

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

- Review of SEND provision - Suffolk County Council commissioned an independent review into Special Educational Needs and Disability provision which has now been completed. The damning report has now been published and has highlighted many failings of the council. There will now have to be a rigorous look at how things must be improved. I have asked that an urgent education scrutiny meeting be convened, but this has been refused so will now have to wait until November.
- Motion to Council - My group asked that the promise to increase cycling and walking is fulfilled.
- Boundary Commission Review of County Divisions - I am of course very disappointed that the recommendation is to reduce the number of councillors to 70 from 75 and to therefore increase the THEDWASTRE SOUTH division to take in even more parishes, including Tostock and as far as Little Finborough and Combs. Imagine the time to get from Combs to say Thurston. Not to mention the vehicle movements.
- Cycling / Walking Review for Stowmarket - I have sent details but hopefully you will get an official invite to give your views. Or go on the website the consultation ends 25th October
- Review of Parking in the District - this is taking place to see what the problems are and how they can be resolved. The survey date has been extended to 15th October.
- Meadow Lane - I have reported problems with the resurfacing and streetlights.
- Pokeridge Corner - I am surprised SCC says they have no records of the lack of hedge removal here as this and yourselves have asked for this to be done on numerous occasions. I have asked Steve Merry to look into this.
- Victoria Close – Pedestrian Barrier - this seems to have been dealt with.
- Mill Road and Diversions - I have asked the cabinet member to ask if there can be some changes to the diversions to help with the possible rat running on Mill Lane.
- Problem parking on Sandpit Lane - I have advised the residents to contact your PCSO

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

- At Mid Suffolk’s most recent meeting on Thursday 23rd September, the Council approved the District’s first dedicated Wellbeing Strategy. This aims to ensure that everyone in Mid Suffolk has the best possible conditions for good wellbeing, and consideration has been given to the approach required by the Council and its partners to achieve this, as well as the strategic objectives required to get the right results. There are also three long term outcomes included in the strategy, which maps out the Council’s wellbeing ambitions until 2027:
  - Families lead active, healthy, safe and independent lives and manage their own health & wellbeing
  - Sustainable and inclusive places, and spaces, which maximise health & wellbeing opportunities and benefits
  - Health inequalities will be reduced

Whilst the comprehensive strategy links to other Council priorities including tackling homelessness and addressing climate change, it will primarily focus on five key themes which have the most meaningful impact on health and wellbeing, consisting of personal wellbeing, health, relationships, what we do and where we live. These will help inform the strategy’s high-level actions and detailed delivery plan – subject to ongoing review to ensure relevance in the ever-changing landscape. The strategy has also been shaped by extensive research, with wellbeing factors – including mental and physical health, relationships, and surroundings – being measured across Mid Suffolk to identify current strengths and weaknesses.

This highlighted the positive work of the Council’ communities team and its partners to date, including offering art therapy and mental health support for new parents, holiday activity and food projects for low income families, cookery courses for elderly and isolated residents, and sports activities such as free outdoor fitness classes in Stowmarket.

Invaluable support was also given to communities during the Covid-19 pandemic, with Council officers making over 25,000 calls to housing tenants and contact made with more than 6,000 Clinically Extremely Vulnerable residents to offer help and advice during lockdown. This was in addition to dealing with over 1,500 calls from the Home, But Not Alone service, which provided a lifeline for those needing assistance

## Appendix C and D – Minutes of 06.10.2021

with financial difficulties, social isolation or obtaining essential food and medical supplies in the peak of the pandemic.

A dedicated Covid-19 Emerging Needs Grant was also set up, which saw over £171,000 paid to charities and organisations across Babergh and Mid Suffolk. A further £1.4 million was paid in other council community grants during 2020/21, with recipients including Citizens Advice, Community Action Suffolk, Rural Coffee Caravan and Lighthouse Women's Aid. The Wellbeing Strategy will support this existing work and complement the recently refreshed Leisure, Sport and Physical Activity Strategy and recruitment of a new Communities and Wellbeing Assistant Director – a shared post with the Clinical Commissioning Groups – ensuring Babergh and Mid Suffolk remain great communities with bright and healthy futures that everyone is proud to call home.

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:

- Success for Babergh and Mid Suffolk at national awards - Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils received national recognition this month for their innovative support of communities through Covid and beyond – winning bronze in the overall Council of the Year category of the iESE Public Sector Transformation Awards 2021, and gold for our Virtual High Street initiative supporting local retailers.
- Ultra-low emission HVO fleet takes to the road - Babergh and Mid Suffolk are the first rural UK councils to switch their fleet to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) – slashing carbon emissions by up to 90% and supporting the councils' carbon neutral aims.
- Joint Local Plan public examination resumes - The Hearing Sessions for the public examination of our Joint Local Plan have resumed. Sessions are being held virtually, enabling them to be fully inclusive, whilst also ensuring public safety, and are being live streamed in real time on the councils' Joint Local Plan YouTube channel, should you wish to follow the plan's progress.
- Chance to have your say on the future of parking - Everyone is encouraged to have their say on Babergh and Mid Suffolk's future parking strategy with residents, businesses and visitors across the districts urged to help shape plans for the next decade. Details are available on our website.
- Work progressing well on Woolpit community car park - Construction is well underway on a much-needed community car park, which will initially provide 120-spaces for Woolpit Health Centre to help with the Covid-19 and flu vaccination efforts this winter. Drainage and earth works have already finished, and the car park is on schedule to be completed in November.

### **Report from District Cllr. Cllr Wendy Turner to Full Council -**

- September Council meeting - Having not been able to have a meeting since May, the agenda for September's Council meeting was too full. There was insufficient time to complete the agenda and two motions from the Green and Liberal Democrat Group were unresolved. These were to do with Biodiversity Friendly lighting and Voter ID. These two items will be added to an agenda of another meeting hopefully to be held in the next couple of weeks.
- Wellbeing Strategy - The Council have adopted a new Wellbeing Strategy. The Strategy focusses on trying to ensure that families lead active, healthy, safe and independent lives and are able to manage their own wellbeing. It promotes sustainable and inclusive places and spaces and go some way to reduce health inequalities across the district.
- CIFCO - The Council discussed the 2020/21 report and business plan 2021/22 for CIFCO Capital Ltd. All the funds have now been invested. The total income CIFCO has produced is about £2.5M but there is still a net loss in equity of about £12.5. There is always interesting debate about CIFCO as the Green and Liberal Democrat group vote against the plan.
- Neighbourhood plan process - It was also agreed to streamline the Neighbourhood Plan process. Neighbourhood Plans can now automatically proceed to the referendum after examination by inspectors, rather than having to seek approval from the Council. Also that post-referendum Neighbourhood Plans with an majority 'yes' vote can be formally adopted by the Chief Executive instead of having to be approved by Cabinet.

## Appendix C and D – Minutes of 06.10.2021

- No Casinos in Mid Suffolk - Mid Suffolk Council adopted a 'No Casino' resolution. None of our bordering council have such a resolution and there is currently no provision for a new casino anywhere in England and Wales.
- Pay Policy Review - There was a proposal to increase the salary scales for the senior management team of Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils, but this was deferred because Babergh District Council had voted against the proposal.
- HVO fuel for Council vehicles - In September Babergh and Mid Suffolk became the first rural UK councils to switch their fleet of waste tankers to HVO. All 35 waste tankers are now fuelled by HVO and the smaller public realm and housing service vehicles will also be switching to the new fuel in the near future. This will help to reduce the Council's carbon emissions.
- Elmswell Primary School expansion - SCC voted to approve the controversial planning application to enlarge Elmswell Community Primary School to 420 places. This development will be the subject of a CIL funding bid, and the decision will be made by MSDC Cabinet in due course.
- Recreational land - A meeting is to be held on 1<sup>st</sup> October with Jo Churchill and other representatives from Thurston PC, MSDC and SCC, myself and Cllr Harry Richardson to discuss the urgent need for recreational land in Thurston.
- Bloor Homes - DC/20/05894 - have been in discussions with a representative from Bloor Homes to see if further improvements can be made to the Thurston planning application before it goes to Reserved Matters planning committee.