

STOWLANGTOFT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

**MONDAY 21 MARCH 2022 AT 7.30 PM
THE 'COMMON ROOM', ST GEORGE'S ROAD**

Present: Cllrs D'Lima (Chair), Cassidy (Vice Chair), Catchpole, and Suggett. A Osman (clerk) was also in attendance along with 2 members of the public.

105 **Apologies for absence.** None.

106 **Declarations of Interest.** None declared.

107 **Minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2022:**

The Chair summarised the minutes. Cllr Cassidy proposed that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January be approved. Cllr Suggett seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

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

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

Minute 96: 17 January 2022: White Lines, The Street. County Cllr Mellen had reported out of meeting that the Suffolk Highways advice was to paint white edge markings rather than a centre line. The meeting accepted this advice, noted that County Cllr Mellen had offered to initiate this work and to fund from his local Highways budget.

Minute 96: 17 January 2022: Potholes by Bridge Farm. It was noted that the potholes on the bend before Bridge Farm had been repaired with more substantial patches.

Minute 99: 17 January 2022: Order for VAS Posts. The Clerk confirmed that the order for VAS posts on the A1088 had been placed with Suffolk Highways but that a date for works to commence had not yet been provided.

Minute 102: 17 January 2022: Authorised Signatories. The Clerk confirmed that the Cllr Suggett was now an authorised signatory for the Parish Council bank account.

109 **Co-Option of New Councillors.** After the resignations of Hugh Godfrey and Jennifer Godfrey, the Parish Councillor vacancies had been advertised on the village noticeboard in December 2021. At the conclusion of the specified period, no election had been called. Therefore, Cllr Suggett proposed that Mrs Marion Sherwood and Mr Robert Cuff be co-opted onto the Parish Council. The Chair seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously. Cllr Sherwood and Cllr Cuff signed the Declaration of Acceptance to Office and completed a Register of Interest form after the meeting which the Clerk would forward to MSDC.

110 **County Councillor report.** In the absence of County Cllr Mellen, the Chair presented his report, previously circulated. The Parish Council noted the contents. A copy of the report is attached to the minutes for information.

111 **District Councillor report.** In the absence of District Cllr Richardson, the Chair presented his report, previously circulated. A copy of the report is attached to the minutes for information. Since the last meeting, District Cllr Davies has been elected as the second District Councillor for the parish area.

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

113 **Clerk's report:**

Parish Council Meeting Dates. The pre-circulated proposed Parish Council meetings dates for 22/23 were discussed. Subject to the start time of the Annual Parish Meeting planned for 16 May 2002 being brought forward to 7.15pm, the future meetings dates were agreed.

SALC Newsletters. It was agreed that the Clerk would continue to receive and filter appropriate information from SALC. Topical information relevant to Parish issues would be circulated to members.

Online Banking. The Clerk confirmed that the move to online banking for payments was now complete.

Duke of Edinburgh Scheme. The Clerk had received correspondence from a local resident seeking support for voluntary litter picking activity linked to the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme and confirmed that he would provide sign off for this activity at the appropriate time.

Toad Crossing Signs. The Clerk had received a request for the Parish Council to provide Toad crossing signs along Kiln Lane. The meeting strongly supported the ongoing Toad Patrol activity but agreed not to fund permanent signs.

End of Year Accounts and Audit. The Clerk confirmed that the usual auditor for the Parish Council accounts had been arranged and that the end of year accounts and audit report would be presented to members at the May meeting.

114 **St George's Church:**

Clock. The Chair reported that no further information was available on the availability of the clock repairer. To provide an alternative solution, **Cllr Suggett agreed to contact Market Weston** who has just had their clock repaired and find out who provided this service.

Funding. The meeting discussed the use of the village Community Fund as an option to assist with Church repairs. **Cllr Cassidy agreed to find out when the next trustees meeting** was to allow this initiative to be discussed further.

115 **Finance:**

Cllrs noted the financial report and agreed for the Clerk to generate online payments for the listed invoices/bills. The Chair agreed to act as the authoriser for the online payments.

116 **Planning matters.**

There were no planning applications submitted since the last meeting.

117 **Highways matters:**

VAS. It was confirmed that 2 new VAS for the A0188 had been ordered and delivered. Once the posts for the new VAS were installed by Suffolk Highways, they would be installed with the assistance of HART Farms Services. After further discussion of the current policy of turning the VAS off after 4 weeks, it was **agreed that the Clerk would**

obtain an update from Suffolk Highways as to the progress of the planned review of SpeedWatch policy in the County.

White Speed Gates. HART Farm Services had reported that the posts on the white speed gates at the eastern end of The Street were rotten. The meeting noted that HART Farm Services were due to provide a quote to repair or replace these posts for consideration at a future meeting.

Potholes – Kiln Lane. The **Chair agreed to report potholes by the pond on Kiln Lane** using the Suffolk Highways reporting tool.

118. **Correspondence:**

Suffolk Tree Network Newsletter. After considering pre-circulated material from the Suffolk Tree Warden Network, the meeting confirmed that they would not actively participate but that the Clerk would continue to monitor future correspondence.

119 **Councillors’ Forum:**

Plaques for Bench and Jubilee Tree. The meeting supported the proposal to procure plaques for the bench and the new Jubilee tree. **Cllr Cassidy agreed to look at buying options.**

Newsletter. The meeting noted that some information discussed during Parish Council meetings would be beneficial for inclusion in the village newsletter. **Cllr Cuff agreed to pass on relevant information from meetings to the newsletter editor.**

Electoral Information. A query was raised about the number of electors and houses within the parish. The **Clerk agreed to find this and share with members.**

120 **Public Forum.** Nothing reported.

121 **Date of next meeting:** Monday 16 May 2022 at 7.45pm in St George’s Church.

The Annual Parish Meeting would also be held on Monday 16 May at 7.15pm in St George’s Church.

The Parish Council noted that a Planning Meeting would be held on Monday 18 April 2022 at 7.30 pm in the ‘Common Room, St George’s Road, if any planning applications were received.

The meeting concluded at 8.43pm.

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Chair

Parish Report – March 2022

Councillor: Andy Mellen

Divisions: Thedwastre North

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COVID-19

Latest SCC information is available here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Latest Government advice is available here: www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Enhancing Biodiversity

Suffolk County Council will be doing more for the county's natural environment, as it confirms plans to enhance the biodiversity of at least 30% of its land by 2030. The opposition group had a major influence in providing recommendations to SCC which are now a part of the Council's ambitions to enhance biodiversity. Examples include planting more hedgerows, improving highway trees, and developing nature-based flood management solutions. For more information, visit: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news/show/councils-commitment-to-further-enhancing-suffolks-natural-environment>

Changes to Highway Code

Several new changes to the Highway Code are now in force as of the 29th of January. According to The Department for Transport (DfT) the new regulations are about recognising and protecting the most vulnerable road users and making the highway safer for everyone. Suffolk Roadsafes's Quiz helps illustrate the changes that are necessary to know and includes a link to further information - <https://www.quiz-maker.com/QG20TF8NL>. For more Government information on the changes you need to know, visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-highway-code-8-changes-you-need-to-know-from-29-january-2022>

Devolution Deal

The Government published its White Paper on Levelling-Up, within which it has agreed that Suffolk will be one of nine initial 'County Deals' up for negotiation. A new deal will potentially give local leaders more powers to make decisions for their communities for the first time. Our Group welcomes the idea of bringing more power to the communities of Suffolk. However, we are concerned about a potential Mayoral position created in Suffolk and the effect this may have on marginalising districts in Suffolk.

Full Council Budget Meeting

County Councillors met on the 17th of February to debate and vote on the Council's budget for 2022-23. Suffolk GLI Group highlighted the need to invest more in adult social care, as well as an innovative project to reduce the energy bills of those most vulnerable, considering the current energy and cost of living crisis. Both ideas were rejected by the Conservatives, but our Group will continue to champion more investment into our social care and green technology. For more information on Suffolk GLI's Budget amendment, visit: [https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=\(17-02-2022\),%20County%20Council](https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=(17-02-2022),%20County%20Council)

Warmer Homes Suffolk

Suffolk residents who are struggling to keep their homes warm can contact a new project, named 'Warm Homes Suffolk', which offers funding and free advice. The project can offer expert advice on reducing energy bills, energy usage and identify benefits that residents may be entitled to, to help keep their homes warm. Visit: www.warmhomessuffolk.org.

Follow us on:

Website - [Suffolk Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent Group – The GLI Group at Suffolk County Council \(suffolkgli.wordpress.com\)](http://suffolkgli.wordpress.com)

District Councillor's Report: Harry Richardson

Mid Suffolk District Council

Mid Suffolk District Council has frozen its element of council tax this year. The 2022/23 budget, which was approved unanimously at the Full Council meeting on 24th February, allows continued investment in the council's strategic priorities, including the economic regeneration of the district, and tackling climate change.

It also builds on last year's additional investment of £5.1m into supporting the district's communities, at no extra cost to Mid Suffolk's council taxpayers. During the debate, a Green and Liberal Democrat amendment to the budget was agreed which will fund two new zero carbon electric buses to deliver scheduled rural community transport for Mid Suffolk residents.

Sheltered housing charges and garage rents also remain frozen at 2021/22 levels, but Mid Suffolk District Council tenants will see an increase of 4.1% to their rents to cover inflationary pressures and allow investment in improving the quality of council homes.

This means average weekly social rent will increase by £3.45 from £84.42 to £87.84. For affordable housing, weekly rents will increase by £4.99 from £121.34 to £126.33.

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:

Bird Flu outbreak near Elmswell

The UK's Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer has confirmed highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1, commonly known as bird flu, at a small holding near Elmswell. A 3km Protection Zone and a 10km Surveillance Zone have been put in place around the infected premise to limit the risk of the disease spreading.

All poultry keepers – whether commercial farmers or those with a small backyard flock – are required by law to house poultry, or otherwise, to keep them separate from wild birds.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils respond to new 'County Deal'

The leaders of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have welcomed the news that Suffolk is one of nine counties invited to negotiate a ground-breaking devolution deal – bringing more control over areas such as transport, infrastructure and skills to the region.

The Government's Levelling Up White Paper, published this week, outlines a blueprint for driving up living standards and improving opportunity and prosperity across the country.

As part of it, Suffolk is one of nine county areas invited to negotiate a historic 'County Deal' - a new devolution model that, subject to negotiations, will give local leaders more powers to make decisions for their communities for the first time.

This could include greater control over buses and trains, to deliver London style public transport or skills programmes which focus on the needs of local people to help them access the high quality, high paying jobs of the future.

Additional funding to support districts' rough sleepers

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council have been awarded £324K to provide specialised emergency accommodation for rough sleepers and those at risk of homelessness.

The funding, from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government's Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme, will see the development of two new self-contained 'mbloc' emergency accommodation units in Stowmarket (Eric Jones House, Ipswich Road) and two self-contained units in Sudbury to house vulnerable adults at risk of living on the streets.

These new energy efficient homes in Stowmarket and Sudbury – will provide dedicated long term emergency accommodation for entrenched rough sleepers – allowing their complex needs to be addressed in a more comprehensive way.

Placements will allow people who have been historically excluded and marginalised, to get the help, support and life skills they need to hold down a secure tenancy and stay off the streets in future.

Training, guidance and advice will be delivered by a range of agencies including health, social care and voluntary organisations, supporting the councils' goal of ending all rough sleeping by 2024.

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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