

## STOWLANGTOFT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

**MONDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2021 AT 7.30 PM  
THE 'COMMON ROOM', ST GEORGE'S ROAD**

Present: Cllrs D'Lima (Chair), Cassidy (Vice Chair), Catchpole, H Godfrey, J Godfrey, and Suggett. Cllr Orlopp was absent. A Osman (clerk) was also in attendance along with a member of the public.

71 **Apologies for absence.** None.

72 **Declarations of Interest.** Cllr H Godfrey and Cllr J Godfrey stated their intention to speak on highways matters adjacent to their property but confirmed these would be restricted to safety issues in the whole village to which they would not gain any personal advantage. Those present noted the declaration

73 **Minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2021:**

The Chair summarised the minutes. Cllr J Godfrey proposed that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2021 be approved. Cllr Suggett seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

The October planning meeting was cancelled due to no planning applications being received.

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

Minute 57: 20 September 2021: Footpath matters. Cllr J Godfrey confirmed the footpath behind Stockings Wood was clear.

Minute 57: 20 September 2021: Platinum Jubilee Tree. The Chair's suggestion of placing the tree in Primrose Meadow was supported. **Cllr Catchpole agreed to look at a precise location.**

Minute 62: 20 September 2021: Church Clock. The Chair indicated that the clock repairer was still not available, and the meeting noted that this item would be paused until this situation changed.

Minute 62: 20 September 2021: Churches Conservation Trust Update. Cllr Cassidy provided an overview on St George's Church activity, referring to an update previously circulated to councillors.

Minute 63: 20 September 2021: Quotes for A1088 Posts. Cllr H Godfrey reported approaching 2 contractors to quote for installing posts on the A1088 for VAS but that they were unable to assist due to not being licenced to work on the highway. The meeting acknowledged the best way ahead for A1088 VAS posts was to accept the quote from Suffolk Highways.

Minute 66: 20 September 2021: White Lines on The Street near Church View. Cllr Cassidy reported that he had not had any further update from County Cllr Mellen.

Minute 66: 20 September 2021: Road Closure Signage. Cllr Cassidy had spoken to County Cllr Mellen who had also received complaints from other parishes about road closure signage.

75 **County Councillor's report:**

*(County Cllr Mellen arrived at 7.42pm)*

*The Chair invited County Cllr Mellen to cover his previously circulated report and to consider matters from minute 57 above.*

A1088 Bridge Restriction. County Cllr Mellen updated on the A1088 bridge restriction put into place following assessment last year by Suffolk County Council. Traffic lights would remain in place until permanent weight restriction signs were installed at which time the lights would be removed. Likely a minimum of 18 months until repairs commence. Several concerns were raised in the meeting about impact on local villages and constraints on farming traffic that use the bridge.

White Lines, The Street/Road Closure Signage. Cllr Cassidy reiterated the issues over white lines on The Street and road closure signage. **County Cllr Mellen agreed to take these issues back to the County Council.**

30mph Signs. Cllr H Godfrey raised a potential issue with the siting of 30mph signs indicating that they may no longer be located appropriately considering recent development in the village. **The Clerk was to write to County Cllr Mellen to confirm the costs for a Parish Council instigated review of the 30mph signs. This correspondence would also reiterate the issues previously covered in minute 75 on white lines and road closure signage.**

[Clerks Note: The policy for speed signs in Suffolk can be found at: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/Roads-and-transport/traffic-management-and-road-safety/Speed-Limit-Policy.pdf>]

*(County Cllr Mellen left the meeting at 8.02pm)*

76 **District Councillor's report(s).** In the absence of District Cllr Turner and District Cllr Richardson, the Chair presented their reports, previously circulated. The Parish Council noted the contents. No questions were asked. Copies are attached to the minutes for information.

77 **Police report.** No Police report was received. Previous newsletters are available at <https://www.suffolk.police.uk/your-area/snt-newsletters>.

78 **Clerk's report.** The Clerk confirmed that Mid Suffolk District Council owned the 'Common Room' and that it continued to be available for Parish Council meetings. The venue had also been highlighted to Mid Suffolk District Council elections team as a Polling Station option for future elections. The meeting accepted the status quo and would continue to use the venue for Parish Council meetings unless high summer temperatures made St George's Church a cooler alternative.

79 **St George's Church:**

The meeting discussed continued payment of the Church newsletter for village residents. It was agreed that the Parish Council would not pay for further newsletters but would continue to promote activities and events in the Church. It was noted that Village Church News is available online at [www.vcnews.org.uk](http://www.vcnews.org.uk). **The Clerk was to write to the Churches Conservation Trust to confirm the decision on newsletters and reiterate continued support for future events in the church.**

Cllr H Godfrey drew attention to the ongoing support provided by Cllr Orlop and his son for cutting the churchyard grounds. The value of this assistance was noted by the meeting.

80 **Finance:**

Cllrs agreed the financial report and noted no cheques required signature.

The Chair presented the budget for FY 22/23 that had been previously circulated. Considering the decision at minute 79, the budget for newsletters was removed. It was also noted that VAT reclaim for VAS equipment was dependent upon progressing the A1088 scheme. Cllr J Godfrey proposed that the budget with the above amendment be approved. Cllr Catchpole seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

81 **Planning matters:**

The Chair highlighted the consultation by Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Council's on Housing Land Supply Position Statement previously circulated and no input was deemed necessary by the meeting.

There were no planning applications submitted since the last meeting.

82 **Highways matters:**

VAS, The Street. The Chair introduced the outstanding issues relating to the current VAS located on the Street. It was agreed that the signs would be switched off every 4 weeks for one week as per the County Council's MoU. The location of VAS posts on The Street was discussed as this had been noted as an issue previously by Suffolk County Council. Cllr H Godfrey provided some background on the signs, and it was agreed that clarification should be sought from Suffolk County Council as to their continued reluctance to accept this installation, noting that significant work had been put in by Cllr H Godfrey over the past 6 years to realise this important road safety scheme.

Cllr H Godfrey reported that he had signed MoUs for both the current Street VAS and the proposed A1088 VAS. It was noted that previously the Parish Council had appointed Cllr H Godfrey as the authorised signatory for the VAS MoUs.

VAS, A1088. The meeting reaffirmed its desire to progress the installation of VAS on the A1088 using the application already submitted by Cllr H Godfrey. Given the number of outstanding issues and potential changes in direction by the County Council on this topic, **it was agreed that the Clerk would write to Suffolk County Council to express the Parish Council's frustrations over the continued impasse and to seek clarification of the outstanding issues on Stowlangtoft VAS and how these can be best resolved.**

Written Statement. Cllr J Godfrey provided the clerk with a written statement relating to highways matters. The key points were:

- Expressed sadness over difficulties experienced over several years engaging with Highways officers.
- Perceived changes to and retraction of agreed positions has undermined parish council's efforts to increase road safety.

Lorry Map Review. The Chair mentioned the review of the County Council's Lorry map previously circulated and suggested any individual comments should be made directly using the online consultation form included in the agenda.

83 **Correspondence.** It was agreed that the Parish Council would not input to the Police and Crime Plan consultation previously circulated.

84 **Councillors' Forum:**

Post Box. Cllr Cassidy reported that the post box stolen in March has not been replaced. **The Clerk was to write to the Post Office to hasten a replacement.**

Churchyard Grass Bank. Cllr Cassidy indicated that the grass bank along The Street next to St George's Church was overgrown. **The Clerk was to ask HART Farms Services to attend to this issue as part of ongoing cutting within the village.**

85 **Public Forum.** Work in Hunston on sourcing a defibrillator was mentioned. This was a potential future activity for the meeting that would most likely depend on the release of the BT Public Phone box for community use.

86 **Date of next meeting:** Monday 17 January 2022 at 7.30 pm in the 'Common Room, St George's Road.

The Parish Council noted that a Planning Meeting would be held on Monday 20 December 2021 at 7.30 pm in the 'Common Room, St George's Road, if any planning applications were received.

The meeting concluded at 9.14pm.

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Chair

# Parish Report – November 2021

**Councillor Andy Mellen**

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## **COVID-19**

Suffolk has been declared an “Enhanced Response Area” (ERA) due to the high Covid rates. Information on this and other local stats are available here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Latest central Government advice is available here: [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

## **Full Council – Motion and Decisions**

The Suffolk County Council met for a Full Council meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> October 2021. Our Group proposed a motion to support the Local Electricity Bill, a proposed change in the law which would allow small-scale electricity producers to sell their electricity at proportionate cost, potentially making local electricity cheaper and more reliable. The motion was passed unanimously. Details of the motion can be found here: <https://powerforpeople.org.uk/local-electricity-bill-briefing-for-councillors>

The Conservatives proposed a motion to condemn the tactics used by the protest group Insulate Britain, which was passed with the following vote: 41 For, 9 Against, 7 Abstained.

## **Cabinet Meeting – 12<sup>th</sup> October**

On the 12<sup>th</sup> October, the Cabinet and Councillors met to discuss the following two matters: Recommendations highlighted in the Suffolk Local Access Forum Annual Report 2020/21, and to vote on submitting the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), in relation to the Council’s Bus Back Better Strategy. Summary of the main decisions are below:

1. The Cabinet accepted the Suffolk Local Access Forum Annual Report 2020/21 and noted the report’s recommendations and the action that the Council was taking to address the recommendations.
2. The Cabinet acknowledged and agreed to the headline asks and order of costs contained in the proposed Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), as set out in the report.
3. The Cabinet delegated final development, including costings, and the submission of the BSIP, to the Executive Director for Growth, Highways and Infrastructure, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Transport Strategy and Waste.
4. The Cabinet noted that a further Cabinet paper on the Enhanced Partnership Arrangements would be provided prior to its submission in March 2022.
5. Full Cabinet Reports can be viewed here: [https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=\(12-10-2021\),%20The%20Cabinet](https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=(12-10-2021),%20The%20Cabinet)

## **Suffolk Schools to Reinroduce Face Coverings**

On Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> October, the Directors of Public Health, and Children and Young People Services, released a statement notifying us that face coverings are to be reintroduced into schools from 1<sup>st</sup> November.

This is due to the rising COVID cases in Suffolk, and therefore staff and students will have to wear face coverings in communal areas, outside of the classroom, unless exempt for medical reasons. Visitation will also be restricted to essential visits. A further review on its effectiveness will commence 15<sup>th</sup> November. See Cllr Simon Harley, our Group's Public Health Spokesperson's comments on the decision at <https://suffolkgli.wordpress.com/2021/10/26/gli-public-health-spokespersons-warning-over-winter-response-to-reintroduction-of-covid-measures/>

### **Sizewell C: Government Announce Support & New Funding Strategy**

On the 15<sup>th</sup> October, Suffolk County Council announced their support for Sizewell C, and are taking up 'important concerns' with the Secretary of State. Our Group remains firmly against the project, believing there has been a political underestimation, and that the people of Suffolk are being sold short by the Administration's inability to face the reality of the situation.

In addition, on 26<sup>th</sup> October, Business and Energy Secretary, Kwasi Kwarteng, announced a new government strategy for funding Sizewell C. The project so far has been heavily contentious, suffering from delays and planning concerns, as well as rising costs.

The Government has announced a Regulated Asset Base funding plan – a strategy that aims to retain investors by shifting the costs of the project onto the consumer - the British public. In the form of a taxpayer subsidy, the Government would pay the costs of the project to the developers that investors deem too risky to commit further.

Our Group rejects this strategy and recommends that the Government reconsiders before it puts the burden of cost onto our local communities, and instead looks at investing in cleaner, cheaper, and quicker forms of renewable energy.

### **Bus Back Better: Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) Approved**

The Cabinet approved the new Bus Service Improvement Plan, as part of their new £50m Bus Back Better strategy – aimed at rejuvenating Suffolk's bus service, in particular isolated areas of rural Suffolk. Our Group supports the essential commitment needed to help connect rural communities.

Bus Back Better aims at making bus services cheaper, more reliable, and carbon efficient. All proposals of the BSIP that were passed by Cabinet can be viewed here:

[https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=\(12-10-2021\),%20The%20Cabinet](https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=(12-10-2021),%20The%20Cabinet)

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# District Councillor Report: Thurston Ward

November 2021

Extraordinary Council meeting	An extraordinary council meeting was held on Monday the 18 <sup>th</sup> of October to discuss two motions proposed by the Green and Liberal Democrat group carried over from the previous meeting. Firstly, a motion to reduce light pollution by putting policies in place to control new street lighting was passed with only one vote against. Secondly a motion to object to the Government's proposal to introduce voter photo ID requirements at polling stations, was also passed but only by a very narrow margin.
Joint Local Plan	The Inspectors have paused the examination for the Joint Local Plan for 6 months. This is to allow officers to re consult and further clarify the spatial strategy and review part of the evidence base. There are some concerns about the housing allocations.
Tree for life scheme	The tree for life scheme for new parents has been launched. Applications for 2021 are now open having been delayed because of Covid. Applications can be made on the council's website before 10 <sup>th</sup> January 2022.
CIL funding	The Council has made a bi-annual payment of CIL funds to the parish councils – amounting to over £1M across 47 different town and parish councils.
Neighbourhood Plan Process	Is to be streamlined by allowing NPs to automatically proceed to referendum after examination rather than having to seek approval at cabinet. If the post referendum had a majority vote it will be formally adopted by the councils' chief executive which will help mitigate potential delays to plans.
Elmswell Primary School expansion	A CIL bid for over £1.5M to expand Elmswell Primary School is to be determined by MSDC Cabinet on Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> November. The rest of the costs (approx £700k will come from S106 contributions from earlier developments. This bid is not supported by the parish council, nor the district and county councillors, who would all think that this would produce a very crowded school for 420 pupils.
Locality Awards	There is still funding from the annual locality awards. Amounts of £250 or more are available to local community groups and organisations. Please encourage groups in the village to contact me for an application form or telephone for further information and help in applying. Half of my budget has been awarded to various organisations, including a Nature garden at Thurston community College, Speed cameras and posts in Norton and Stowlangtoft.
Meadow Lane Thurston	I've been working with residents and enforcement to make sure Linden Homes carries out remedial work on Meadow lane as conditioned, some work has now begun.

**Cllr Wendy Turner**

Mid Suffolk District Councillor (Green Party)

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## **District Councillor's Report: Harry Richardson**

### **Mid Suffolk District Council**

Mid Suffolk held an extraordinary meeting on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> October to consider two motions that had been delayed from our regular meeting in September, owing to a lack of time on the night. Both motions were passed by the Council: the first requires the Council to consider reducing or replacing a number of streetlights where these interfere with biodiversity; the second commits the Council to writing to the relevant minister to oppose the introduction of compulsory voter ID.

In addition, it has been announced that Suffolk is to receive extra resources to fight Covid-19, having been confirmed as an 'enhanced response area' (ERA) amid increasing pressure on our hospitals and high rates of infection.

A request for additional support was submitted last week by Public Health Suffolk - on behalf of public sector partners - and is intended to secure in additional support, funding and resources to help the NHS avoid unsustainable pressure.

Suffolk now becomes an ERA from Monday (November 1<sup>st</sup>) for up to five weeks, and additional support will include:

- Support for the vaccination efforts by extending opening hours and creating pop up vaccination clinic within our communities
- Help to coordinate on the ground door knocking campaigns
- Help to reduce transmission in schools with increased testing and additional temporary powers
- Funding for Covid-19 awareness raising communications and advertising.
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This does not, however, mean any additional restrictions on people's movements or actions. It is not a lockdown or like the tiering system that was trialled in England in 2020. Instead, it will boost the county's ability to raise awareness, tackle outbreaks and encourage people to get vaccinated.

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:

### **Delay to the Joint Local Plan**

Public examination of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council's Joint Local Plan – the strategic blueprint for future development of the districts - has been paused by the Planning Inspector to allow the councils further time to review its evidence. It is expected that this will resume in the new year.

### **£1.5m funding boost for Babergh and Mid Suffolk communities**

Town and Parish Councils across Babergh and Mid Suffolk received £1.5 million in neighbourhood CIL last month – paving the way for a range of vital community facilities and projects.

### **First Local Energy Showcase hailed a success**

With more attention than ever turning to sustainability and reducing the environmental impact of energy consumption, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils hosted business owners and community groups at their first Local Energy Showcase.

### **Tree for Life scheme welcomes applications from new parents**

Mid Suffolk's popular Tree for Life scheme, which offers a free tree for new parents, is now open for 2021 applications. The scheme, which benefits families, communities and the environment by boosting tree coverage across our districts, is open to all families in the districts who have or are welcoming a new arrival between 1<sup>st</sup> January and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021. Parents who may have lost a child during the same period are also able to apply for a remembrance tree.

### **New iPad lending scheme to help residents get online**

Suffolk Libraries and Mid Suffolk District Council are joining forces to help residents get online with a new iPad lending scheme – supporting those who need a little extra help to access services in an increasingly digital world.

### **Stowmarket business help those experiencing domestic abuse**

Mid Suffolk District Council urged businesses and organisations in Stowmarket to take part in a domestic abuse awareness event last month – empowering them to spot the signs of abuse and help address it.

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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Harry Richardson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line underneath the name.

### **Cllr Harry Richardson JP**

Mid Suffolk District Councillor for Thurston Ward

Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing

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