

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>
- Guidance and information on 20mph speed limits - As you may remember from last month's report, my group tabled a motion at July's council meeting to make it easier for communities to obtain a 20mph limit where there is clear local support for it. We argued that the currently process with SCC Highways is lengthy and unnecessarily complex at a time when 20mph limits have increasing public support. This motion was rejected by the Conservative administration on the grounds that they were already planning a review of this process. 20's Plenty, a UK organisation that promotes lower speed limits, has some helpful guidance and a draft motion for parish and town councils who are considering a 20mph speed limit, with lots of supporting information including data from the 20mph trial in Wales which showed that lower speed limits significantly reduced accidents, deaths and serious injuries with no impact on journey times. Please see link below if this is something you may be interested in pursuing: https://www.20splenty.org/parish_council_motion
- Thurston Rail Crossing meeting with MP - still waiting for a date from him
- Church Road - this is with enforcement who have contacted the developer
- Norton Road / Church Road - the damage done is now with the police and for SCC to claim damages
- Review of Suffolk Transport Infrastructure - Following the passing of a motion at July's council meeting which acknowledged that intervention was necessary to reduce the reliance on the Orwell Bridge, the council's administration have announced a review of transport infrastructure for Suffolk and requested funding from the government to make improvements. The review will examine what is needed and where, examining areas such as the Orwell Bridge and the A14 corridor, Port of Felixstowe, the Sizewell power stations, and the need to upgrade the Ely/Haughley rail junction, which the government recently announced there would be no money for. The review will also take into account housing needs and the role of the future Mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk, who will have responsibility for strategic transport. The council has sent an open letter to the Transport Secretary, Heidi Alexander MP, calling for talks about the need for strategic investment in Suffolk's transport infrastructure, which you can read here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/SCC-response-to-Heidi-Alexander-MP-1.pdf>
- All Suffolk Food Waste to be Processed in the County - As part of the new 'Simpler Recycling' laws brought in by the previous Conservative government, councils will have to collect and deal with food waste from all Suffolk households from 2026. The council has set up a four-year contract with Bio Capital to process this food waste locally at a recently approved anaerobic digestion plant at the Adnams Distribution Centre in Reydon near Southwold. Around 31,000 tonnes of household food waste could be sent to the new facility each year, which will be processed to generate green fuel (biomethane), and turned into soil fertiliser, which means Suffolk's food waste will be put to good use.
- Awards for Suffolk's Junior Road Safety Officers - The council recently played host to pupils and school staff at the first in-person Junior Road Safety Officer (JRSO) Awards event since before

the COVID-19 pandemic. The awards ceremony is to recognise the dedication and creativity shown by schools and pupils in promoting road safety and encouraging active travel within their communities. The Junior Road Safety Officer (JRSO) scheme has been running for more than 20 years and gives pupils in Years 4 to 6 (ages 9–11) the opportunity to get involved in road safety work at their schools, delivering sessions to peers and taking on initiatives in their wider communities. The scheme is an excellent way to engage with children, parents and carers and expand the reach of the council's road safety education team, with 61 participating schools over the last 12 months. For more information about the Junior Road Safety Officer scheme, see the Suffolk County Council website: <https://suffolkroadsafe.com/education-home/junior-road-safety-officer/>

- Update on Homes for Ukraine Scheme - As of 31 March 2025, Suffolk has welcomed 1,747 Ukrainian refugees under the government's Homes for Ukraine scheme, supported by a special team in the Public Health & Communities directorate. The government has introduced the Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme (UPES), which allows people currently living in the UK under an existing Ukraine Visa scheme to apply to extend their stay in the UK for a further 18 months when their valid Ukrainian visa expires. Here is some guidance below for hosts and guests:

- It is important that guests actively apply to extend their visa - the visas will NOT be extended automatically.
- Guests should submit an application when they have 28 days or less left on their current permission. If they apply too early, their application may be rejected, and they would then need to re-apply later.
- If the guest doesn't know the date when their current leave to remain ends, they can sign into their UKVI account (www.gov.uk/evisa/update-ukvi-account) to find out, or they can refer to their permission letter which will detail their visa's expiry date.
- Applications can only be submitted while the guests are physically present in the UK.

To get more information about how to apply for an extension, follow the instructions provided on the official UK government website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/applying-to-the-ukraine-permission-extension-scheme> The government pays Homes for Ukraine hosts a 'thank you' payment of £350 per month, and in Suffolk this is supplemented by an additional £25 per month by the council. You can find further information about the scheme here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/becoming-a-sponsor-homes-for-ukraine>

Finally, Suffolk County Council is offering a one-off Independent Living Payment (ILP) of £2,000 to Homes for Ukraine guests who are leaving their host accommodation and moving into their own home. To issue this payment certain criteria must be met, and Suffolk County Council will ask to see a copy of a valid, signed and dated (by both parties) legal tenancy agreement in the guest's name. The funding can be used for purchasing items to support the move to independent accommodation. The new accommodation can be either furnished or unfurnished, and can be situated outside of Suffolk. Guest(s) can apply for the Independent Living Payment by downloading a form from the council's website, which is available in English, Ukrainian and Russian. To access this form and details of other support for Ukrainian guests in Suffolk, please use this link to the council website: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/community-and-safety/communities/community-engagement/support-for-refugees/support-for-ukraine/ukraine-information-for-guest>

Report from Cllr. Bradbury – *due to a medical situation, no report is forthcoming for this month.*

Report from Cllr. Richardson -

- Reminder: Local government reorganisation - Both sets of proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Suffolk have now been published. Suffolk County Council are proposing a single unitary authority, with further information available here: www.onesuffolkcouncil.co.uk The Districts and Borough are proposing three unitary authorities in the county (East, West, and South Suffolk), with further information available here: www.threecouncilsforSuffolk.org In the three unitary proposal, all of Thurston ward (i.e. Beyton, Norton, Thurston, Tostock and Stowlangtoft) would be in West Suffolk. All local authorities in Suffolk will debate their respective proposals later this month ahead of a final submission deadline of Friday 26th September.
- Reminder: Tour of Britain event - A reminder that the Tour of Britain men's race will pass through Mid Suffolk this coming Wednesday (3rd September). The riders will travel west through Stowlangtoft, down Ixworth Road in Norton, and then through Thurston before heading on to Quaker Lane in Beyton. The race is expected to pass through our villages between 12:50pm and 1:40pm. During this period there will be 'rolling road closures', with disruption expected for 30-40 minutes per section of road. Further details can be found here: www.britishcycling.org.uk/tourofbritain/men/stagetwo
- New electric recycling bins - Twelve striking new pink recycling bins can be found in the two districts, where residents can dispose of their broken electrical items. This includes things like coffee machines, kettles, mobile phones, tablets, and anything smaller than a 4-slice toaster. These are located at:
 - Iliffe Way car park, Stowmarket
 - Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre, Stowmarket
 - Elmswell train station
 - New Green Community Centre, Thurston
 - Station Yard car park, Needham Market
 - Buckshorn Lane car park, EyeThe scheme has been supported by £47,000 from Material Focus' Electricals Recycling Fund, a not for profit which heads up the national 'Recycle your electricals' campaign. It is one of 60 UK projects to have received a share of almost £800,000 from the fund which aims to reduce e-waste and its environmental impact.

On average there are at least 30 electricals hidden away in drawers in the average home, a total of 880 million items across the UK. Many of these could be donated or sold to people who could put them to good use with a simple repair.
- New emergency temporary accommodation - As of March 2025, MSDC were accommodating a total of 158 households in emergency housing, including women and children escaping domestic abuse, as well as vulnerable adults with complex needs who might otherwise be at risk of rough sleeping. Demand for temporary accommodation has risen significantly, with Mid Suffolk's requirement nearly doubling between the 2020/21 and 2024/25 financial years.

This increased demand has resulted in a growing dependence on bed and breakfast and hotel accommodation, costing the councils approximately £70,000 per month. At the August cabinet meeting, Mid Suffolk councillors agreed to invest in 30 additional properties, which will serve as temporary emergency accommodation.

Eligibility for emergency temporary accommodation is determined by legal homelessness status, compliance with immigration and residence requirements, and demonstration of priority need. Individuals meeting these criteria, who would otherwise face rough sleeping, are provided with short term accommodations while the council assesses their circumstances and seeks a long-term housing solution.

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

Three Councils For Suffolk: Big enough to deliver, local enough to care

The five district and borough councils of Suffolk, Babergh, East Suffolk, Ipswich, Mid Suffolk, and West Suffolk, have launched their joint Three Unitary Councils for Suffolk proposal, a locally led plan to reshape local government and deliver stronger, more responsive services to communities across the county.

Suffolk routes revealed for opening stages of Lloyds Tour of Britain Men

The two stage routes that will open this year's Lloyds Tour of Britain Men in East Suffolk and Mid Suffolk and Babergh, have been revealed, that will see the world's top cyclists pass through dozens of communities and cover more than 300 kilometres of Suffolk roads.

New emergency temporary accommodation for those most in need

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils are to invest in additional temporary accommodation – helping those at risk of homelessness.

Twelve new electrical recycling banks installed in Babergh and Mid Suffolk

Residents can now recycle their broken electricals at one of 12 electrical recycling banks located in the districts