

Parish Report AUGUST 2024

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MOTIONS TO COUNCIL

At the last full council all parties agreed to congratulate all the new MPs and to call on them to make the case for Suffolk.

My group brought a motion to the council meeting on Thursday 11 July to propose that the council review and streamline processes to use housing developer funding for local improvement work. It was acknowledged that often, infrastructure works needed following additional housing were delayed for years, whether this was due to designing, programming or undertaking the works to a decent standard. Often these works are scheduled and provided by SCC, but sometimes the developer will be responsible for them which can also lead to delays and make local communities frustrated and ultimately resentful of new development. The motion was passed by councillors and the hope is that this will speed up the process for new junctions, footpaths, cycle paths and road improvements near new housing developments.

VERGE CUTTING; AND SURFACE DRESSING ; SCHEDULE SENT

Extra Investment agreed for Special Education Needs

At Cabinet on Tuesday 25 July, the proposal to invest a further £9.1 million in Suffolk's SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) service was agreed. This is to fund extra staff and capacity to make sure the council can achieve its targets for assessing children and production of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). The investment will be funded through the council's reserves, and will be £2.6 million extra for the rest of this financial year, £3 million in 2025/26, and £3.5 million in 2026/27, although the extra money in the coming two years will be subject to ongoing review. This comes at a time when the outcome of the 2023-24 budget was also presented, showing a nearly £15 million drop in the council's useable reserves – their 'savings' for a rainy day. My group also expressed concern that the council's target for EHCPs was to complete 50% within the legal 20 week timeframe, rather than the required 100%.

Youth Justice Plan

At Council on Thursday 11 July, we reviewed the new Youth Justice Plan for 2024-2025 which outlined the ways the council plans to support young people who become involved in the criminal justice system. The plan outlines the ambitions of the council to reduce the number of girls, children in care and minority ethnic children currently over-represented in the Suffolk system, and support children involved in the criminal justice system or at risk of re-offending to engage with education, training or employment.

Scrutinising the State of Suffolk Roads

On Tuesday 23 July, the council's scrutiny committee met to discuss the state of the roads in the county, how much was spent annually and how works were prioritised. Officers from Highways explained how roads are categorised from Green to Red (poor condition), that the optimal resurfacing programme would require around £50m per year

in funding, whereas the current amount available for resurfacing works was more like £17m per year. My group are pressing for a review of the county's Highway Maintenance Operational Plan (HMOP) which sets out the parameters on what defects Highways respond to and the timeframe for response. We also believe the reporting systems for defects is not working correctly. All of the committee agreed that better communication with residents and timely fixes for road defects would be beneficial to the public perception of Suffolk's roads – as overall the condition of roads rated Red (in poor condition) has dropped since 2012, and the number of roads rated Green (in good condition) has risen.

I hope you felt the meeting with Ben Cook scc highways was worth while.

DITCHING WORK AT THE STREET; this has been done .

Suffolk Youth Climate Conference

On 3 July, 250 local schoolchildren pledged to write to their local Member of Parliament about climate change after an inspiring address by Chris Packham, renowned UK naturalist, at this year's Suffolk Youth Climate Conference. The event was held at Suffolk One Sixth Form College and organised by the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership.

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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>

Flood preparation advice: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolk-fire-and-rescue-service/fire-and-rescue-safety-advice-in-the-community/preparing-for-flooding>

Flood recovery advice and support: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/flood-recovery-information-for-suffolk>