

STOWLANGTOFT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

**MONDAY 15 JANUARY 2024 AT 7.30 PM
THE COMMON ROOM, STOWLANGTOFT**

Present: Cllrs D'Lima (Chair), Suggett (Vice Chair), Cuff, Marsh, and White. A Osman (clerk) was also in attendance along with two members of the public.

District Cllr Davies was in attendance.

- 68 **Apologies for absence.** Cllr Catchpole sent apologies which were accepted.
- 69 **Declarations of Interest.** Cllr Cuff declared an interest in Item 10 in relation to payments for the village newsletter.
- 70 **Appointment of Vice Chair.** Cllr Suggett indicated her availability for the vacant Vice Chair role. Cllr Cuff proposed that Cllr Suggett be appointed as the Vice Chair. Cllr Marsh seconded the proposal, and it was carried unanimously.
- 71 **Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2023.** Cllr Cuff proposed that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2023 be approved. Cllr Marsh seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

The December meeting was cancelled due to no planning applications being received and no urgent actions needed.

72 **Matters arising from the last meeting:**

Minute 61: 20 November 2023: Newsletter Funding. **Cllr Cuff agreed to provide payment details** for the agreed contribution to the village newsletter.

Minute 61: 20 November 2023: Budget 24/25. The Clerk confirmed that adjustments to the budget for 24/25 had been completed.

- 73 **County Councillor's Report.** The meeting noted the contents of the County Councillor's report that had been previously circulated and observed that the A1088 bridge repair works had been listed on the 'One Network' website to take place between 10 June and 31 October 2024.
- 74 **District Councillors Report.** The meeting noted the contents of the District Councillors combined report that had been previously circulated. It was agreed that **the Clerk would obtain further information on the 20s Plenty scheme** and add to the next Parish Council meeting agenda.

District Cllr Davies left at 7.50pm

75 **Clerk's report:**

Parish Council Meeting Dates 24/25. The meeting discussed the draft meeting dates for the period May 2024 to April 2025 previously circulated. The **proposed dates were agreed** and any meetings in the period May to Sep would take place in St George's Church.

Z Cards. The Clerk reported on a free public information leaflet provided by the Suffolk Resilience Forum that was designed to help people prepare for emergencies. It was

agreed that the Clerk would obtain sufficient leaflets to be distributed to all village households with the village newsletter.

76 **St Georges Church.** Cllr White reported that an architect's survey of proposed works was potentially going to take place in the spring.

77 **Finance:**

Finance Report. The meeting noted the financial report (current bank balance of £1763.33 and the projected outturn at the end of the FY of £500 current account and £1,500 savings account), circulated before the meeting. Payments authorised:

HART Farm Services	£269.00
Newsletter contribution	£100.00

Cllr D'Lima agreed to authorise payments.

Precept FY24/25. The meeting **agreed a precept of £3,300 for FY24/25** and the form was signed by the Chair and Clerk.

78 **Planning matters.** The meeting noted DC/23/05800 and **agreed not to provide a comment.**

79 **Highways matters:**

Kiln Lane Traffic Survey. The meeting noted Kiln Lane traffic survey would take place from 18 January to 2 February 24.

Kiln Lane Potholes. The meeting observed that the previously reported Kiln Lane potholes have been marked for repair.

SpeedWatch. Cllr Cuff indicated that the SpeedWatch group would be come more active as the weather improved and it was observed that speeds appear to be increasing once more. A call for more SpeedWatch volunteers will be included in the village newsletter.

VAS Battery. **Cllr's D'Lima and Cuff agreed to check the battery on the eastern VAS** on The Street.

80 **Correspondence:**

Locality Funding. The meeting agreed to seek locality funding to assist with the village newsletter, VAS post and VAS battery costs. **The Clerk was to approach locality councillors with further supporting information.**

Call for Land for Nature Recovery. The meeting noted the email previously circulated covering a call for land for nature recovery.

Change in Law. The meeting noted the document previously circulated covering a change in law removing the restriction on local councils from incurring expenditure on buildings, grounds relating to the Church or ecclesiastical charities.

81 **Councillors' Forum:**

Co-Option of New Councillors. The meeting **agreed to co-opt Mr Bourne** as Parish Councillors to fill the vacancy.

Kiln Lane. The Chair raised the issue of any remaining clearance work on Kiln Lane on behalf of Cllr Catchpole. The Clerk reported that information provided by Suffolk Highways suggested that all clearance work had now been completed and no further work was planned.

Stocking Lane. The **Chair agreed to report recent flooding from Stocking Lane** on the Highways Reporting Tool.

82 **Public Forum.** Nothing reported.

83 **Date of next meeting:** The next meeting will be held on Monday 18 March 2024 at 7.30pm in The Common Room, St George's Rd.

If any planning applications or urgent actions are identified after the November meeting, these will be considered at a short meeting on Monday 19 February 2024 at 7.30 pm.

The meeting concluded at 8.30pm.

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Chair

Parish Report – January 2023

Councillor

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Flooding in Suffolk

Recent high rainfall has led to many Suffolk residents' homes being flooded, and flooding more generally on roads. At Council on 7 December, a motion was passed for the council to review the frequency of drain and gully clearance in areas at risk of flooding, and to work closely with districts and boroughs, Anglian Water and the Environment Agency to help prevent future flooding. Our opposition group had hoped to introduce further measures on regularity of maintenance, but this was not supported by the Conservative administration. The motion that was passed was preceded by an announcement by the council of £1m in extra funding to investigate flooding incidents in the county.

Details of a government-funded scheme from DEFRA whereby Suffolk residents can apply for up to £5,000 to help protect their property from future flooding can be found at this link, with applications from January 2024: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/flood-recovery-information-for-suffolk>

Sea Link Consultation Response

On Tuesday 12 December, Suffolk County Council Cabinet reviewed their proposed response to the National Grid's proposals to link up Suffolk and Kent with undersea cables and landfall at Aldeburgh and a substation at nearby Friston. Councillors in these areas were particularly concerned about the impact on the natural environment and the Suffolk coastline, with most councillors agreeing that engagement with the community about the proposals had been poor, and the timing of the construction coinciding with Sizewell C to create even more pressure on the county's transport routes and tourism industry. Cabinet decided that they would not lodge a holding objection at this stage, but their response to the National Grid consultation outlined their concerns and the possibility of objecting in future once more details were known.

SCC Carbon Net Zero Ambitions

The council's Scrutiny Committee met on Monday 11 December to review the council's progress towards becoming carbon net zero by 2030. Overall there had been a 10% reduction in emissions in 2022/23, due to reduced energy use for street lighting (a recent upgrade programme) and reduced gas consumption at SCC property and schools.

However, the council is not on target to be carbon neutral by 2030, at least partially due to the third scope of indirect emissions – this includes emissions by suppliers and contractors used by the council which are difficult to measure accurately and control. The supply chain represents 91% of the council's total footprint, and it has updated its contract terms and conditions to include annual reporting on reducing carbon emissions, and also requires suppliers to sign up to its Carbon Charter and Climate Change Commercial Ask.

Getting Children Ready for Education

On Thursday 14 December, the council's Education and Children's Scrutiny Committee met to review the support the council provides to prepare children for school. This includes the county's nurseries and early years providers, health services for 0–5-year-olds and Family Hubs (formerly children's centres). In recent years the council has worked with the National Literacy Hub to try and engage children with reading, after research in 2020 concluded that educational attainment for Suffolk children was much lower than it should be.

The Committee acknowledged the good work that was going on in a challenging area and urged that recruitment of health visitors be prioritised by SCC to fill the current vacancies (21%). There were also plans to improve the council's digital platform - in partnership with parents - so they were able to find information and support more easily.

DEFRA's Property Flood Resilience Grant

As well as the initial £500 grant payment and council tax/business rate discounts, residents whose homes have been flooded may also be eligible for up to £5,000 from the Property Flood Resilience (PFR) Grant, which the government requires Suffolk County Council to administer on their behalf. The application process will begin in early 2024 and after initial eligibility checks by SCC, property owners will be responsible for sourcing an independent surveyor and PFR contractor. Payment of up to £5,000 including VAT will be paid retrospectively to the property owner once the Council receives proof of the completed installation and invoicing for the approved measures.

Further information about the grant eligibility, conditions and the forthcoming application process can be found here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/property-flood-resilience-grant>

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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>

District Cllr Report Thurston Ward Beyton, Norton, Thurston, Tostock, Stowlangtoft December 2023

MSDC Meeting.

There was no Mid Suffolk District Council meeting in December. Mid Suffolk District Council's cabinet will be asked to approve a full business case for delivery of the first work package of the Stowmarket Health, Education and Leisure Facilities (SHELF) project.

The initial works also include an improved pitch for Stowmarket Rugby Club, community running track, cricket nets and additional paths and fencing.

The cabinet, which meets on 9 January, will consider a recommendation to put £450,000 towards the £2.4million scheme, with the remaining funding already identified from a range of external sources alongside Section 106 contributions.

There are more than 680 empty houses in Mid Suffolk, which the councils are keen to bring back into use to help meet growing housing need.

The councils already impose a council tax premium on the owners of properties that are empty and unfurnished for two years or longer, but under new legislation, the councils would be able to target empty properties after just one year from April 2024 – and impose a levy on second homeowners from April 2025.

MSDC has continued with its 'cozy homes' initiative which makes insulation available to appropriate households in our District.

It is for:

- *Residents of Mid Suffolk: Whether you are a private tenant, a homeowner, or a landlord with fewer than five properties, this scheme is for you.*
- *Financial Criteria:* Your household income should be less than £60,000 per year, with savings not exceeding £16,000.
- *EPC Rating:* Your home should have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating between D and G.
- *Council Tax Banding:* Your property should fall within council tax bands A to E.

It covers loft insulation (including loft clearance), cavity wall insulation, draft proofing and possibly also other forms of insulation where appropriate.

Planning

Target date has been set as the 17th January for applications DC/23/02429 and DC/23/02430.

Network Rail.

Still no sign of the final report which was due by the end of November.

Thurston Community College

The fitness suite is now available for community use.

A14

Continuing to support the Tostock campaign to have the village speed limit further along Church Road and additional restrictions in Norton.

Locality grants

We would welcome applications, particularly from Tostock and Stowlangtoft Parishes.

David Bradbury & Austin Davies

Mid Suffolk District Councillors

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