

STOWLANGTOFT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

**MONDAY 15 MARCH 2021 AT 7.30 PM
VIA ZOOM**

Present: Cllrs D D'Lima (Chair), I Cassidy (Vice Chair), H Godfrey, Mrs J Godfrey, N Kaines and J Orlopp, County Councillor Mrs Storey and District Cllrs Mr Richardson and Mrs Turner. Mrs A Bryant (clerk) was also in attendance. Members of the public were in attendance.

The Clerk advised that Mr Motteram, Road Safety Officer from the Suffolk County Council and Mr Andy Mellen, prospective Green Party candidate for the upcoming County Council elections were also in attendance.

55 **Apologies for absence:** Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Catchpole. The Parish Council authorised the absence.

56 **Declaration of interest:** No declarations of interest were declared.

57 **SID / Vehicle Activated Signs**

The Parish Council welcomed Mr Motteram to the meeting. All present acknowledged that the Parish Council's ten questions had been sent to Mr Motteram prior to the meeting.

The Parish Council noted that the VAS had been installed in Stowlangtoft in 2020 having purchased the solar powered VAS from Elan City from Parish Council funds. The County Council had raised concerns regarding it being active permanently.

Mr Motteram explained that a neighbouring parish had expressed an interest in installing the same VAS from Elan City and had sent a photograph to clarify the system in place. The County Council (CC) had not seen Stowlangtoft's VAS prior to this time. Mr Motteram confirmed that the CC had been surprised at the size of the VAS and were concerned that the CC installed posts were not suitable to carry such a large load. Mr Motteram advised that this issue had raised various concerns at other villages within Suffolk, however the CC had to start somewhere and were therefore investigating Stowlangtoft initially. He had spoken to Elan City and now had a better understanding of the VAS supplied.

The CC SID scheme has been in place since 2013 and run without any intervention since then. Mr Motteram added that the CC were about to launch an ANPR SID scheme. The CC have concluded that they will need to obtain more information from Parish Council's prior to approving systems in future.

(County Councillor Mrs Storey arrived at 7.39 pm)

The Chair advised that the Parish Council had recently run the VAS in 'spy mode' for a specified period and had obtained data which clearly showed that the VAS being active impacted on vehicle speeds through the village. **The Chair said he would email the data to Mr Motteram after the meeting.**

Mr Motteram explained that the initial scheme in 2013 had a Memorandum of Understanding which all Parish Council's had to sign, and this required that the VAS be inactive for a period. This requirement was based on observations and scientific findings. He added that additional investigations would be required to ensure this was still the case, however in the meantime he was asking that Stowlangtoft cease using the VAS for a period

to abide by the Memorandum of Understanding. He added that the CC would run their future investigations in Stowlangtoft if required.

Mr Motteram also expressed concern at the location of the VAS posts along The Street, especially the one in the photo which appeared to be on the offside of the road and close to the terminal sign which means that it is capturing data from vehicles legally travelling over 30mph. He queried why they had been installed in different locations to those approved. Cllr Godfrey replied that the posts had been installed one day with no prior notification. The CC employees had installed them whilst he had been out of the village.

Cllr Godfrey queried why Lackford and Stonham Parva who also had Vas running 24/7, 365 days a year had not been asked to cease this practice. Mr Motteram explained that it was his understanding that these signs were run in spy-mode which addressed the constant use concern. He added that unfortunately the 2013 scheme appeared to have become unregulated and would need reviewing to ensure safety.

Cllr Godfrey said that Stonham Parva PC had been using the Elan City devices for 18 months without demounting them and without switching them off. He went on to say that the method of operation had been discussed with Cllr Matthew Hicks who is their representative and the Leader of the CC and, he had confirmed that intermittent use was advisory only. Mr Mottram felt this was not the case and that it was mandatory for all Parish Councils that have approval to operate a SID in line with the Memorandum of Understanding and either to move the devices or switch them off for a period of time. Mr Mottram queried this saying that the devices were turned off from time to time. Cllr Godfrey explained that the Stonham Parva devices were under pressure from traffic and lost power but that they were not decommissioned.

Cllr Godfrey stated that the Parish Council's only interest was road safety. The Parish Council wished to install additional VAS on the A1088 and queried if the approved posts and locations would be sufficient for Elan City solar powered VAS? Mr Motteram replied that post extensions were proposed for the A1088. Cllr Godfrey queried the post locations as the Parish Council's application had been to cover the entire residential area based on years of knowledge of road traffic collisions in the area.

Following a detailed discussion, **it was agreed that the VAS installed in The Street would remain insitu and continue to operate, occasionally putting them into spy-mode and sharing data with the Suffolk County Council on request.**

Mr Motteram left the meeting at 8.05 pm

Mr Andy Mellen, the prospective Green party candidate for the upcoming County Council elections on 6 May 2021 introduced himself to the Parish Council and members of the public. The Parish Council noted that Mr Mellen hoped to represent the Thedwastre North ward.

The Parish Council took a short adjournment at 8.10 pm – 8.15 pm

58 **Minutes of the last meetings:
18 January 2021**

The Chair presented the minutes previously circulated. Cllr Mrs Godfrey proposed that the minutes of the meeting dated 18 January 2021 be approved. Cllr Cassidy seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

The Chair agreed to sign the minutes and drop them round to the Clerk for filing.

59 **Matters arising from the last meeting**
Minute 50 – The Chair reported that the footpaths had been cleared and Kiln Lane from the water tower to Walsham Road had had any litter removed. He advised that these points were relevant when we dealt with finance later in the meeting.

Minute 52 – Charity Bench – Cllr Cassidy reported that Cllr Kaines had measured up for the brass plaque with a view to engraving and then installing on the bench.

The Chair confirmed all other matters arising would be covered as agenda points.

60 **County Councillor's report**
County Cllr Mrs Storey presented her report, previously circulated. She had nothing further to add. The Parish Council noted the contents. No questions were asked. A copy is attached to the minutes for information.

County Councillor Mrs Storey left the meeting at 8.20 pm

61 **District Councillor's report**
District Cllr Mrs Turner presented her report, previously circulated. The Parish Council noted the contents. No questions were asked. A copy is attached to the minutes for information.

District Cllr Mrs Turner added that litter appeared to be an issue everywhere. She explained that there were funds available to assist with cleansing. The Chair explained that the Parish Council currently received a MSDC grant for cleansing but any additional help would always be welcomed. **District Cllr Mrs Turner agreed to provide additional information.**

District Cllr Richardson presented his report, previously circulated. He had nothing further to add. The Parish Council noted the contents. No questions were asked. A copy is attached to the minutes for information.

(District Cllrs Richardson and Mrs Turner left the meeting at 8.25 pm)

62 **Police report**
The Parish Council noted the Police report. The Parish Council noted that copies of previous newsletters were available at <https://www.suffolk.police.uk/your-area/snt-newsletters>.

63 **Clerk's report**
The Clerk had nothing to report.

64 **St George's Church**
The Clerk reported that correspondence had been received from Reverend Katherine Valentine which advised that during 2020 the Diocese had worked out a new scheme with the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT), by which St George's could remain open as the parish church while the Diocese and the CCT worked to maintain it and build up some community/village support.

The scheme meant that the Diocese agreed to insure the building and had bought into a maintenance package run by the CCT, so the fabric would be taken care of. The CCT would work with the community, initially speaking to local people (including the Parish Council) and conduct surveys and questionnaires to assess the level of local support with a view to forming a local support group.

The scheme should commence on 1 April 2021 with services, funerals, weddings, baptisms, and burials able to continue. The whole project is planned to last 2 years, in which time it is hope that St George's will be on a more secure footing and will be able to remain open as the parish church.

The Parish Council noted the update which was received as good news.

The Chair reported that Mr Dixon, a resident of the village, following the last Parish Council meeting, had contacted a clock restorer regarding the regulator within the church clock. A quotation of £185.00 (call out fee) plus £35.00 per hour after the first hour, plus any parts or materials used. Mr Dixon had requested that the Parish Council consider funding this work.

The Chair advised that £500.00 had been budgeted for in 2020/2021 towards churchyard maintenance cuts. However, none of this had been spent. He stated that he would be happy for the Parish Council to support this repair work. Cllr Orlopp added that the Community Fund would be prepared to contribute towards the repair work. Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Godfrey and seconded by Cllr Kaines **that Mr Dixon could progress the repair work and that the works would be funded by the Parish Council and the Community Fund on a 50/50 basis.**

65 **Finance Report:**

Councillors agreed the financial report, previously circulated and the cheques would be signed and returned to the Clerk for action.

The Chair drew the Parish Council's attention to the cheque for HART Farm Services. He explained that the cleansing would be over budget considering the additional unplanned work on clearing the pavements.

End of Year Balance Sheet

The Parish Council noted the End of Year Balance sheet as at 15 March 2021 and noted that some cheques would need to clear before a final position was known.

2021 – 2022 budget

The Parish Council noted the updated spreadsheet containing the figures discussed at the meeting held on 18 January 2021. **Cllr Orlopp, seconded by Cllr Godfrey, proposed the contents of the 2021 – 2022 budget be accepted. The vote was unanimously carried.**

The Chair highlighted that there would be an overspend in 2021 – 2022 due to the proposed purchase of VAS for A1088 but the reserves would cover the expense.

Annual Statement

The Parish Council noted the annual statement for the period ending 31 March 2021. **Cllr Cassidy, seconded by Cllr Mrs Godfrey, that the content of the Annual Statement be accepted. The vote was unanimously carried.**

66 **Planning matters:**

DC/20/05696 & DC/20/05697 (listed building) – Cocksedges, The Street, Stowlangtoft – The Parish Council noted that the planning application had been granted and that the Parish Council had not objected to the application.

DC/21/00184 – Toft Barn, The Street, Stowlangtoft – The Parish Council noted that the planning application had been granted and that the Parish Council had not objected to the application.

67 **Highway matters**

The Chair reported that the pothole in Kiln Lane had been repaired but not particularly well. This left 2 potholes outstanding for repair; these were on the western edge of the village by the speed gates and on the junction of Church View.

The Parish Council noted that Kiln Lane would be closed from 24 March to 23 April 2021 for Anglian Water to undertake works.

Cllr Cassidy informed that an officer from CC had visited the village to check that the license regarding the charity bench was in order. Whilst visiting, she had commented that the vehicles parked on the piece of land on the opposite side of the junction to the bench at the bottom of Kiln Lane was unsatisfactory. The Parish Council discussed that parking had occurred in the area for several years. They also noted that the land was owned by the CC and therefore there was nothing the Parish Council could do. Therefore, **the comments made by the CC officer were noted.**

68 **Correspondence**

The Clerk advised that Mr Hainsworth, a resident of Stowlangtoft had emailed a proposal through for areas of the village to not be cut short and wildflowers be planted to assist bees. Mr Hainsworth had also included a map with proposed locations.

The Parish Council were supportive of the proposal, however the locations proposed were not owned by the Parish Council and that perhaps Mr Hainsworth should contact MSDC and SCC. Cllr Godfrey, although supportive of the proposal, stated that leaving areas to go wild was in stark contrast with the work undertaken to tidy the village up. Cllr Mrs Godfrey supported the proposal and suggested that Mr Hainsworth and herself meet to discuss the proposal and perhaps suggest some alternative locations. **It was agreed that the Clerk would contact Mr Hainsworth and provide Cllr Mrs Godfrey's telephone number so that a meeting could be arranged.**

69 **Councillors' Forum**

Councillor Kaines – Cllr Kaines informed the Parish Council that, having served for 25 years on the Parish Council he would be resigning his position. The Parish Council thanked Cllr Kaines for all his hard work over the years and wished him well. **The Clerk would contact MSDC regarding the vacancy and would display the relevant notice on the noticeboard.**

The Parish Council noted that there were residents who had expressed an interest in serving on the Parish Council. If no election were called then the vacancy could be filled via co-option.

Suffolk West Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) – Cllr Cassidy explained that CAB had contacted him and queried whether the Parish Council would donate towards their vital work. The pandemic had hit them hard, yet there were more people than before who needed help and support. **The Parish Council discussed a donation and agreed that £100.00 would be donated.**

70 **Public Forum**

None.

71 **Date of next meeting:** Monday 17 May 2021 at 7.45 pm in the Meeting Room, St George's Road (via Zoom if necessary). The Clerk advised that guidance on face-to-face meetings was currently being reviewed.

The Parish Council AGM would also be held on Monday 17 May 2021 at 7.00 pm in the Meeting Room, St George's Road (via Zoom if necessary).

The Parish Council noted that a Planning meeting would be held on Monday 19 April 2021 at 7.30 pm in the Meeting Room, St George's Road (via Zoom if necessary), if any planning applications were received.

The meeting concluded at 8.53 pm.

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Chairman



Thedwastre North

March 2021



Visit suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus for health advice, service changes, business support and schools' guidance.

I have previously reported on the Covid-19 rates for the county, and more specifically, Mid Suffolk. These are still going in the right direction but the danger is complacency – and so the advice is still hands, face and space. The vaccination will not be an invisible shield – it means that those getting the infection will not get it as badly and will be less of a strain on the NHS resources.

The government has set out a very clear roadmap, based on getting the various stages right before moving on to the next stage.

Step 1 starts on 8th March – for most people this is when the children go back to school. For the political agenda it is when campaign leaflets can be delivered and door-to-door deliveries, obviously in a Covid-secure way, can start. The Cabinet Office has issued clear guidelines on what can be done, and when. They are available here:-

[COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/covid-19-response-spring-2021)

[The Government's approach to elections and referendums during COVID-19 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/roadmap-to-elections-and-referendums-during-covid-19)

If in doubt – the gov.uk website has a search facility – 'roadmap' and 'May 2021 polls delivery plan' works.

There is a new **Covid-19 rapid testing centre** based at the Blackbourne in Elmswell. This is available for anyone living or working in the surrounding area who is unable to work from home.

Lateral flow testing involves taking a swab from the throat and nose to see whether coronavirus is present in the body. The person tested will then receive a text message giving the result within an hour. Anyone giving a positive test will be told to self-isolate and advised on what to do next. People are being asked to get tested twice a week, three to four days apart, as part of their weekly routine.

Anyone receiving a negative result needs to continue to follow the social distancing guidance as they may only be at the early stages of developing the virus. This is in case levels of the virus in a person at the earlier test were too low to be detected at that time.

Highways Flooding

On 2nd March there is a meeting of the Suffolk Flood Risk Management Scrutiny Sub Committee. Agenda papers are available to view online and the evidence papers include some useful information. I will be 'attending' although not a member of the committee. I know that there have been issues in several villages over the last few months and I have met Highways officers on site at a couple of those locations. Two sites have had ditches dug out by Highways contractors to facilitate the water flow.

There is a Riparian duty on many landowners to dig out ditches. Information on the duties and responsibilities are listed on the Suffolk.gov.uk website on the section entitled 'Maintenance of ditches and other watercourses'...

Highways doubles drainage budget following £27.2m announcement

Drainage and flooding, Rights of Way bridges and resurfacing of roads in Suffolk have been allocated extra funds for the 2021/22 financial year following Department for Transport's funding announcement.

Keen to progress more drainage schemes across Suffolk to support the fight against flooding, Suffolk Highways has allocated an extra £2m – double its current budget allocation – in order to help tackle the worsening flood problems being experienced across the county. Suffolk Highways also looks set to bolster its resource to support in the repairing or replacement of seven Rights of Way bridges across the county with an additional £800k, whilst committing a further £3.4m to the county's surface dressing programme.

Although the budget is less than the 2020/21 allocation, Suffolk Highways prudently prepared for a decrease and allocated a tentative £21m for the 2021/22 financial year.

Council Budget 2021/2022

It is fair to say that the pandemic this year has also significantly impacted on the council – not only has there been an expected £7.9m shortfall in the income from council tax, but progress of the council's transformation programmes, has had to be redirected to focus instead on community resilience. This has included redeploying staff into bespoke roles such as procuring personal protective equipment (PPE) to support Suffolk's care sector and adapting working practices for frontline staff to maintain effective social distancing measures. Many of the new ways of working adopted by the council during 2020 because of the pandemic may actually offer potential alternative transformation savings as the organisation continues to adapt and tailor the way it works to deliver services for Suffolk's communities.

In 2021/22, general Council Tax will rise by 1.99 per cent, which represents an increase of £26.68 for a Band D property, from £1,224.70 in 2020, to £1,251.38. There is also a two per cent rise in the Social Care Precept for the forthcoming year as the council recognises the ongoing challenges with meeting the rising costs and rising demand for adult care services. This means a Band D property will see an overall rise of £53.55 this year for Suffolk County Council's element of their Council Tax bill, from £1,343.61 in 2020-21 to £1,397.16 in 2021-22.

Scrutiny Committee meeting

On 10th February the council's scrutiny committee considered evidence from a number of 'witnesses' on the subject of developing local emergency plans. Several local villages have emergency plans and I gave 'evidence' on the Woolpit Emergency Plan. Some of the speakers came from the larger urban areas, some from villages where the Emergency Plan had morphed into a Good Neighbour scheme but it made for an interesting session.

The Scrutiny committee had an extensive list of recommendations and these were presented to the Councils Cabinet committee at the end of February. The main points that I picked up were that some areas had better communication with the County Council – both the Joint Emergency Planning Unit

(JEPU) and the Social Care system. Better communication top-down and then bottom-up was certainly something that Woolpit picked up. If any other village is interested in an Emergency Plan then there is a lot of information on the Suffolk County Council website and local village websites.

Elections 6th May 2021

On 6th May there are elections to Suffolk County Council and also for Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner. Nominations must be in by 8th April. A timeline is available on the Mid Suffolk Council website. The election moratorium starts on 25th March.
<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/elections/current-elections/>

Census Day 21st March 2021

'The census is coming' cards have recently been delivered with the post. There have also been adverts on the television.

Jane Storey

1st March 2021

District Councillor Report: March 2021

COVID update	<p>The Prime Minister has now outlined the stages necessary to get back to a more normal way of life following the pandemic. For this to proceed as planned it is vital that everyone takes up their offer of a vaccine.</p> <p>There are currently 10 different covid-19 business support grants open for applications. The grants relate to different periods of national or local lockdown restrictions since November 2020. The Home but Not alone phonenumber is still active for those who need it.</p>
COVID community testing sites	<p>Rapid testing centres are rolling out across the county. The first Mid Suffolk site was at the Museum of East Anglian Life in Stowmarket. Elmswell and Needham Market Community testing centres opened on Wednesday 24th Feb and it is hoped to open test centres in both Eye and Debenham in due course. These test centres are for people who are not displaying symptoms of COVID and you need to book an appointment via the SCC website https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/getting-a-test/</p> <p>If you do have symptoms you must book a test via the national website or phone 119. https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test</p>
General Fund Budget 2021/22	<p>At the February Council meeting next year's budget was agreed. There is to be a 1.66% increase in Council Tax despite budgeting for over £3M surplus each year for the next 3 years. Cross party working groups are to be set up to decide how to spend approx. £4M across all parts of the organisation to help in the recovery following the pandemic.</p>
Housing Revenue Account 2021/22	<p>Since the Government removed the cap of rent increases, MSDC are to increase their Council House rent by CPI+1% (this equates to approx. £1.25 per week increase). Sheltered Housing Service charges are to go up by £1 per week, but there are no changes to Sheltered Housing utility charges or garage rents. The Council has a Capital programme 2021-24 to develop 254 affordable homes and 119 shared ownership homes. MSDC has engaged Icen Homes to identify development sites. Over the next 3 years it is hoped to bring forward sites at Cedars Park, Bacton and Haughley. MSDC are also bidding for S106 acquisitions in several new developments all over the district.</p>
Needham Lake visitor centre	<p>The Council have completed the procurement process and appointed a contractor to build the Needham Lake Visitor Centre and Café. The facility is a high quality and environmentally sustainable building which will become a real asset to the Lakes as a tourist attraction and as a benefit to the local community.</p>
Gateway 14	<p>Gateway 14 has submitted a planning applicant to MSDC for a mixed use business park. This has followed an extensive community engagement exercise. The public consultation on the planning application runs until 3rd March and it is hoped that the application will be determined in April or May.</p>
Census 2021	<p>Census day is March 21st. It is vital that everyone completes the survey as the responses will help to identify society's needs now and in the future. This information helps plan and fund services in the locality including transport, healthcare and education. All households should receive information in the post explaining how to complete the questionnaire online or to apply for a paper form if necessary.</p>

Clr Wendy Turner

Mid Suffolk District Councillor (Green Party)

Ward of Thurston

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District Councillor's Report: Harry Richardson

Mid Suffolk District Council met on Thursday 18th February to consider our budget for the financial year 2021/22.

The budget agreed increases Mid Suffolk's share of council tax by 1.66%, or the equivalent of £2.80 a year (23p a month) for an average Band D property. The District Council recognises the financial challenges facing many residents and local employers as a result of the pandemic, and the money raised through the council tax increase is therefore being ring-fenced to provide direct support for businesses hardest hit by the pandemic.

In addition, Mid Suffolk is now also in a position to invest an additional £4m into the District's recovery. This money will be invested in the local economy, housing, the wellbeing of residents, and in its communities – with a cross-party approach adopted to develop recommendations to Mid Suffolk Cabinet for its use.

In addition to further investment in tackling climate change and enhancing biodiversity, the Council has pledged to:

- build the affordable & sustainable homes people need,
- invest in people's physical & mental health,
- support the recovery & growth of the local economy; and
- strengthen & enable civic pride, community spirit & empowered local democracy.

Mid Suffolk are also increasing Council house rent by 1% above the rate of inflation, or the equivalent of a rise of £1.25 per week. Sheltered Housing Service charges are to go up by £1 per week, but there are no changes to Sheltered Housing utility charges or garage rents. The revenue raised from these increases will then fund the development of 254 affordable homes and 119 shared ownership homes across the District.

There have also been a number of initiatives launched in the previous weeks and so I have included below a summary of the major updates across the District:

Stowmarket arts centre gets major boost

Ambitions for Stowmarket to become a hub for arts and culture took a major step forward earlier this month, following Councillors unanimously giving the go-ahead to lease 11 Market Place to the John Peel Centre

Go ahead for emission-cutting fuel plans

Mid Suffolk District Council will cut their fleet's carbon emissions by up to 90% – supporting the councils' carbon neutral aims.

New service to support residents to live independently and safely in their homes

Mid Suffolk District Council's 'Independent Living Service' has been developed to help improve the quality of life of the districts' most vulnerable adults, young people and children

Housing Delivery Test 2020

The recently published Housing Delivery Test 2020 (an annual measurement of housing delivery in the area of relevant plan-making authorities) confirms that Mid Suffolk met the Government's housing delivery requirement over the past three years.

Census 2021 will provide a snapshot of modern society

Households across Mid Suffolk will soon be asked to take part in Census 2021. The census is a once-in-a-decade survey that gives the Office for National Statistics the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales. It has been carried out every decade since 1801 (except for 1941).

New recycling campaign aims to get Suffolk's recycling right

Every year, more than 10,000 tonnes (1 in 5 lorries worth) of recycling from Suffolk homes is rejected. This is due to residents placing the wrong items in their recycling bins. A new campaign 'Together we can get our recycling right' has been launched by the Suffolk Waste Partnership to tackle the problem.

I hope that this report has been useful but if a member of the Parish Council wishes to discuss any of the above further then please do not hesitate to contact me via the email address below.

With kind regards,

Cllr Harry Richardson JP

Mid Suffolk District Councillor for Thurston Ward

Cabinet Member without Portfolio

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