

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

- Proposed biodiversity motion - At Full Council on the 3rd December, the LDGI Group is proposing a biodiversity motion. If voted through, this motion will ensure:
 - Delivery of an SCC biodiversity strategy
 - Assessment of how SCC can lead partner organisations in this field.
 - Adoption of biodiverse land management options on SCC land.
 - A letter to the Secretary of State calling for a clear and ambitious national biodiversity strategy.
- Submitted response to Pavement Parking Consultation - Following the Government’s announcement of a consultation on potential reforms to the law on pavement parking, my group has submitted a response supporting Option 3: a nationwide roll-out of a London-style ban on pavement parking. For too long the rules about parking on pavements have been an unnecessary grey area. People looking to park are confused whether it is better to block the roadway or the pavement and end up parking half on and half off pavements – the worst of both worlds.”
- Submitted response to Local Government Boundary Commission consultation on draft recommendations - My Group submitted a response to the LGBC consultation. The Group objected to the proposed reduction in councillor numbers, which makes little sense given Suffolk’s growing population and the increase in councillor workload. The Group also registered concern that the proposals from the boundary commission adhered too closely to suggestions received from the Conservative administration at the County Council. I am concerned the proposal for TheWarStore south will include parishes in the east of the county have no relationship with the rest of the division. The proposed divisions will also destroy previous efforts in multiple areas to align County Council divisions with those of the District Councils. Finally, the Group objected to multiple instances of cohesive communities are being divided and lumped into divisions with other towns and villages with which they are not closely connected.
- OFSTED initial report on SCC’s SEND services released - An initial report has been published by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) looking into the support for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Suffolk was one of eighteen local authorities taking part in the study to gather evidence to inform future national improvements for children and young people with SEND across Education, Health and Care. The initial findings of the report suggest that SEND services were maintained during lockdown in Suffolk, and workers have increased collaboration and co-production. The stress level of young people and families had risen, but the County Council has established dedicated services to provide support, including distributing family support boxes to over 2000 families, and running a campaign called Back to School, aimed at helping SEND children transition back into school life. As my Group’s Spokesperson for Education, Children and Young People, I commented:
“I know that many families in Suffolk found the lockdown restrictions extremely difficult to cope with and struggled with isolation. Suffolk County Council’s officers and social workers have done great work to improve the lives of children with special needs, especially during the lockdown period when those children and families were in the greatest need of support.”
The findings of the initial report can be read here:
<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/council-and-democracy/council-news/Area-SEND-Interim-visit-summary-note.pdf>
- Meeting re Land Options - having attended that meeting it needs the county council to be “generous” to the parish in order to take the land for public use.
- Meadow Lane - this continues to be raising concerns about the use of the lane and the noise from generator. I have tried to get these stopped.
- Local Highways Budget - I have put in several of your requests, but I am afraid the over bureaucratic way these are dealt with may mean they don’t make the “cut” before the deadline date of 31st December. I have spoken personally to John Simpson about this so hopefully some may get approved.
- New COVID rules for the next few weeks - I have sent the details to all clerks explaining just what the rules are.

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

- An update on Covid-19 in Suffolk - Regular bulletins are being produced to give a snapshot of the current Covid-19 situation in Suffolk - along with updates on the work being carried out as part of Suffolk’s Local Outbreak Control Plan. You can find the most up-to-date information via the Suffolk County Council website.
- New Covid-19 support grants launched - Businesses in Babergh who have had to close their doors to customers as part of the current national lockdown may be eligible for a second wave of grant funding through the Government’s Covid-19 support packages.
- Green light for councils’ biodiversity vision - Councillors at Babergh and Mid Suffolk approved their first Biodiversity Action Plan to protect and strengthen biodiversity – supporting the councils’ aims to be carbon neutral by 2030.
- Councillors submit JLP for examination - Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have submitted the draft Joint Local Plan to the independent examiner as part of the regulation 19 stage, which will now form part of a consultation running until 24th December. Thereafter the inspector will review the Plan and will report back to the Councils with recommendations in the latter half of 2021.
- Councils to consult on CIL charging rates - Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are seeking views on revised Community Infrastructure Levy charges for developers – helping to provide communities with the facilities they need to keep pace with growth.
- Mid Suffolk Disability Forum set to meet - The Mid Suffolk Disability Forum will meet virtually at 10:30am on 8th December. Those wishing to participate in the meeting can join on Zoom using the below details.
 - Meeting ID: 847 3222 2661
 - Passcode: 431232

Report from District Cllr. Cllr Wendy Turner to Full Council

- Joint Local Plan - Following extensive debate at the Council meeting on 11th November the Joint Local Plan has now gone to the planning inspectorate for consideration. The Regulation 19 pre submission version of the plan is available on the website [<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/new-joint-local-plan/>] and any comments are to be made direct to the planning inspectorate before 24th December.
- CIL Charging schedule - The Council has proposed new CIL charging schedule. The changes to the rates are hoped to encourage more development on brownfield sites and the proposed changes to the instalments policy hope to strike a balance between helping the small developer and ensuring that parish councils receive their funds in a timely manner. The proposed changes are subject to public consultation and details can be found on the website.
- Homelessness - Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils have been awarded a grant of £100,000 to help cover the cost of temporary accommodation for homeless people over the winter. In Mid Suffolk there are currently only a couple of people sleeping rough. Many others became officially homeless at the start of lockdown and have been accommodated in hotels. This will need to continue for some months at least.
- CIFCO acquisitions - Three further properties have been added to CIFCO’s portfolio. These new acquisitions are two warehouse buildings in Luton and an office building in Epsom. This now takes the total investment to about £70M out of the total agreed figure of £100M which was agreed by both Councils last year. The Green and Liberal Democrat group at Mid Suffolk continue to question the administration about the efficacy of such investments especially in light of the recent Government decisions about the use of funds from PWLB.
- Biodiversity Action Plan - A Biodiversity Action Plan, produced by a cross-party task force, was adopted by MSDC Cabinet on 9 November. The aim is to improve biodiversity in the way that the Council operate, through specific initiatives and partnership working. One such initiative is to plant 500 trees and a kilometre of hedging during 2021/22. The task force will monitor the Action Plan and look for initiatives for increasing biodiversity.
- Further COVID support - Further grant funding for businesses in Babergh and Mid Suffolk has been announced as part of the Government’s Covid-19 support packages which include the recently launched Local Restrictions

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Support Grant. More information and application details can be found on the website [<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/business/business-rates/grant-funding-schemes/>]. The deadline for applications is the 18th December. The Home but Not Alone phone line will remain open. The number of calls is currently quite low, so its use will be monitored.

- Leisure centres to re-open - Mid Suffolk's leisure centres in Stowmarket and Stradbroke are set to re-open on Wednesday 2nd December at the end of the national lockdown. Suffolk will be in Tier 2 of the new Government restrictions scheme.
- E-voting at Council meetings - Electronic voting was used for the first time at Mid Suffolk's Council meeting on 26th November. A motion to publish how all councillors voted was passed in order to keep decisions as open and transparent as possible. A record of each vote at all Council and Committee meetings will be published with the minutes on the website.
- New enforcement powers - The Council has new enforcement powers against businesses breaking COVID rules. It is hoped that this does not have to be used as any initial approach will continue to be of support and encouragement rather than taking action to close premises for 48 hours.