

Parish Report – July 2022

Councillor: Andy Mellen

Green, LibDem and Independent Group

Thedwastre North Division

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For information on local support during the Cost-of-Living Crisis, visit:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/suffolk-advice-and-support-service/>

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

For information on supporting Ukrainian refugees in Suffolk, email:

refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk

Suffolk GLI call for a Cost-of-Living Emergency to be declared

There is a Full Council meeting on the 7th July. The opposition group have submitted a motion calling for SCC to declare a Cost-of-Living Emergency, and for the Council to redirect funds and efforts towards targeting those most vulnerable.

Prices for fuel, food and energy are increasing as the real value of wages are cut by the rise in inflation. Our motion calls on the government to provide further support to those falling below the poverty line.

In addition, we are calling on the government to make it easier and cheaper to insulate homes. Our motion asks to waive VAT on energy-saving materials, such as insulation, and adequately fund a retrofitting programme so that households can save money on their bills during winter where energy prices are due to rise even further.

Cabinet Meeting: SEND Capital Programme

Cabinet met on 20th June to vote on funding the next phase of SCC's programme to build more capacity for SEND children in education. The cabinet agreed a package of £15.9m, as part of a £45m programme.

Currently, there is a high demand for SEND services, with requests for placement going up by 32% since 2020. The funding Cabinet have agreed will create three new specialist units across Suffolk.

Our Group supported such a project, but was mindful of the rising demand and what was needed for the future. The Cabinet agreed a third phase was required, which will be discuss later this year.

National Grid East Anglia GREEN consultation: SCC submit a rejecting response

The county council's response to this consultation was submitted and is very much aligned with others: MPs, the affected district councils and individual councillors have all expressed concern about the proposals and have called for an off-shore cable route, as part of a strategic power

network linking North Sea windfarms into the grid. There will be a further debate on these issues at the full council meeting on 7th July.

Petition for in-house Suffolk Highways maintenance contract: Still need signatures!

Our Group's petition is still live, requesting that SCC produces an in-house bid for the new Suffolk Highways contract. The contract, which will have been held by Kier for 10 years, is up for renewal next year.

Since Kier's arrival, our Group has seen astronomical prices for the maintenance of Suffolk's highways. Some of these prices include £5,000 for a pair of dropped kerbs, £7,500 to cut down a single tree, and £10,000 to design (not build) four humps in a road.

Our Group believes an in-house bid from SCC to take back control of Suffolk Highways is needed to get things done. The bid would also provide a necessary benchmark for any competitive bid coming from external companies, making sure Suffolk taxpayers money is not exploited.

We need 3,675 signatures to bring this to debate at the Council. Please sign here (ensure you make you name public, or it won't count!):

https://www.petitions.net/for_suffolk_county_council_to_develop_an_in-house_bid_for_suffolk_highways_maintenance

Bridge on A1088 at Stowlangtoft

Detailed plans are now being drawn up for the reconstruction of this bridge, which is currently under a 7.5T temporary weight restriction due to faults discovered during a routine inspection. This temporary restriction expires in November 2023, but Highways are looking to extend this, which probably gives an indication of how long the works are likely to take (Nov. 2023 is two years since the restrictions first came in).