

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 - I proposed a motion for council on Thursday 23 May to lobby the government for improved funding for local authorities, which was seconded by the administration and voted through unanimously in the chamber. Politicians of all parties are concerned by the £4 billion funding ‘gap’ predicted for councils in the next few years, particularly for social care. To balance the books this year, Suffolk County Council had to withdraw £15.9 million from its reserves - the equivalent of council savings accounts – but this is not a sustainable approach. Councils that have become bankrupt have to cut services back to the minimum they have to provide by law, and seek to raise revenue by increasing council tax and other avenues they have such as charges for parking or social care.
- Hollow Lane - following requests from residents I have asked the highways officer to look at the possibility of reducing the speed limit there. Have sent you her response. As I have said my group have asked the council to make it easier for parishes to have a 20mph but that was rejected. I can continue to see how the speed limit could be reduced. I have also asked for the cycle track sign to be put back.
- Transport for Post-16 Students - Cabinet also considered a paper on recommendations for charges for post-16 school transport. Although students now have to be in education or training up to the age of 18, the council receives no funding from the government to pay for their transport. This means the council asks parents and carers to pay for part of the cost with the rest subsidised by the council. In 2023-24, the average cost for a mainstream seat was £1,701 and the average cost for a SEND student seat is £11,819. The proposal approved by Cabinet was for the charge for a mainstream seat to rise to £1,050 a year, which is a steep £90 increase from last year. There will be no increase for SEND students so their seats will remain at £780 a year. The 50% reduction in charge for families on a low income and in receipt of free school meals will continue for another year. The council will continue to signpost families to public transport routes where these may be cheaper and in addition, many schools have bursaries for travel which students can apply for.
- SEND Strategy 2024-29 - Children’s Services Inspection. The council has just received notification that Ofsted will be coming for a two week inspection of its children's services. This inspection is focused on social care, youth justice, corporate parenting, family services and safeguarding. It will also look at partnership working with other council teams and external partners to support children and keep them safe. Suffolk County Council had its last children’s services Ofsted inspection five years ago and was rated as Outstanding.
- Dementia Strategy -Suffolk County Council, NHS partners and adult social care organisations have launched a dementia strategy. - the number of people who develop dementia is likely to be higher, so having a robust and effective strategy to manage this is essential. The strategy has

been co-produced with people with dementia and their carers, and will look to promote early diagnosis, providing better information about care and treatment options, and focus on improved signposting for people of all ages with dementia, their carers and families, to help them get the support they want and need to enable them to live well with dementia within their own community. You can read the new dementia strategy here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/digital-version-suffolk-dementia-strategy-2024-20292.pdf>

- New Vehicles and Equipment for Suffolk Fire and Rescue - Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has unveiled a £3.5 million investment in new firefighting vehicles and equipment, including a 32m turntable ladder vehicle, a specialist rescue tender, six new fire engines, a driver trainer vehicle plus a fleet of electric pool cars. The new vehicles will be on the road by summer 2024. The new vehicles are part of a planned replacement programme whereby fire engines are replaced every 15 years, and include the latest technology to help keep Suffolk residents safe. They also support the council's net zero targets as officer and pool cars will now be electric vehicles. Fire engines are generally diesel vehicles, although there are some electric-hybrid vehicles currently being trialled in London.
- Nature survey - In order to prepare Suffolk's Local Nature Recovery Strategy, the council has launched a public survey so residents can share their favourite nature spots and which habitats they think should be protected. Farmers, landowners and land managers are also encouraged to submit practical, achievable proposals to support nature conservation, as well as sharing how land is currently managed, and any challenges faced applying for government funding schemes. The strategy will form a plan to help reverse the decline in nature across the county, and to connect and expand existing areas that are important for wildlife and the landscape. You can share your thoughts in the Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy Survey by visiting <https://www.nsnrp.org/get-involved> . It closes on 30 June 2024.

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

- MSDC Meeting - Mid Suffolk District Council held both its AGM and May meeting. Cllr Dan Pratt was elected Chair for the coming year with Cllr Keith Scaff as his deputy. Various other posts were filled including Cllr James Caston as chair of Scrutiny. It was decided that the current boundary between Stowmarket and One house parish should remain unchanged. Financing for the training centre at Gateway 14 was confirmed at £18.8 million. Freeport East has agreed to cover 89% of the cost. This means that MSDC will invest £2.26 million in this initiative which will be focused on re-skilling residents and businesses in the new 'Green' technologies. A motion to support the 'Climate and Nature Bill' was passed.
- Our June meeting is cancelled because of the General Election.
- Domestic food waste - Funding to begin food waste collections in Mid Suffolk from 2026 has been agreed, as part of a nationwide requirement by central government.
- Gateway 14 - Planning approval was granted for a new warehouse.
- Planning - Persimmon have submitted an application for 61 homes on the land between College Park and Thurston Community College. Further details and information has been requested by the planning officer. For applications DC/23/02429 and DC/23/02430 a field tour is being organised. MSDC is pursuing the debt DC/20/00663 (Nursery House, Tostock Road, Beyton) through a formal debt recovery process.
- Network Rail - The final report has been received by MSDC. 5 options have been described with a range of estimated costs from £3 to £7 million. One is to reopen the pedestrian tunnel

and refurbish the station house. The next action is to select an option and then work up the detailed costing of its implementation.

- Locality grants - Please do not make any application until after 4th July.

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

NB: Pre-election restrictions have been in place for this period

[Upcoming elections and referendums](#)

The next election within our district is on Thursday 4 July. More details about the UK general election, as well as all other elections and referendums being held on the same day, can be found [on the council's website](#).

[Councils' commercial property arm continues to outperform market](#)

Babergh and Mid Suffolk's commercial property investment company raised more than £1.26m in net income last year.

[Funding boost for Babergh and Mid Suffolk communities](#)

Town and parish councils across Babergh and Mid Suffolk are set to receive more than £1.2m in developer contributions to help community infrastructure keep pace with housing growth.

[Councils secure funding to improve swimming pool](#)

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have both been awarded funding to help ease financial pressures and reduce the carbon footprint of the districts' swimming pools.

[Mid Suffolk agrees funding to support new Stowmarket Rangers initiative](#)

Mid Suffolk District Council has committed £50,000 towards Stowmarket Town Council's plans for a new rangers service, which will launch in the town later this summer.

[Food waste collections for Babergh and Mid Suffolk residents from 2026](#)

Funding to begin food waste collections in Babergh and Mid Suffolk from 2026 has been agreed, as part of a nationwide requirement by central government.

[Gateway 14 continues to take shape as £18million agreed for Skills and Innovation Centre](#)

Funding of £18.8m has been agreed to create a Skills & Innovation Centre at Gateway 14 in Stowmarket – the latest development there to support business, create jobs, and boost the local economy.

[Feel Good Suffolk helps over 2,000 people to improve their health and wellbeing](#)

A service supporting Suffolk residents to make healthier choices has helped over 2,000 people to improve their health since its launch in October 2023.

[Capital grant window reopens as £368k awarded in 23/24](#)

Community groups can apply for capital grants once more as Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils highlight some successful projects from the 2023/24 financial year.

[Council Chair presents funds to two Thornham Magna charities](#)

Mid Suffolk District Council Chair, Cllr Rowland Warboys presents £1,055 to two charities in Thornham Magna.

[Housing issues and Stowmarket regeneration among targets in council's new action plan](#)

Mid Suffolk District Council's leader has outlined plans to address housing issues in the district, regenerate Stowmarket and further combat climate change.

[Half term fun for families in Babergh and Mid Suffolk](#)

A healthy selection of half term activities is on offer for children across Babergh and Mid Suffolk as the district councils help to support families during the school break.