

**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>
- Funding for Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution - On Tuesday 17 June, Cabinet approved allocating £1.9m from council reserves towards the cost of work the council needs to undertake to set up the new mayoral authority with Norfolk County Council and to prepare its business case for a single unitary council, which needs to be submitted to the government in September. Mayoral elections are due to be held in May 2026, with the mayoral authority set up a few months earlier, in February. The government has provided £1m towards the costs of the mayoral authority, which Suffolk County Council and Norfolk County Council have agreed to split between them. The government has also allocated £290k for Suffolk towards Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), which is to be shared with the other councils who are also preparing their proposals for the government to consider in September. The council is not planning to use all of the £1.9m from reserves, which it is allocating as the financial outturn for 2024-25 was better than expected – it just wants to put aside some money it can use if necessary. The costs of setting up the mayoral authority and reorganising local councils is more likely to be tens of millions; it is the potential long-term savings that makes the process worthwhile to the government, who provide council funding.
- Meeting with SCC Highways Officer: Vicky and I went on a walkabout with Matt Fox to see what remedial work could be done especially in relation to the extension to the primary school. Other issues picked up on the way.
- S106 Money: have enquired how much still not spent, most allocated, but some projects still not in place. Bumbury Arms plans still not fully developed.
- Thurston Rail Crossing: A joint letter from the chair of the PC, myself and the 2 District councillors will be sent to the MP urging a meeting. Many thanks to Harry Richardson for preparing the draft letter.
- Raising Educational Attainment in Suffolk - On Tuesday 24 June, the council’s Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee considered the educational attainment of children in the county and how to improve it, as Suffolk is currently below national attainment figures at Key Stage 2 (year 6) and at Key Stage 4 (year 11). The council works closely with headteachers and the leaders of multi-academy trusts (MATs) so that schools can learn from each other via the Suffolk Education Partnership, which was established in January 2023.. Support is also offered to academy schools, although they do not have to engage with it; while the council still has statutory responsibility for school improvement for all of Suffolk, academies receive their funding directly from the government and not from local authorities. The meeting also noted that Suffolk still receives a low level of funding compared to other counties, and council leaders regularly lobby the government for fairer funding.
- Suffolk Libraries Changes to Suffolk Community Libraries - From the 1 June, libraries across the county were taken back in-house by Suffolk County Council at the end of the contract with Suffolk Libraries, who had been running the libraries since 2012. This was a controversial decision which attracted a lot of public and press interest, including a petition against it which was signed by over 20,000 people. The new name for the service is Suffolk Community Libraries,

with new branding, but the council's political administration has given assurances that all libraries will remain open, with no reduction in opening hours.

- Council Gains £8m for Bus Service Improvements - Suffolk County Council has been awarded a grant of £8m from the Department for Transport to fund new and enhanced bus services across the county. The new funding from the government's Local Authority Bus Grant can be used for the following:
  - £2,805,076 revenue funding for new or enhanced services
  - £5,229,805 capital funding for new and improved bus stops, bus stations or vehicle upgrades

The council plans to use the money to improve bus priority on congested streets, upgrade the Real Time Passenger Information system (giving live updates in bus arrival times), and improve bus stops and routes. It will also use some of the money to look into the journeys people take with a view to creating more innovative fare offers in future and get more people to use bus services.. Details of successful local bids for the funding will be posted on the Suffolk on Board website, and if you are interested in putting forward a bid for future funding, you can find information on how to do that here: <https://www.suffolkonboard.com/news/2024/06/bus-service-improvement-plan-where-should-the-money-be-spent/>

- New Bus Service for Thurston - so am very pleased that this money has been used to reintroduce a service for Thurston to be run by Mulley's. A small introduction event will be on 2<sup>nd</sup> July at 110.00 at Genesta Drive. I hope to be there.

#### **Appendix D - District Cllrs' Report to Full Council – Cllrs. David Bradbury & Harry Richardson**

Report from Cllr. Bradbury –

- Council Meeting - Mid Suffolk's monthly council meeting took place this month on the 26<sup>th</sup> June. This included discussing annual reports regarding Joint Audit (alongside Babergh council), and Overview & Scrutiny, a review into CIL expenditure by Cllr Stringer, and Mid Suffolk's new plans regarding the transformation of the Creeping Road waste depot in Stowmarket, in preparation for the rollout of the Simpler Recycling scheme. Additionally, there were three motions discussed on during the meeting. The first was a motion from Cllr Overett, proposing for Mid Suffolk to adopt 20mph speed limits across residential areas to improve road safety, and for Suffolk County Council to make the process more transparent and cheaper, the second was from Cllr Carter, regarding the appointment of a disability champion to improve disability awareness within the council, and the third was from opposition councillor Cllr Richardson, regarding a council response to the spending review. The first two were discussed and approved, the third was deferred due to overrun of time.
- Devolution and local government re-organisation update - Survey is still available for those who wish to sign it. Closing date is soon, and there is expected to be an update from national government within the next month.
- Haughley, Stowupland & Wetherden by-election - The Haughley, Stowupland & Wetherden by-election took place on the 12<sup>th</sup> June, which saw Agnes Watson (Green) elected.
- Elmswell & Woolpit footpath and cycle link - £3m as part of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding has been given to a new scheme linking Elmswell and Woolpit with a new foot/cycle path. This is to assist in connectivity and accessibility between the two villages without use of a car, including services such as local schools, Elmswell Rail station, and Woolpit Business Park.
- Rattlesden Church Warmth Project - £33k as part of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding has been given to Rattlesden Parochial Church council for a new heat and light chandelier for the church, allowing for a warmer, comfortable, and environmentally sustainable

system for the church. Both this and the footpath were discussed and agreed upon in this month's council meeting.

- **Additional Information** - Cllr Bradbury met MP for Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket, Dr Peter Prinsley, at the opening of his new constituency office in Stowmarket. We had a discussion about the lack of a GP surgery in Thurston, and progress being made with East West Rail and the Haughley/Ely upgrades required to increase the number of trains. The tunnel under Thurston Station was briefly mentioned. A more formal meeting to discuss GP provision in Thurston will be at his surgery will be scheduled for later in the year.

### Report from Cllr. Richardson -

- **New Councillor** - Dr Agnes Watson (Green) was elected as the District Councillor for Haughley, Stowupland and Wetherden at a by-election on Thursday 12 June. The vacancy arose following the sad death of Cllr Rachel Eburne, lately Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources, who had represented the ward since 2010.
- **New link between Elmswell and Woolpit** - Mid Suffolk District Council has approved £3 million for a new footpath and cycle way connecting Elmswell and Woolpit, to be delivered by Suffolk County Council. This project is part of wider efforts to improve walking and cycling infrastructure in the district, with additional funding already allocated to several similar projects over recent years, including bridge repairs, path upgrades, and support for cycling schemes.
- **Food Museum grant** - Mid Suffolk District Council is considering a £1 million grant to support a major redevelopment of the Food Museum in Stowmarket. If approved, this would help refurbish historic buildings, improve exhibitions, and enhance access. The council's funding could also help secure a further £3.95 million from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. The museum, which attracts about 70,000 visitors annually, would use the funds for restoration work, new displays, and a programme of educational activities for all ages. The council cabinet is also being asked to underwrite a £533,000 fundraising gap so that work can begin in September.
- **Stowmarket town parking** - Mid Suffolk District Council is seeking feedback from users of Stowmarket's council-owned car parks through an online survey running from 23 June to 10 August. The aim is to gather insights on parking habits and needs to help improve parking provision, support the town centre, and encourage sustainable travel. The survey covers reasons for car park choice, frequency and duration of visits, and will inform future parking strategies. Appendix C and D – Minutes of 02.07.25
- **Proposed planning changes for listed buildings** - Mid Suffolk and Babergh councils, in partnership with Historic England, are proposing to streamline the process for upgrading energy efficiency in listed buildings. Under the new plans, owners of Grade II listed properties could install secondary or double glazing on certain windows without needing formal consent, provided they meet specific conditions. The aim is to help reduce energy bills, support environmental goals, and make it easier to sensitively retrofit historic homes. Suffolk