

District Cllr Report Thurston Ward

Beyton, Norton, Thurston, Tostock, Stowlangtoft

February 2024

MSDC Meeting.

Mid Suffolk District Council meeting in February. The budget was approved. The MSDC part of the council tax will be increased by 2% which is lower than most councils in the country. The MSDC part of the council tax bill is about 8% with the rest to Suffolk County Council and the Police.

The council also approved changes to the second home and empty home council tax charges. There are more than 680 empty properties in Mid Suffolk, which councillors are keen to see used to meet growing housing need.

The councils already impose a council tax premium on the owners of properties that are empty and unfurnished for two years or longer, but under new legislation, the councils would be able to target empty properties after just one year from April 2024 – and impose a levy on second home owners from April 2025.

At meetings this week, both councils agreed a new joint policy that will see the owners of properties left empty for a year or more paying double, with a premium of up to 100% from April 2024; properties empty for five years or more seeing their council tax bills treble with a premium of up to 200%; and owners of properties left empty for 10 years facing quadrupled bills, with a premium of up to 300%.

Owners of 542 second homes in Mid Suffolk will see their council tax bill double from April 2025.

The definition of a second home for council tax purposes would be a property which there is 'no one resident' but that is 'substantially furnished'. There will be exceptions, in line with Government policy, expected to include properties being actively marketed for sale or rent for a limited period, houses going through probate, caravan pitches or houseboat moorings (I can't think of many houseboats in the area)

Mid Suffolk District Council has launched a new rural transport grants scheme to help provide passenger transport routes across the district, connecting local communities and reducing emissions, by providing viable alternatives to solo car journeys.

As well as the Cosy homes scheme, MSDC have a loft insulation offer (here: [Funding and Support for Homeowners and Renters – Green Suffolk](#)) Funding is available to help residents make their homes warmer with extra loft insulation to help save money on their energy bills.

MSDC have approved a grant to New Green Community Trust for new doors at Thurston's New Green Centre - £10,000.00

Network Rail – foot crossing at Thurston Station.

Still no sign of the final report which was due by the end of November.2023 Our preferred option is the reinstatement of the tunnel under the tracks.

Flooding.

The worst flooding in the villages (that we're aware of) was the road between Beyton & Thurston but If any properties have experienced flooding damage, grants are available from MSDC to assist. Apparently this is the wettest February on record so some locations are suffering from flooding despite not being affected previously.

Locality grants

Austin & David still have some locality budget which needs to be applied for before 22 March..

David Bradbury & Austin Davies

Mid Suffolk District Councillors

Email: austin.davies@midsuffolk.gov.uk

david.bradbury@midsuffolk.gov.uk

Telephone: David 07514951188

Austin 07900 791668