

District Councillor Annual Report – Harry Richardson

2025 / 2026

<p>Local Government Reorganisation</p>	<p>The government has announced that there will be three unitary authorities in Suffolk: Western Suffolk, Central and Eastern Suffolk, and Ipswich and Southern Suffolk.</p> <p>These will be formally established on 1st April 2028, at which point the Districts, Borough and County Councils in Suffolk will be abolished. Elections to ‘shadow unitary authorities’ will be held in May 2027, with an initial five-year term.</p> <p>All of the current District ward of Thurston (Beyton, Norton, Stowlangtoft, Thurston and Tostock) will be part of the new ‘Western Suffolk’ authority, with varying consequences.</p>
<p>Budget 2026/27</p>	<p>Mid Suffolk’s Council Tax will rise by 2.99% in 2026/27 following a decision on 26 February. Mid Suffolk is currently forecast to achieve a surplus of £3.6m for the next financial year. A proposed budget amendment by the Mid Suffolk Independents to freeze Council Tax was rejected by 22 votes to 6.</p>
<p>Community Infrastructure Levy changes</p>	<p>At the beginning of 2025/26, Mid Suffolk agreed to move away from the bi-annual CIL submission window (i.e. two opportunities per year) to a rolling application process. This has been well received and has allowed CIL bids to come forward as soon as they are ready, rather than waiting for the appropriate submission window.</p>
<p>Local Plan update</p>	<p>Following the government’s decision on Local Government Reorganisation, local planning authorities in the county (including Mid Suffolk) will need to decide whether to continue developing their own, independent Local Plans or to pause current work and instead focus on plans that are aligned to the forthcoming local authority geographies (i.e. Western Suffolk, for us).</p>
<p>Changes to refuse collection</p>	<p>From June 2026 there will be changes to refuse collection in Mid Suffolk. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reduction in general refuse (black bin) collections from once every fortnight to once every three weeks. • A weekly food waste (bin caddy) collections. • Fortnightly collections of recycling for glass, cartons, and plastic film. <p>Fortnightly collections for other recycling will remain unchanged. Residents should have hopefully received a pamphlet explaining the changes, and a new blue-topped bin for the glass / carton / plastic film recycling.</p> <p>Garden waste collection is also unchanged.</p>

Locality budget

I am pleased to report that I have spent every penny of the £10,000 locality budget that I was allocated for 2025/26. A breakdown of my locality spending is as follows:

Applicant	Item	Allocation
Thurston library	New chairs	£1,000
Thurston croquet club	Maintenance costs	£1,000
Thurston Community College	Replacement football goals for community use	£1,437.25
Thurston youth project	First aid kits, clothes, running costs, etc.	£562.75
Norton Parish Council	Speed indicator device	£2,000
Norton Village Hall	New set of tables	£4,000
TOTAL:		£10,000

As you can see my locality funding was spent exclusively in Norton and Thurston this year (based on the applications I received, not any deliberate focus on my part), so I would strongly encourage applications from Beyton, Stowlangtoft, and Tostock in 2026/27.

My locality budget for 2026/27, again an allocation of £10,000, is now open for applications so please do let me know if there are any potential expressions of interest.

Cllr Harry Richardson

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