Mid Suffolk District Council meeting in January thanked our local volunteers and residents for their work during the recent floodings caused by storm Babet. About 300 homes and 40 businesses were flooding within our district. It was agreed that the MSDC chair would write to all Parish Councils asking them to revisit or create their flooding plan. A new council strategic plan was approved and focuses on four elements (housing, residents, wellbeing and environment).
- The siting of polling stations was confirmed - (Beyton – All Saints, Norton and Stowlangtoff – Norton Village hall, Tostock – Village Hall, Thurston- New Green Centre and Cavendish Hall.
- Stage 1 of the Stowmarket (SHELF) project was signed off.
- It was agreed to invest £18.7 million in building a skills and innovation centre on Gateway 14. This will consist of office space and training areas. This will focus on providing a starting place for new businesses and the skills needed for the new 'Green Industries'.
- Finally, Council agreed to create a Community Rail Partnership with Anglia rail. We would welcome suggested names for the line from Thurston to Ipswich.
- Planning - Joint Local Validation List Consultation - Monday 22 January 2024 to Monday 4 March 2024. Since our Local Validation List (LVL) was amended last year, our new Joint Local Plan (JLP) has been adopted and the LVL has undergone further revisions as a consequence. These revisions are such that formal six-week consultation will be required, giving interested parties an opportunity to make any comments prior to the Joint LVL being adopted.
- MSDC case on the Gladman appeal was heard on 30th January. If successful, the case would be passed to another inspector for consideration.
- Target date has been re-set as 14th February for applications DC/23/02429 and DC/23/02430 because of a lack of a splay report by the applicants agent.

- Network Rail - Still no sign of the final report which was due by the end of November.
- A14 - Continuing to support the Tostock campaign to have the village speed limit further along Church Road and additional restrictions in Norton.
- Locality grants - We have now been able to support Tostock village hall and the knitting/crochet club and Stowlangtoft variable speed signs and its village newsletter.

Briefing Note for town and parish councils – from Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils -

[Mid Suffolk reveals draft budget to deliver new vision](#)

Tackling climate change and ensuring social justice are at the heart of Mid Suffolk's District Council's budget proposals - while limiting council tax increases for residents, the council's leader has pledged. A proposed council tax rise of 2% in district's share of bill would mean an extra 7p a week for residents.

[Plan for 'transformative' £18m Skills and Innovation Centre passes milestone](#)

Mid Suffolk District Council's plan for an £18m Skills and Innovation Centre in Stowmarket has passed a major milestone – with hopes it will be “transformative” for local business, training and jobs.

[Flood-threatened communities get emergency plan support](#)

Communities at risk of flooding are being helped by Mid Suffolk District Council to better prepare for the future.

[Funding available for community action on climate change](#)

Applications are being invited for The Suffolk Climate Action Community Match Funder. It is available to charities, community interest companies, parish councils, voluntary groups and other not-for-profit organisations, whose projects contribute to [Suffolk's Climate Emergency Plan](#).

[£230,000 awarded to community projects across the districts](#)

Projects across Mid Suffolk and Babergh have received a share of £230,000 in grants and funding as part of the councils' commitment to residents' wellbeing and ensuring communities have access to local community facilities.

[Councils award funding to provide warm spaces this winter](#)

More than 30 community projects in Mid Suffolk and Babergh have each received a share of more than £36,000 to keep residents warm and connected this winter.

[New electric bikes arrive at Needham Lake](#)

Two new electric bikes can now be hired from Needham Lake, helping to encourage sustainable travel.

[More Brits overseas can now vote](#)

British citizens living abroad are now eligible to register to vote in UK general elections, regardless of how long they've been living outside the UK.