

Parish Report – February 2024

Councillor
Penny Otton
Thedwastre South

Penny.otton@suffolk.gov.uk

07545423847

Council Budget for 2024-25

At Scrutiny Committee on 11 January, we got our first look at the proposed budget for the financial year 2024-25. The council has projected increased spend for areas such as social care and SEND which are statutory services – this means that the council is required to spend this money by law. As a result this will lead to cuts in Housing Related Support for those at risk of homelessness, support for people with learning disabilities and autism, and to the Skills team, who support young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). The proposal is for 4.99% increase in council tax which includes the 2% for adult social care.

A proposed 100% cut to funding for museums and arts organisations from April 2025, with the funding for 2024-25 coming from government Covid monies to provide a transition period. My group opposes the arts cuts and the other savings, which will hit the most vulnerable in our county. The budget proposals will be voted on during the Full Council meeting on Thursday 15 February. Since then there is a proposal to set up a grants application fund but this still leaves many with a current shortfall.

CLOSURE OF BURY RECORDS OFFICE; the proposal is to relocate to Ipswich which I cannot support as this means people from the west of the county needing to travel .

Autism Strategy for Suffolk

At the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board on 18 January, the first draft of a Suffolk autism strategy was discussed, which will increase awareness and support for autistic people and make sure local services are accessible and meeting their needs. The strategy was commissioned by Suffolk County Council and local NHS providers and has been developed in co-production with Suffolk people with autism to reflect their views and experiences.

New Funding to Combat Serious Violence

Suffolk's Safer Stronger Communities Board has announced a fund of £150,000 from the Home Office to support Suffolk's Serious Violence Strategy. Organisations can bid for funding for specific projects which support the work of Suffolk's Serious Violence Strategy, with allocation of funding managed through Suffolk Community Foundation. The Serious Violence Strategy focuses on young people and communities at risk of becoming involved in serious violence, and the funding for projects is available to charities, voluntary sector organizations, social enterprises, parish councils, educational settings and other public bodies from April 2024. Applications are invited for grants between £4,000 and £15,000 and organisations can apply by visiting: <https://www.suffolkcf.org.uk/grants/seriousviolencedutyfund/>

'Good Journey' Scheme for Visitor Attractions

Visitor attractions in Suffolk are invited to sign up for a new scheme promoting car-free days out in the county. Suffolk Growth Partnership and Suffolk County Council have

teamed up with national organisation 'Good Journey' to create the scheme, which launches in March.

Around 25 local tourism and visitor attractions are invited to join the Suffolk Good Journey scheme offering residents and visitors discounts and incentives to leave the car at home and explore more of the county on foot, by bike or using public transport. Participating attractions will be supported and will feature on goodjourney.org.uk which provides travel information and discounts to domestic and international visitors and there will a marketing campaign to promote it. Visitor attractions and venues interested in joining Suffolk Good Journey can find out more details by contacting Loretta Jones at Good Journey on loretta@goodjourney.org.uk or info@suffolkgrowth.co.uk

Blue Badge Team - Change of Telephone Number

As a direct result of customer feedback, the Blue Badge phone number will be changing, and there will now be a dedicated phone line for Blue Badge customers. From **31 January** the Blue Badge team will be answering enquires on **03456 066 077**, this number will be visible online across the SCC Website, InfoLink and any future published materials. This is a change from the current telephone number, which is 0808 800 4005.

For more information about how you can apply for a blue badge or assist someone to make an application, please visit <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/parking/blue-badge-scheme>

FLOODING AND HIGHWAYS;

I put your idea to Thurston about a joint meeting and they are happy to do so.

We are still waiting for the report back on the possible STOP sign end of slip road

I have spoken with Neil Jarvis and he is happy to work with us even when he is no longer at mid Suffolk.

Photos of the flooding under the flyover have been sent to the floods team

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Cost of Living help and advice:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/family.page?familychannel=6>

Benefits advice and support:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/adult.page?adultchannel=0>

Flood preparation advice: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolk-fire-and-rescue-service/fire-and-rescue-safety-advice-in-the-community/preparing-for-flooding>

Flood recovery advice and support: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/flood-recovery-information-for-suffolk>