

District Councillor Report – Harry Richardson

1 October 2025

Local government reorganisation	As mentioned in my last report, Suffolk County Council and Mid Suffolk District Council (the latter working with the other Districts in Suffolk and Ipswich Borough Council) have submitted their plans for local government reorganisation. A public consultation will be held by the Government later this year and a final decision is expected in early 2026 on the future of local government in Suffolk—this being either one or three unitary authorities across the county.
Stowmarket High School expansion	The high school in Stowmarket will have its' capacity extended from 900 to 1,200 students. This is to reflect the significant housing growth in the town and in neighbouring villages such as Elmswell and Woolpit. The total cost is around £10m, with £4.8m coming from CIL funding, £3.6m from S106 funding, and £1.6m from Suffolk County Council. This also follows the ongoing expansion to Thurston Community College.
Winter loneliness fund reopens	The Living Well in Winter grant provides support to local organisations—including town and parish councils, village hall and playing field committees, sports clubs and centres, charities, social enterprises, community shops, and community interest companies—to facilitate accessible and inclusive spaces, as well as affordable activities designed to help individuals maintain social connections throughout the winter months. Up to £2,000 can be applied for and applications must be submitted by Sunday 19 October. In the previous year, this scheme 13 in Mid Suffolk projects, which included initiatives such as warm spaces, coffee mornings, film screenings, and dance classes. The application window for the grant has now reopened, with funding available for programmes that foster social connections, enhance physical and mental wellbeing, and provide welcoming community hubs. Eligible projects may include lunch clubs, after-school groups, affordable family sports sessions, craft workshops, community cafés, or other initiatives aimed at uniting residents and supporting them during the colder season.
Grant funding opportunities	Babergh and Mid Suffolk grants and funding team will be hosting a free funding summit on Thursday 6 November at Blackbourne Community Centre, Elmswell, from 9am to 2.30pm. The event will help community organisations access the funding they need and is being delivered in partnership with Suffolk Community Foundation, Community Action Suffolk, Suffolk County Council and the National Lottery Community Fund. Book online here: Conference Booking Form : AideCRM

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