

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>
- Flood preparation advice: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolk-fire-and-rescue-service/fire-and-rescue-safety-advice-in-the-community/preparing-for-flooding>
- Flood recovery advice and support: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/flood-recovery-information-for-suffolk>

- **Health Scrutiny** - At Health Scrutiny Committee on 17 April, we heard from colleagues in the NHS about their digital integration work, trying to join up the different IT systems they use and to make information sharing easier between health and care providers. This is especially helpful given the UK’s aging population.
- **Strategy for Care Leavers** - On Tuesday 23 April, Cabinet reviewed the Leaving Care Strategy which detailed the ways in which the council wants to improve the service it provides to young people leaving our care. The council acts as a ‘corporate parent’ to all children taken into care, and must always ask itself with every decision: ‘would this be good enough for my child?’. Plans in the new strategy for young people leaving care include help with housing, employment, mentoring and extension of the current council tax exemption scheme for care leavers who are living outside of Suffolk. The Leaving Care service offers support to all young people leaving care up to the age of 25, and care leavers regularly attend meetings at the council to provide feedback and ideas for improvement.
- **New Appointments in Children’s Services** - As well as the council’s new £4.4m investment in additional staff to improve SEND services (detailed in last month’s report), two new appointments have been made to leadership. Sarah-Jane Smedmor will be the new permanent Director for Children’s Services, with a start date of 8 July. An Independent Chair for the new SEND Improvement Board has also been appointed, Kathryn Boulton, who will start in June
- **New Government Funding for SEND Schools** - The council will be receiving an additional £10.9million from the Department for Education to create new specialist places for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The Department for Education also announced it was funding a new SEND school in Suffolk sponsored by the Unity Schools Partnership, which will provide 126 new places in Suffolk for pupils aged between three and 16 with severe learning difficulties. Earlier this month, the Chancellor also announced a new Alternative Provision (AP) free school, the SENDAT New AP Suffolk Free School, in West Suffolk. The sites for both schools are yet to be confirmed.
- **More Suffolk Homes Eligible for Energy Improvements** - More families will be able to secure free assistance to make their houses warmer and more energy efficient using the Warm Homes Suffolk scheme. Residents and landlords of eligible properties can apply for energy efficient measures such as insulation, solar panels or heat pumps, with average funding of £18,000 is available for homeowners, and £12,000 for landlords and their tenants. Warm Homes Suffolk has been funding home energy efficiency improvements for two years, with funding from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. To be eligible, the following conditions must be met:
 - Homes must have an EPC rating of D, or below

- Homes are not heated by mains gas

And then either of the following conditions:

- Households have a combined pre-tax income of under £36,000 (this was previously £31,000)
- Homes are in a certain postcode (you can use this pre-qualified postcode checker), which includes parts of Beccles, Bungay, Bury St. Edmunds, Felixstowe, Great Cornard, Haverhill, Ipswich, Kessingland, Lowestoft, Mildenhall, Newmarket, Rushmere St Andrew, Saxmundham, Sudbury
- **New Resurfacing Investment Gets Underway** - Residents across Suffolk are set to benefit from 421 newly surfaced roads this year which is almost double the number of roads completed last year. This is a result of the extra £10 million investment by the council into resurfacing roads, which was announced last May 102 roads will be surface dressed, whilst a further 319 sites will benefit from a full machine resurfacing during the year. Surface dressing and machine resurfacing. These treatments prolong the life of a road surface, remove potholes and level it out. During the last six months, Suffolk Highways has repaired over 9,000 potholes and resurfaced 41 roads, with a further 278 roads planned for resurfacing in this financial year. Having said this, winter weather always sees an increase in potholes and there is still a lot to do.
- **Highways Issues, Ixworth Road** - despite again there is still not plan for the work.
- **I have been sent a list of proposed work:** Footway Heather Close. Work at Woodland Close/ Church Road are on the list but may have been done. But if not let me know.
- **Parking at the Library** - I have been in touch with the Friends of Thurston Library to see how SCC can help and have spoken to the new head teacher. I am also asking SCC to get on with giving formal permission for the gates to the Sensory garden at the library.
- **Network Rail** - following a conversation with Christine Thurlow she has promised to get an update asap.

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

- **MSDC Meeting** - Mid Suffolk District Council April meeting as cancelled on the advice of the electoral officer because of the May elections.
- **Gateway 14** - Being part of Freeport East, two growth funds with a total value of £800 K was announced. Applications are invited from local small and growing businesses to foster opportunities in areas such as clean energy, advanced manufacturing, advanced manufacturing, advanced logistics, digital technology and agritech.
- **CIFCO year-end meeting** - MSDC originally invested £100 million. 2024 valuation has a further reduction in value to £80 million. A capital expenditure plan was signed off. It has been agreed that MSDC, in the next 3/4 years, will not be making any further funds available to CIFCO. Rental income remains strong, however, higher interest rates are like to reduce the net income to about £1 million. Over 50% of the 94 buildings within the portfolio now have an Energy Performance Certificate of C or above. A plan was passed to meet the government target of C ratings by 2027.
- **Planning** - MSDC case on the Gladman appeal was heard on the 30th January, however, the decision has still not been announced. Further details and information has been requested by the planning officer and so the target date has been re-set as early May for applications DC/23/02429 and DC/23/02430.
- **Network Rail** - Still no sign of the final report which was due by the end of November.

Appendix C and D – Minutes of 01.05.2024

- **Community Grants** - The New Green Centre obtained a £10k grant from MSDC. This helped replace the external doors improving access and heat retention. Other organisations are encouraged to apply for support.
- **Wildflower areas** - With Spring in the air, MSDC are both continuing with our minimal mow areas, and we are also looking for new sites. Any proposals are welcome.
- **Locality grants** - We are now entering a new financial year and so Cllr Bradbury and Cllr Davies would welcome your organisations proposals for funding.

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

Not yet received – 30.04.24