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# **Parish Report – FEBRUARY 2023**

# **Councillor: Penny Otton**

For information on local support during the Cost-of-Living Crisis, visit: [www.suffolk.gov.uk/CostOfLiving](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/CostOfLiving)

For information on supporting Ukrainian refugees in Suffolk, email: [refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk) or [ukrainesupport@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk](mailto:ukrainesupport@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk)

**SCC Financial Budget**

SCC is currently going through its process to approving the budget for 2023/24.

The Conservative budget proposes a 3.99% increase in tax, broken down into a 2% rise in the Social Care Precept and a 1.99% increase in general tax. The Council aim to make most of its savings through increasing the number of unfunded vacancies amongst the Council’s workforce.

Our Group believes that impact council services have faced this year requires the Council to increase general tax by an additional 0.89%. We have proposed how we would spend the additional funding to protect services from the rising demand and costs.

**GLI Budget Amendments – Funding Vital Services**

Our Group has proposed amendments to the Conservative budget for 2023/24. Initially, we would propose to increase the general tax closer to the Government-recommended amount, which will be a 0.89% increase. This equates to a £9.94 annual rise, or a 19p weekly rise for a Band B property, and would generate just over £3.3m.

Currently, SCC is not on track to achieve Net Zero by 2030. Our Group proposes to invest in a Carbon Budget Officer, to help develop a clearer pathway towards Net Zero. In addition, we propose to facilitate a county-wide review into Suffolk’s speed limits.

On the frontline, we will use £1m to actively recruit Occupational Therapists and Social Workers, as well as invest more into Suffolk Libraries to help maintain their necessary services through the cost-of-living crisis. In addition, we would invest £1m in providing wider capacity of community transport to be used to help achieve Net Zero through EV vehicle usage.

**Carbon Budget – SCC is Not on Track**

At the beginning of January, the Scrutiny Committee met to discuss the Carbon Budget.

This year’s carbon budget shows that SCC is not on track to reach Net Zero by 2030. Current forecasts show that SCC will still be producing 10,000 tonnes of CO2 in 2030 – that’s still half of what we are emitting now. Our Group believes more needs to be done to improve the accuracy of calculating all of SCC’s emissions, which is why we have proposed a Carbon Budget Officer is employed to provide a sole focus on improving the reporting of carbon emissions.

**SCC’s Further Investment in Trees & Hedgerows**

SCC are planning to invest £110,000 in managing and inspecting trees and hedgerows. The money will be used to ensure that trees and hedgerows are given the best chance to thrive.

Currently, the Council has planted around 50,000 trees and hedges this planting season. This comes as the latest science indicates trees can capture nearly twice the amount of carbon as previously thought. Our Group believes this highlights the greater need to plant more trees, and more importantly how crucial it is to not unnecessarily cut trees down.

For more info, visit: <https://phys.org/news/2022-12-uk-woodlands-carbon-previously.html>

A14 PUBLIC MEETINGS; having passed the info of the dates and information about the work. It is important to note any problems with traffic not using the diversions.

LOCALITY BUDGET; now agree for the hedge work.

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