

Parish Report – February 2022

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

www.suffolk.gov.uk/CostOfLiving

For information on supporting Ukrainian refugees in Suffolk, email:

refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk or ukrainesupport@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk

Homes for Ukraine: One Year Anniversary of War

The 24th February marked the one-year anniversary since Russia's illegal and immoral invasion of Ukraine. Suffolk continues to do its part through the Homes for Ukraine programme – hosting refugees fleeing the war. In total, 1256 Ukrainian refugees have arrived in Suffolk through the programme. Currently, we have around 330 host families, supporting 750 Ukrainians – with others in private accommodation. Suffolk is in need of new hosts, to continue to offer a safe haven for Ukrainian refugees who are not yet ready to enter private accommodation. Based on numbers, Suffolk needs 50 new hosts in the coming months.

If you think you can help, please visit www.suffolk.gov.uk/Ukraine. Hosts are entitled to £350 per month, which increases to £500 after 12 months.

SCC Financial Budget

At the beginning of February, the Council's budget for 2023/24 was voted in. The Conservative budget will now increase tax by 3.99% - broken down into a 2% rise in the Social Care Precept and a 1.99% increase in general tax.

The Council is not on track to achieve Net Zero by 2030, Therefore, we proposed an additional 0.89% increase (19p weekly increase) to ensure vital services were protected from cutting support to residents, and that more direct action is taken to reduce carbon emissions.

Our Group proposed to invest in a Carbon Budget Officer, to help develop a stronger pathway towards Net Zero. In addition, we proposed to facilitate a review into Suffolk's speed limits, in the hope to provide residents with a clearer path to more appropriate travel in their communities.

We proposed using £1m to actively recruit, retain and reward frontline staff in adult social care, as **well as providing more for Suffolk Libraries** . In addition, we wanted to invest £1m in providing wider capacity of community transport to be used to help achieve Net Zero through EV vehicle usage. I,m afraid these were voted down by the administration group

SCC Cabinet Meeting

The Cabinet agreed to move the West Suffolk Archives in Bury St Edmunds to a new location in the town on Western Way. I know the current location has many problems including accessibility.

Finally, the Cabinet discussed the Fire & Rescue Service's new risk management plan. The plan outlines all foreseeable risks in Suffolk and indicates the service's priorities and proposals to improve the service. Currently, the service suffers from low recruitment, poor retainment of officers, unmet response targets, and an increase in demand through extreme heatwaves caused by climate change. Our Group support the plan, hoping more investment can now be provided to the essential and increasingly ever-needed service.

New Highways Services: Contract Agreed

Milestone Infrastructure, part of M Group Services, has been awarded SCC's new highways services contract. The contract, worth between £800m-£1bn, will begin 1st October 2023 and will last up to 20 years. The service will provide maintenance of roads, pavement, Rights of Way, drainage, hedges, construction of new roads, and snow clearing – this is not an exhaustive list.

Our Group campaigned last year for Suffolk Highways maintenance to be brought back in-house.

We have been given reassurance from Suffolk Highways that the same mistakes will not repeat, and that the contract is more robust to deal with the inflated quotes previously received. However, our Group will closely monitor to ensure this is the case.

Household Support Fund: Extension Granted by Government

The Government has agreed to extend the Household Support Fund, meaning local authorities will continue to receive funding to help residents through the current cost-of-living crisis. The grant is distributed through small payments to support vulnerable household meet daily needs such as food, clothing, and utilities.

To apply for help, visit Suffolk's Cost-of-Living support leaflet at:

<https://suffolk.pagetiger.com/cost-of-living-support/scc1>

MIDSUFFOLK

Full council agreed no increase in midsuffolk part of the council tax and did agree my groups amendment to allocation extra funds towards getting more homes better insulated and up to higher standards.

NEW COMMUNITY GRANTS POT' ; an new pot has been established for community projects including project feasibility studies were excluded from CIL money

CULTURE, HERITAGE AND VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGY; a lot of information has been collected in order to increase the economic and cultural sectors

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