

Annual Parish Report 2019

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School Travel

The change to free school transport was one of the most controversial decisions the council has taken in my time; since the decision to close middle schools.

I am of course so disappointed that this is going ahead despite a brilliant campaign by Thurston Community college, Rattlesden primary, its staff parents and pupils, along with the Parish council and myself. I am now working with them to see what can be done to help those who will loose out on free transport to the college.

Following changes to the school travel policy, which will take effect in September 2019, eligible families must now “opt-in” to receive school transport – you will no longer be automatically signed up. School place allocations have taken place, and families are being advised to check their transport eligibility. There still the ability to apply under hardship grounds, and staff to walk grounds.

information available at www.suffolkonboard.com/optin.

New Council Leader and Chief Executive

In May, the Conservative group leadership changed, and Cllr Matthew Hicks became the new Leader of Suffolk County Council. Cllr Hicks brought with him a number of new Cabinet members, including Mary Evans for highways.

Suffolk County Council also appointed a new Chief Executive. Nicola Beach joined the council from Essex County Council,

HIGHWAYS; again, this has been a full in-box. There is a new director of highways, Mike Ash, so no doubt his will be too.

we have had the timetable for grass/verge cutting and an invitation for communities to appoint their own contractor if they so wish to do so.

HGVs; we have asked for a review of the planning permission and I have asked to cabinet member to look into the HGV route

OFSTED REPORT ON SUFFOLKS SERVICE FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS; a shocking report has highlighted the failures in Suffolk to support children with special needs. The council will have to make major changes if it does not want the government to come in and take over the service. I am pleased that the council has agreed to provide addition new places for these children

REVIEW OF COUNTY COUNCIL BOUNDARIES; the boundary commission is looking into a possible review of Suffolk county council divisions.

MOTIONS TO COUNCIL; my group put a motion on climate change and for SCC to do all it can to reduce carbon emissions. This was supported overwhelmingly.

My own motion calling on Suffolk county council to stop all use of single use plastic was also fully supported.

A motion to reduce the gender pay gap. This was not!

LOCALITY BUDGET; I have been happy to help with the cost of a new oven for the village hall, and for the WW1 project being run by Robin,

MID SUFFOLK

ALL CHANGE! As a result of the elections on 2nd May, I am delighted to have been re-elected, but the number of Green party councillors has increased to 12 thereby the council is in No overall control; 12 Green, 5 lib dem, 17 Conservative 1 independent! At the time of your meeting nothing will have been agreed as to the cabinet positions, leader of council etc!

I have constantly opposed the council buying risky commercial properties outside the district and then putting £1 million aside in case these go bust. However, I am pleased the council has bought the old Aldi site and the Nat West bank to help the John Peel centre profile and improve the town centre,

2PCSO, S I am pleased that Mid Suffolk has funded 2 PCSOs but have made sure they can be used not just in Stowmarket,

5 YEAR LAND SUPPLY; at last the council can say it has a 5-year land supply for development areas. However, the new Local plan has been delayed until the new council, so the number of speculative applications continues.