

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

- Elections to take place on May 6th - Local elections will take place on Friday May 6th for SCC’s 75 county councillor seats, as well as several district councillor seats and the Police & Crime Commissioner. Suffolk County Council’s annual general meeting will take place on May 27th.
- COVID-19 Home testing kits available from libraries and pharmacies - The public can now obtain free Lateral Flow Devices (LFD) from any library in the county, along with 130 NHS pharmacies, subject to stock availability and opening times. Regular testing is seen as key in controlling the spread of the virus as the UK’s vaccination programme continues. For more information see the link below:
- <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news/show/home-testing-now-available-from-libraries-and-pharmacies>
- 95% of Suffolk children receive a place at their first preference school - School places for the coming year have been confirmed, and 95% of children have been offered a place at their first preference school. 99.15% of children were offered a place at one of their top three preferred schools. SCC received 7207 applications from parents indicating which primary school they would prefer their child to join in September 2021. Parents will now need to consider school transport. If children are eligible for Suffolk County Council funded school travel parents will receive an email by 14 May 2021 with details of how to opt-in.
- Suffolk Waste Partnership composting campaign launches - To celebrate International Compost Awareness Week in the first week of May, Suffolk Waste Partnership are launching several initiatives to support residents to begin composting. Free bagged compost will be handed out at several events (see link below for details), and cheap composting equipment can be ordered through the Partnership. On average, more than a third of the contents of Suffolk’s rubbish bins could easily be composted at home. Theoretically each household in Suffolk could compost 150kg of organic material a year, turning waste into free soil improver. See link below for more details:
<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news/show/free-compost-a-hot-competition-and-cheap-bins-to-help-green-fingered-residents>
- Signs at Barrells Road - after much emailing, including to the leader if the council the Graffiti has been removed, however it seems SCC now has a policy to not routinely replace directional signs.
- NETWORK RAIL - as of 30th April I have asked Christine Thurlow at MSDC if there has been any action on the proposals for the crossing. It is now May and we have had nothing
- State of the Road - along with the parish council we have sent a list of roads surface issues to highways which need urgent action.

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

As Mid Suffolk District Council did not meet in April I have included below a summary of the major updates across the district:

- Covid-19 - With the recent easing of lockdown restrictions we are now seeing the gradual, welcome re-opening of our towns and high streets, as we continue to administer financial support to business across our districts.
 - Since March 2020, 7,589 grants worth £36,694,834 have been paid out to businesses in Babergh and 6,507 business grants worth £31,513,835 paid out in Mid Suffolk. Now, there are further one-off Government Restart Grants of up to £18,000 available to help businesses reopen following lockdown, with a larger Back to Business Grant (offering up to £25,000) due to launch soon.
 - We are also continuing to encourage everyone to protect themselves, and others, by getting tested twice a week as part of the fight against coronavirus. There is now, however, far greater availability of home testing, with kits now available from libraries and pharmacies across Suffolk.
 - Lateral flow devices (LFD) can now be obtained free from any library in the county, subject to stock availability and opening times. Similarly, more than 130 NHS pharmacies across Suffolk will be taking part in the Pharmacy Collect scheme, where people can collect kits free of charge.
 - Home, But Not Alone - We have now received confirmation from the Collaborative Communities Board that Home, But Not Alone will remain in place until at least June, in line with the expectation to enter the fourth stage of the Government’s Roadmap on 21st June.

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- Guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities - The Government recently updated guidance for those managing community centres, village halls and other community facilities to reflect step two of the Roadmap out of lockdown. Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) have also updated their website to include an appendix detailing when activities, including Parish Council meetings, can lawfully resume again in community facilities.
- Queen's Award for Voluntary Service - There are many exceptional volunteer groups across Mid Suffolk who have been instrumental in our district's response to Covid-19. Whilst we continue to recognise and support their ongoing efforts, nominations are also now open for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, providing further opportunity to show appreciation to the volunteers who've made a real difference in our communities.

Report from District Cllr. Cllr Wendy Turner to Full Council

- 6th May Elections - Election day is 6th May. As well as County Council elections there is also the election for the Police and Crime Commissioner and some Neighbourhood Plan referenda. The count for the County Council elections will take place on Friday 7th, the PCC on Saturday 8th and the Neighbourhood Plans on Monday 10th. Due to these elections, no MSDC Council meetings have taken place during the purdah period other than regulatory committee meetings.
- Future format of Council Meetings - the legislation allowing virtual meetings for local government expires on 7th May, but the COVID regulations do not allow meetings in person until after 17th May. There is an appeal about extending the legislation for virtual meetings at the end of April, so we await further instructions about how meetings will be conducted next month.
- COVID community testing - the first phase of COVID community testing ended on 31st March, and an altered programme is now in place until the end of June. Local testing sites at Elmswell, Needham Market, Eye and Debenham were due to close on 16th April. Lateral flow testing kits are now available in many libraries and pharmacies and people can do them at home.
- Business Support Grants - A significant new grant fund has just been launched by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils. This is to support the recovery of local businesses reopening after lockdown but unable to access the Government's Restart Grant scheme. The grant will be a one-off payment of up to £18,000 for eligible businesses depending on the scale and size of business, impact of Covid, permitted opening dates and anticipated reopening costs. More details are available on the website. <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/business/business-rates/grant-funding-schemes/>
- Council support for members of the public - Despite the closure of our customer access points, our Customer Service team has continued to offer emergency face-to-face appointments for those who, for whatever reason, cannot be helped over the phone or remotely. Now that lockdown is easing, more face-to-face appointments will be available to book. Perspex screens have been installed at the customer contact office in Stowmarket and staff will be regularly tested.
- TPO on Elmswell Oak Tree - A TPO has been served to protect an oak tree on School Road, Elmswell which was at risk due to highways improvements necessary to enable the development of up to 86 new homes north of School Road.
- Potholes - Complained to Highways about the dangerous state of Thurston's roads. No satisfactory response. Still waiting for Highways to respond to latest email.