

# MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL

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## DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING of MELLIS PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 30<sup>th</sup> MAY 2024 @ 6:30PM IN MELLIS MEMORIAL HALL

**Present:** Cllr L Read, Cllr A Cross, Cllr L Farley  
DC Cllr Warboys, Clerk – J Challis, 5 members of the public

**Apologies:** Cllr Paterson

### **1 To elect Chair of the Parish Council 2024/25**

Cllr Farley proposed Cllr Read be elected. Cllr Read indicated he was willing to stand; proposal seconded by Cllr Cross and approved unanimously with one abstention (Cllr Read).  
Cllr Read signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office, which was witnessed by the Clerk.

### **2 Chair's welcome and to consider and approve apologies for absence**

Cllr Read welcomed everyone to the meeting, and apologies received from Cllr Paterson were approved unanimously.

### **3 To receive Declarations of Interest on agenda items**

None received.

### **4 To consider requests for Dispensations on agenda items**

None received.

### **5 To resolve the draft minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024 are a true and correct record**

The minutes for the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024 were approved unanimously.

### **6 Members' consent to receive summons electronically**

Councillors signed their unanimous written consent to receive summons electronically.

### **7 To consider adopting the LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct**

Councillors agreed unanimously that they do not wish to adopt the LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct at this time, and will continue to adhere to the Suffolk Local Code of Conduct first adopted by Mellis Parish Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2015.

### **8 Report from County Councillor**

CC Cllr Fleming sent her apologies for being unable to attend the meeting; her report can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

## **9 Report from District Councillor**

DC Cllr Warboy's report can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.

## **10 Public Participation Session (10 minutes set aside)**

Two members of the public shared their concerns regarding speeding and the volume of traffic in the village. They said it has gotten to the point where they do not feel safe exiting their own driveway on foot. They have previously brought these concerns to the PC and also raised them with CC Cllr Fleming and Suffolk Highways. However, they feel that the response received from Suffolk Highways and CC Cllr Fleming has been inadequate with a lack of action. They feel the speeding aspect has increased since the opening of the Eye roundabout.

Cllr Read advised that this will be discussed further under agenda item 14, although options to address the issues were briefly discussed, with VAS signs displaying a smiley/sad face, and different types of speed enforcement cameras being put forward.

Cllr Warboys said that Mellis being included in the National Cycle route is important when the PC looks ways to address the issues, and also suggested looking at possible Quite Lane designations.

Cllr Read thanked the members of the public for their comments.

## **11 Chair's Report**

See Annual Parish Meeting minutes which can be found as an addendum.

## **12 Clerk/RFO's Report**

- Mellis PCC have shared their thanks for the PC's recent donation.
- BMSDC have sent details of the Joint Local Plan Draft Supplementary Planning Documents Consultation 15<sup>th</sup> May – 19<sup>th</sup> June 2024. Full details shared with councillors.
- Further to the 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024 meeting, when Cllr Cross raised concern that the PC had not been included as a consultee against DC/24/00515 for Brome reservoir, MSDC have advised that PCs are not statutory consultees on EIA scoping opinions as they are not a planning application or decision. Sometimes they are sent to PCs by the Validation Team, but only technical consultee responses are taken into account.

## **13 National Grid Norwich to Tilbury Statutory Consultation**

The statutory consultation has been extended to 11:59pm on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2024 because of the Election. Full details, including current public information dates and venues, can be found on National Grid's website: <https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/infrastructure-projects/norwich-to-tilbury>

Cllr Read said that as per the letter dated 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024, sent to Jo Churchill from Justin Tomlinson MP, the decision on Norwich to Tilbury will be made by the Secretary of state, and not the Government.

Cllr Cross advised that he attended the Parish Meeting to discuss the pylons held in Wortham on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2024, which was also attended by CC Cllr Richard Rout, Graham Gunby National Infrastructure Planning Manager Growth, Highways & Infrastructure SCC, Bron Curtis MSDC Principal Planning Officer, CC Cllr Fleming, DC Cllr Warboys, and representatives from Pylons East Anglia. He said that some shocking information was given regarding the increase in the number of HGVs, and the amount of aggregates required to build the access roads. This will have a huge effect on parishes who may less affected by the proximity of the pylons.

Cllr Warboys said the proposal will be presented to the Planning Inspectorate as part of the planning process, who will look at the balance between the harm and benefits. It is therefore of the highest importance that councils and residents evidence the harm it will cause to them.

A pylons awareness walk is being held in Gislingham on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2024, and a meeting in Gislingham village hall on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024 hosted by Gislingham Parish Council.

7:10pm 1 member of the public arrived.

Cllr Cross stressed the importance of the information available through Pylons East Anglia: <https://pylonseastanglia.co.uk/>.  
The PC's full response to the consultation will be discussed further at the next meeting.

## 14 Parking and traffic concerns within the Mellis

Following the Clerk's meeting with Joshua White from Suffolk Highways on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2024, councillors discussed his suggestion that the most effective way to address traffic/speeding issues in Mellis, is the installation of VAS devices. There are 3 very good locations along Mellis Road, which a device could be alternated between. Joshua said he does not think the gateways will address the issues, although they will be an aesthetic addition to the village. He suggests the gateway as you enter from Wortham, should be incorporated into where the current 30mph sign is. He thinks making a feature of this boundary would be a positive step, but that it will counterproductive to have a gateway on Dam Lane, and then a second entry point marked by the 30mph after the S bend. There could be a VAS device before the railway crossing, a second before the next bend, and a third after the next straight bit. He said the straight sections do not look urban because of the common, which encourages speeding, and the VAS devices would be really effective. Joshua will also discuss whether 'unsuitable for HGVs' signs which do not include a weight limit, and therefore do not need an enforceable traffic regulation order, are appropriate for Mellis with CC Cllr Fleming.

After discussing, it was agreed unanimously to proceed with the street application licence for the village gateways, to include one on Dam Lane and not by the 30mph boundary sign. It was also agreed to apply for the 3 VAS device locations mentioned above.

**ACTION – Clerk as above**

## 15 Planning

### To consider:

- DC/24/02322 – Application to amend working hours to include Saturday-Sunday 7:00-19:00. National Grid Yaxley 400kV Substation, Leys Lane, Yaxley, Eye, Suffolk, IP23 8DX. After discussing, councillors agreed unanimously that they OBJECT to this application.

**ACTION – Clerk to add comments to MSDC Planning Portal.**

To Receive an Update on:

- DC/24/01862 – Full Planning Application – Construction of open-sided agricultural building. West End Farm, The Common, Mellis, Eye, Suffolk, IP23 8EF – **AWAITING DECISION.**
- DC/24/01863 – Full Planning Application – Construction of open-sided agricultural building. West End Farm, The Common, Mellis, Eye, Suffolk, IP23 8EF – **AWAITING DECISION.**
- DC/22/05647 – Approval of details reserved by Requirement 16 (Construction Hours) pursuant to the Progress Power (Gas Fired Power Station) Order 2015. Progress Power Ltd, Potash Lane, Eye, Suffolk, IP23 7HE – **AWAITING DECISION.**

## 16 Newsteads Land including approval of expenditure and official opening arrangements

Cllr Cross will obtain an estimate and design proof for the commemorative bench, for presentation at the June meeting.

The official opening of Mellis Garden will take place at 10:30am on Saturday the 8th June, to coincide with the national 'Great Big Green Week' (8th to 16th June 2024).

Afterwards there will be a showcase of historical photo archives (courtesy of Bill Spence) back at the Memorial Hall, showing Mellis through the years. Cllr Farley and Cllr Cross have arranged for artwork to be on display from Mellis Primary school.

The BBQ being organised by the PC will be held at the Railway Tavern from 1:00pm, and Cllr Cross has found a band called Acoustic Aura who are available to play.

### Expenditure:

Cllr Farley advised that the bbq, which the PC agreed to provide for free at the 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024 meeting, will cost approximately £500.00 to provide. This includes rolls, burgers, vegetarian options and sundries. The band, Acoustic Aura, have advised a charge of £250.00 to play at the

event. Refreshments will cost approximately £160.00, and ribbon to cut for the opening is £12.50. The approximate expenditure totalling £922.50.

At the 8<sup>th</sup> February meeting, it was agreed unanimously to book Gislingham Silver Band to play as part of the D-Day80 anniversary plans on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024, at a cost of £150.00. In addition, the band have requested refreshments are provided for their break between performances, and a marquee needs to be hired in case of rain. The marquee will cost £50.00 to hire, and the refreshments approximately £50.00.

Total proposed expenditure, not including Gislingham Silver Band's booking fee which has already been approved, is approximately £1,022.50.

Cllr Read proposed approval of a maximum expenditure of £1,250.00 to cover the bbq, booking of the band, refreshments, ribbon, sundries and marquee hire. Seconded by Cllr Cross and approved unanimously.

Cllr Cross volunteered to pay for the refreshments for Gislingham Silver Band, the band, the burgers, rolls, and marquee hire, and submit an expenses claim for reimbursement at the next meeting.

Cllr Farley said she will pay for the bbq sundries, other refreshments, ribbon and marquee hire, and submit an expenses claim for reimbursement at the next meeting.

The Clerk has requested an invoice from Gislingham Silver Band, and will raise an online payment request after their performance, to be paid directly from the PC's bank account.

**ACTION – Cllr Cross/Cllr Farley as above.**

## **17 D-Day80 Anniversary plans 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024, and approval of expenditure**

Residents have been invited to gather at the Railway Tavern at 7:00pm on Thursday 6th June. Gislingham Silver Band will play two 40-minute sets with a break in between, and at 9:15pm the beacon will be lit.

Expenditure approved as per agenda item 16.

## **18 Approval of new dog bin quotations and location**

Deferred.

## **19 Finance**

A list of payments and receipts, expenditure against the budget, and bank reconciliation to 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2024 were sent to councillors prior to the meeting.

### **i) Confirmation of Barclays bank account balance**

The Barclays bank account balance as of **24<sup>th</sup> April 2024 - £33,258.46**

### **ii) Review and authorisation of payments presented:**

1	J. Challis	Clerk Admin May	£488.74
2	J. Challis	Expenses - mileage April meeting	£5.94
3	HMRC	PAYE/NIC	£20.80
4	Memorial Hall	May meeting	£30.00
5	Memorial Hall	Rural Coffee Caravan May meeting	£20.00
6	L Curtis	Bus shelter cleaning	£18.00

Cllr Cross proposed approval of all payments above; seconded by Cllr Farley and approved unanimously.

### **ACTION**

- **Cllr Read and Cllr Cross to pay agreed payments above via online banking (dual authorisation).**

## **20 Matters for future consideration**

- Wellhead Project
- Traffic/speeding concerns within Mellis
- Phone box-stained glass repairs
- Memorial Hall car park maintenance
- Digitisation of the History of Mellis

**21 The date of the meeting is Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 6:30pm in St Mary the Virgin Church, Mellis (due to the Memorial Hall being unavailable).**

Meeting close at 7:34pm.

**District Councillor’s Report:**

**Gislingham Ward**

**Mellis, Gislingham, Thornham, `Wortham & Burgate, Wickham Skeith Parish Councils**

**May 2024**

Working together	At the Annual Council meeting in May, we are continuing our ethos of working together with all political parties across the Council by ensuring different roles are shared out.
Skills and Innovation Centre at Gateway 14	Also this month, the final funding proposal for developing the Skills and Innovation Centre site on Gateway 14 will be discussed. This is an £18 million plus investment that will help to address green skills and innovation across the district working with local companies and educational facilities. Of the total amount, £6 million is Government funding and over £11 million is from Freeport-related business rates. If agreed, planning permission will be applied for to progress the work.
Supplementary Planning Documents	At June’s Council meeting, councillors will discuss several Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which will support the Joint Local Plan. Consultation on these is currently open (until 19 <sup>th</sup> June) and although these are not planning policies they provide detailed guidance for applicants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Housing (including open market mix, community-led housing, affordable housing and self-build)</li><li>- Biodiversity and Trees (including permitted development, biodiversity net gain, veteran trees and expectations of developers)</li><li>- Intensive Livestock and Poultry (especially the impact on habitats and the local population)</li></ul>
Recycling	The Government is introducing “Simpler Recycling” which will include a food waste collection from April 2026. The first stages in this project were agreed by Cabinet last week as plans are being put in place to ensure we have the resources and facilities to meet this timetable. Note that in Suffolk over 50% of waste thrown into the black bin is recyclable!
Energy efficient housing	The Council was successful in gaining an £800k grant for decarbonising council housing stock. Mid Suffolk will add to this to ensure as comprehensive programme as possible.
Locality Awards 2024/25	Applications for this year’s Locality Awards grants are now open, so we would welcome applications from any community organisation or group. Do get in touch with either of us to discuss options. Information and application forms are available on the website and completed forms should be sent to either of us. <a href="https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/web/mid-suffolk/w/locality-awards">https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/web/mid-suffolk/w/locality-awards</a>

**Cllr. Rowland Warboys** Chair Mid Suffolk District Council 2023/24, Green Party, Gislingham Ward

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**Mid Suffolk District Councillors' Annual Report for 2023/24**

**For the Annual Parish Meeting – 2024**

***New administration***

The result of the May 2023 elections was that the 24 elected Green Party councillors officially became the administration at Mid Suffolk. Councillor Andy Mellen, as Leader outlined our initial priorities to lead and work with other bodies to address the challenges faced by our communities: cost of living, affordable homes, local services, public transport and climate change.

A cabinet of six councillors was formed.

**Andy Mellen** - Performance & Resilience

**Rachel Eburne**- Finance & Resources

**Andrew Stringer**- Heritage, planning & infrastructure

**Tim Weller** - Environment, culture & wellbeing

**Richard Winch** - Housing & property

**Teresa Davis**- Thriving towns & rural communities

Other roles were provided to members of Council across all political parties in line with our view of collaborative politics.

A Plan for the next few years was agreed which placed environmental and social responsibilities at the heart of everything the Council does. In a break with previous administrations this went out to consultation.

***Budget***

For 2023/24 the General Fund budget was for approximately £15.5 million with an expected £2.3 million surplus which will go into reserves. Funds have also had to be provided from the Housing Revenue Account for the backlog of repairs that has built up.

For 2024/25, net expenditure on services is budgeted at £18.5 million with a 2% increase in council tax.

The HRA Account is independent of the Council's General fund and has to be self-financed. Council home rents increased by 7% and sheltered housing service charges also increased. This has been done to ensure the Council can afford the repairs and maintenance that are needed. All these increases are due to inflation, costs of energy and other cost increases.

The Council has reserves of over £28 million as at the end of the financial year plus an expected dividend from the Gateway 14 business park. Plans for this are on a variety of work including new foot/cycle paths, land for biodiversity and green spaces, regeneration of Stowmarket town centre, improved sports provision in the district and enabling community-led housing.

Approval was also given to increasing council tax on empty homes in 2024/25 and implementing increased council tax on second homes in 2025/26.

***Thriving towns and villages***

A group of Councillors has been working on issues around sustainable transport. A new rural transport grants scheme with a pot of £600,000 was set up to help provide passenger transport options across the district.

Approval was gained for the financing of a Green Skills and Innovation Centre on Gateway 14 (G14). This will in part act as a centre of excellence for local businesses and a training site for adults needing new skills. Also on G14, The Range is due to move into the largest building on site and a deal with a sustainable roof products supplier was agreed.

In Stowmarket, the first part of the sports project was approved and work will commence this year for new pitches, an athletics track and other improvements at Chilton Fields and next to the high school.

In conjunction with Suffolk County Council, Mid Suffolk provided much support to residents and businesses affected by the floods of Storm Babet and Storm Ciaran.

The councils of Mid Suffolk and Babergh were jointly awarded *Council of the Year* for their collaboration with different partners, working to improve services and focus on communities.

### ***Environmental sustainability***

The Council launched the *Cosy Homes* scheme, a £2 million project to insulate homes for free. Separately a grant of nearly £1 million was received for retrofitting council homes.

A new *Pride in your Place* grant was established to provide every parish with additional funds to improve the environment for their community.

The Council continues to encourage local groups to improve areas for wildlife and a call for sites from land-owners was made so that more trees can be planted across the district. The annual Tree for Life scheme was again a success and tree, hedging and wildflower packs for communities across the district.

The Council published its Carbon Reduction Management Plan with a focus for this year on improving sheltered housing and further work on the leisure centres.

### ***Planning and Housing***

In November 2023, Part 1 of the Joint Local Plan (JLP) for Mid Suffolk and Babergh was approved and adopted. The JLP sets out a planning framework to guide development in the districts over the period to 2037. JLP Part 1 provides a set of strategic and local development management policies against which planning applications and appeals will be assessed. There are 10 strategic policies (such as on affordable housing, climate change and tourism) and 32 local policies (such as on biodiversity, historic environment and sustainable construction).

With regards to Part 2, the Inspector had acknowledged that 90% of Mid Suffolk's housing target is already allocated (either via existing permissions or sites allocated via Neighbourhood Plans) and that this is central to future policies. Work has been continuing on this with public consultation expected later in 2024.

Separately, to support this, the Council is working on Supplementary Planning Documents. The first three, currently at draft stage, are on Housing, Biodiversity and Intensive Livestock and Poultry.

***The Council continued to oppose the Norwich to Tilbury pylon project raising significant concerns, particularly over the impact on the environment and the effect on local communities.***

Mid Suffolk's annual monitoring report showed that 1,257 new dwellings were built in the district in 2022/23, of which 299 were affordable. This met 144% of the Government target. There are 6,916 outstanding planning permissions (as at 01/04/23) which are either not started or under construction. Mid Suffolk has 10.88 years of housing land supply, well above the Government target of five years.

Over £1.5 million was provided to parish and town councils in the form of the Community Infrastructure Levy during the year.

### ***Supporting the community***

We support local events and community groups where we can and particularly link local groups with external fundraising via the Mid Suffolk community team. Almost £550,000 was allocated by Mid Suffolk District Council Direct to communities across the district from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

MSDC would like to thank the Parish Councils for all their work done throughout the year.

### Mellis Parish Council, May 2024

Councillor Jessica Fleming, Hartismere Division. Tel. 07714-597980 [Jessica.fleming@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Jessica.fleming@suffolk.gov.uk)

**Suffolk Walking Festival** - Kicked off on Saturday 11 May at Thornham Walks, and takes place over two weeks with walks to suit all ages and interests. Tickets for this year's walk are now on sale, visit [www.suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk](http://www.suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk).

**Road Surfacing** – The surface dressing programme begins this week, 102 roads will be surface dressed and a further 319 will receive full machine resurfacing during the coming year. For more information on surface dressing and to view this year's programme please visit: [Surface dressing](#) For resurfacing please visit: [Road Resurfacing](#)

**Grass and Verge Cutting** – the schedule for all Suffolk roads has been published, Mellis is scheduled to have minor roads cut as of 1<sup>st</sup> July. Refer to: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roads-pavements-and-verges/trees-grass-and-weeds/grass-cutting?nodeId=ca661a3d-e7e4-59b5-a821-67f162ee0f54&entryId=f6ada90b-fd63-5a18-b925-fe972eabd818>

**Mellis/ Thrandeston Road Passing Places** – For information, Thrandeston has suggested that passing places on this road would be very helpful. I am meeting with the parish councillors and Josh White on 3<sup>rd</sup> June with to assess the best potential locations for these.

**National Grid Pylons Consultation** – Commenced on 10<sup>th</sup> April, the time period for response has been extended until (26<sup>th</sup> July – tentative) and dates for some engagement events have also been changed. For details including the preliminary environmental impact report (PEIR) and a survey refer to: [nationalgrid.com/norwich-to-tilbury](http://nationalgrid.com/norwich-to-tilbury)

A public meeting was held in Wortham involving Mellis and Burgate on 28<sup>th</sup> May which was well attended. The final public event hosted by National Grid locally was held on 15<sup>th</sup> May in Diss. Suffolk County Cabinet passed a resolution seeking Government and National Grid to pause the process to allow full evaluation of the options presented by ESO (see below).

**Electricity System Operator (ESO) Offshore Coordination Study** – This study is relevant to National Grid's proposals for Norwich to Tilbury. The [ESO East Anglia Network Study](#) was published on 12 March 2024 by The National Grid Electricity System Operator. The study explored options for transmitting power in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex. National Grid has committed to take the results of this study into account in designing the electricity distribution system for this region.

An alternative for onshore above ground transmission includes a - *High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) option* - which could enable undergrounding for the length of the route. Suffolk County Council endorses a pause in National Grid's onshore aboveground proposal and a full review of options within the ESO study, this subject is coming to SCC Cabinet on 21<sup>st</sup> May.

**Waveney Valley Landscape Assessment** - The "[Valued Landscape Assessment](#)" was jointly commissioned by Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils. The study provides evidence of the site's importance, sensitivity and vulnerability to various new energy proposals. It was undertaken by leading landscape consultancy, Alison Farmer Associates, look at the landscape of the Waveney Valley, outside The Broads National Park

**Suffolk Business Board Established** - The Business Board takes over the role of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in providing a voice for Suffolk businesses in Suffolk. It will be chaired by Mark Pendlington, former High Sheriff of Suffolk, with deputy chairman Cllr Matthew Hicks, leader of Suffolk County Council. It's first meeting is later this month, and its focus is on key Suffolk sectors including agri-food, retail, technology, ports and logistics, and the visitor economy.

**School Travel** – Council funded school travel notices will be sent by 10<sup>th</sup> May 2024 with details of how to opt-in. Parents or carers with a child born between 1 September 2019 and 31 August 2020 who have not yet applied for a school place should apply immediately. Refer to the [School Admission pages](#) or by contacting Suffolk County Council on 0345 600 0981.

**Reminder - Consultation on Devolution Proposals Closing Soon** - The 10-week public consultation on our proposed devolution deal with the Government closes on 26<sup>th</sup> May, refer to [www.suffolk.gov.uk/devolution](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/devolution) and social media. The matter will be debated later this summer at full council. Devolution would include:

- A directly elected leader of Suffolk County Council
- Control of a new investment fund worth £480m over the next thirty years
- Local control of the Adult Education Budget each year (worth £9.4m in 2025/26)
- £5.8m one-off funding to prepare brownfield sites for development
- Multi-year transport funding plus £500,000 over two years.

Please get in touch with me if you have questions or comments: [Jessica.fleming@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Jessica.fleming@suffolk.gov.uk) Tel: 07714-597980  
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Firstly, thank you everyone for your support this year, please get in touch with your comments, ideas and suggestions which are always most welcome.

The past year has been dominated by the unusual autumn and winter storm events and the council budget. The Revenue Budget for 2024/5 totals £753 million (up £53m from 2023/4), this has been balanced through transfer from the corporate risk reserve, council tax increase and tight budgeting. Our Chief Financial (Section 151) Officer has made it clear that drawdown from reserves will not be possible in future years. Council tax has been raised by the limit of 4.99% of which 2% is ring fenced for social care. Overall the financial position is sound though challenging.

The council conducted a public survey last autumn to assess spending priorities. Comments supported funding (in priority order): Highways & Infrastructure; Children and Young People; Public Health & Communities; and Adult Social Care. Comments tended not to support further council tax increases on lower bands.

The council is responsible for an array of services including Registrars, Coroners, Libraries, Museums and Archives, Asylum Seekers referred by the Home Office, Community Safety, Fire & Rescue Services, Trading Standards as well as Roads, Waste Disposal, Adult Social Care, Childrens Services including Special Needs and Disabilities (SEND), School Transport, Public Health. More information on these services and partner organisations can be found on the web platform [www.suffolk.gov.uk](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk)

- **Storms and Flooding** – As lead local flood authority, the county council has a duty to investigate ‘significant’ flooding under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act. These investigations help to establish the source of flooding, factors which may have caused or exacerbated the flooding, the impacts on people, services and infrastructure. Usually around 4 Section 19 events occur annually, this year there were at least 100.  
  
The Council has hired (7) new engineers to address urgent flood problems, gathered over 800 flood reports from homes and businesses, and accessed funding from the Government relating to Storm Babet. Work is ongoing.
- **Supporting SEND** – Along with its NHS partners, the council was jointly inspected by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) last November which found significant concerns with the SEND service provided by the NHS and Council. (This was the first joint inspection.) As a result changes have been made, a Shadow Improvement Board set up with membership from both SCC and its NHS partners and a new approach developed that incorporates stronger joint working arrangements. The council has invested additional funds to secure essential specialist staff and is committed to improving all aspects of the service.
- **Bus Service Improvements** – The council will receive £3.6 million of Government funding over the next two years on strengthening and expanding Suffolk’s bus network from the Department for Transport’s Bus Service Improvement Fund Phase 2 to deliver improvements to public transport in Suffolk. Suffolk’s Enhanced Partnership, which represents the county council and local bus operators, has agreed to allocate £1.2 million to support operator - and local community-led proposals for new or enhanced services across the county.
- **Highways Contract** - Milestone Infrastructure, part of M Group Services commenced its new contract on 1 October 2023. Milestone is the Council’s new contract partner for up to 20 years under a contract to provide projects including but not limited to maintaining roads, pavements and rights of way, drainage, hedge trimming, construction of new road schemes, snow-clearing and gritting.

- **Nationally Significant Infrastructure and Large-scale Energy Projects in Suffolk** - Energy developers are bringing forward large-scale energy projects following the latest publication of National Grid's Transmission Entry Capacity (TEC) Register (a list of projects that have secured the right to connect to National Grid's network if consented 2008 by Government). These connection offers form a legally binding contract with National Grid. The current list shows that new projects connections are possible at Bramford near Ipswich, and at Yaxley, near Eye. Other solar arrays are also emerging with the expectation of grid connection.
- **Norwich to Tilbury Pylon Scheme** - Over the past year this scheme has undergone both non-statutory and now statutory consultation on its plans for onshore transmission of power from offshore wind. The National Grid Electricity System Operator has completed a study to assess options for transmission in East Anglia - The [ESO East Anglia Network Study](#). ESO reports on nine potential options for the Norwich to Tilbury scheme including offshore and hybrid schemes. The County Council endorses a pause in the process to review all options.
- **Sizewell C** - Construction 'began' on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 under the terms of its Development Consent Order for the twin 3.2GW nuclear power stations. The council obtained significant improvements to plans during the project's examination by the Planning Inspectorate, including maximising transport of construction materials by rail and sea rather than by road. For more information refer to [Suffolk County Council's role in Sizewell C](#) . During construction the council will have a number of responsibilities:
  - Oversight of discharge requirements (equivalent to planning conditions) to maintain control over highways, archaeology and flooding
  - Project governance including chairing the Transport Review Group
  - Administering funding secured through a Deed of Obligation (a legal agreement between Sizewell C, Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council to limit the scheme's impact on local communities during construction).