

**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>
- Highways / Road Closures - this has been a total nightmare again, with various road closures, including work by Anglian water on Thurston road Beyton. Vicky and I have dealt with numerous emails and have attempted get as much information from SCC and pass on to residents. However as I have replied to one I will not accept personal abuse to any councillor or employee at any council no matter how emotive the subject.
- CIL Bid for Thurston Community College - we raised some issues, including the lack of community space and possible parking for the library, and lighting.
- Ixworth Road - following meeting with Sam Harvey she has promised the work will be done or will take legal action against the developer. This also includes the uncontrolled crossing at Norton Road.
- Suffolk Libraries - as I write (27<sup>th</sup> November) we still do not have news about the new contract, which was to be announced early November.
- Loft Insulation Offer for Suffolk Residents - For the second year running, Suffolk’s Public Sector Leaders are providing funding to help Suffolk residents make their homes warmer and save money on their energy bills by providing discounted loft insulation - The Suffolk Loft Insulation Offer enables homeowners in Suffolk to receive a 50% discount (up to £200) and free delivery on orders of 200mm or 370mm wide eco-friendly thermal insulation rolls from High Loft, the UK's leading eco loft insulation brand. Last year, the project enabled the insulation of over 5,000m<sup>2</sup> of roofs in Suffolk, and this year the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership wants to double that figure. The offer is open to anyone in Suffolk and will only close once the allocated funding has been spent. Visit <https://highloft.co.uk/pages/suffolk-council-200-loft-insulation-contribution> and fill in the form to receive your discount code.
- More Home Energy Efficiency Schemes - The council’s new £3m fund for interest-free loans to residents wishing to undertake home energy efficiency upgrades that was mentioned in last month’s parish report is now active, and applications can now be made at <https://www.lendology.org.uk/warm-home-suffolk-loan>. Energy efficiency upgrades such as insulation, solar panels, batteries, glazing, or heat pumps are possible with loans from £2,000 to £15,000 to be repaid over a maximum of seven years at 0% interest.  
A Suffolk Retrofit Assessment Voucher Scheme is also launching, funded by Suffolk Public Sector Leaders, whereby homeowners in Suffolk will be able to apply for a voucher that covers the cost of a professional retrofit assessment on their home property. Residents who own a home with an EPC band of below C can take up the offer of a voucher to claim an assessment from a PAS 2035 Retrofit Assessor who will identify the best measures for their home, for example insulation, draft proofing, ventilation repairs, low carbon heating or solar panels. The assessment report will also incorporate analysis of the cost vs benefit of implementing the suggested improvements. The assessment is free for those with properties smaller than 98m<sup>2</sup>,

with a maximum additional charge of £30 for larger properties bigger. Homeowners can check to see if their property has an existing Energy Certificate with an EPC band and record of their property size at [gov.uk/find-energy-certificate](http://gov.uk/find-energy-certificate). They can apply for the vouchers by visiting [suffolkenergyassessment.co.uk](http://suffolkenergyassessment.co.uk). Applications are open now, and vouchers will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis.

- Council Budget Consultation - Suffolk County Council has launched a public consultation prior to decisions on the budget for the next financial year, 2025-26, which are due to be made in the next few months. This is an opportunity for residents and businesses to share their views on proposed Council Tax changes and spending priorities, as well as giving information on how the council manages its finances, the cost-saving measures already in place, and how the council might generate more money to support essential services. The council can increase its budget in two main ways: by receiving more funding from the government or by increasing Council Tax. The survey asks residents which council services they use and to indicate which council services they consider most important to them. The consultation will close on Monday 16 December, and if you want to participate, visit [www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/2025\\_26\\_budget](http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/2025_26_budget). The results of the consultation will be included in a final report when the council sets its budget is set in February 2025.

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

- Council meeting - A full council meeting took place on the 21st November, which included discussion of the council's treasury management. The Green administration also introduced a motion urging the government to rethink the decision to cut the Winter Fuel Allowance for most pensioners. After debate, this was agreed and a letter will be written to the chancellor.
- Fees and Charges - updates to Fees and Charges across the district were approved in this month's cabinet meeting and will take effect on 1st April 2025. A full list of alterations are available on the council's website – most charges are being raised by only 1.7% and some fees are coming down.
- Community Funding - Mid Suffolk's website now has a new community funding page, which aims to make it much easier for local community groups to understand and apply for grants and funding. So if you are in need of some funding for a project, it's worth going to the [www.midsuffolk.gov.uk](http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk) home page and clicking the 'Access community funding' button.
- Summary of Waste Recycling over Christmas & New Year - There are a few alterations to the recycling schedule over Christmas, including a scheme to recycle Christmas Trees. The information can be found on Mid Suffolk's website, using the following link: [Christmas waste collections - Mid Suffolk District Council -](#)
- Tackling Social Housing - Stigma Mid Suffolk council, along with their partners in Babergh council, signed up to a new campaign to stop social housing stigma. This was done in the form of a council workshop, which looked at the best methods to tackle social housing inequality and negative stereotypes associated with it across the district.
- Additional Information - David attended an East West Rail partnership seminar in Newmarket. Attendees from Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire included councillors, industry leaders and key personnel from Network Rail and Great Anglia. We are trying to push the new government to deliver on the ( unfunded but promised by the previous government) Haughley and Ely track and station improvements. We are also trying to get the barrow ( foot) crossing replacement at Thurston station included in this work.
- Locality grants - A local sports organisation has been unable to deliver a project at the primary school in Thurston and they will be returning the approx. £1000. As always, please email ,

[BMSDCgrants@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:BMSDCgrants@babberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk) and either of your ward councillors to enquire about locality grants.

- Local Government Reform - As has been reported in both The Times and the East Anglian Daily Times, the government is due to publish imminently their 'Devolution White Paper' with likely implications for local government reform in Suffolk. Although we will need to wait until the detail has become clearer, it seems there will be significant implications for both Mid Suffolk District Council and Suffolk County Council with the prospect of a unitary authority and directly-elected Mayor for Norfolk & Suffolk.
- Supplementary Planning Documents - Two supplementary planning documents (SPDs) were adopted by Mid Suffolk District Council in November, set out clear expectations of those looking to develop within the districts. The Housing SPD lays out more detail on the number and type of new properties required by each district on sites, ensuring the right mix to meet housing need, including adequate provision of affordable housing. The Intensive Livestock and Poultry SPD puts measures in place so intensive farming can sensitively coexist within the districts' rural communities as a valued part of our economy.
- Green Skills Summit - 90 students in years 8 and 9 from schools across Babergh and Mid Suffolk have taken part in the District Councils' Schools Green Skills Summit. The students debated real-world climate change challenges and emulated real-life negotiations, as world leaders did recently at COP29. The council-run event, facilitated by InterClimate Network, and hosted by Ipswich High School, was designed to engage young people from a wide variety of socio-economic backgrounds about climate change and its effects. The councils' hope is to open up opportunities for local action and sustainable career choices for the next generation, following on from this year's Green Careers Week 2024 (4 - 9 November).
- Innovation Awards - The winners of Babergh and Mid Suffolk's 2024 Innovation Awards were announced at the beginning of November. 9 awards were handed out to 21 finalist as businesses were recognised for their achievements and for striving to use unique and creative approaches to deliver their products and services. The 'Overall Business of the Year' award, sponsored by Mosaic Group, was presented to Stowmarket-based IEMusic. The business was commended for setting a new standard for industry engagement and youth development by enhancing musical education in schools and giving young people the freedom to carve out careers in the music industry. In the wake of the pandemic, IEMusic, run by its founder Sam Robson, has provided nearly 200 industry taster days to young people across East Anglia, equipping them with essential skills and knowledge while opening the gateway to a career in music, where it might not have been possible before.

**December Briefing Note for town and parish councils – awaited from Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils**