



Great Bricett Annual Parish Meeting

MINUTES of the Annual Parish Meeting held at the Village Hall on Tuesday, 13th May 2025 at 7pm

PRESENT: Cllr S Burnett (PC), Cllr A Autcherlonie (PC), Cllr L Jefferson (PC), Cllr S Tetlow (PC)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs Jennie Blackburn (Clerk), County Cllr Kay Oakes, District Cllr Dan Pratt and two members of the public.

GB01/25/26 - CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman of Great Bricett, Cllr Sue Burnett, welcomed those present.

GB02/25/26 - APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Cllr Michelle Parnell (PC), Cllr Richard Morley (PC), Arland Shawe-Taylor (PCC) and Mr Gough (Ringshall Primary School).

GM03/25/26 - MINUTES 14th MAY 2024

The minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting, held on 14th May 2024, were approved as a true record and were duly signed by the Chair.

GB04/25/26 - REPORTS RELATING TO THE PARISH

Representatives of the following organisations were invited to speak and answer any questions. Where received, their reports are attached to the Minutes.

- a) **Great Bricett Parish Council – Cllr Sue Burnett**
(Full report attached to these Minutes)

Cllr Burnett's report was circulated prior to the meeting and would be published on the village website.

No questions were asked.

- b) **Suffolk County Council – Cllr Kay Oakes**
(Full report attached to these Minutes)

Cllr Oakes' report was circulated prior to the meeting and would be published on the village website.

No questions were asked.

- c) **Mid-Suffolk District Council – Cllr Daniel Pratt**
(Full report attached to these Minutes)

Cllr Pratts' report was circulated prior to the meeting and would be published on the village website.

No questions were asked.

d) **Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC)**

(Full report attached to these Minutes)

A representative from the VHMC was not present at the meeting and a report had not been received.

e) **Parochial Church Council (PCC) – Arland Shawe-Taylor**

(Full report attached to these Minutes)

Arland Shawe-Taylor was not present at the meeting. His report was circulated prior to the meeting and would be published on the village website.

f) **Ringshall Primary School – Mr Gough**

(Full report attached to these Minutes)

Mr Gough was not present at the meeting. His report had been circulated prior to the meeting and would be published on the village website.

g) **Community Speed Watch – Cllr Sue Burnett**

(Full report attached to these Minutes)

Cllr Burnett's report was circulated prior to the meeting and would be published on the village website.

No questions were asked.

h) **Tree Warden / Community Woodland – Cllr Sue Burnett**

(Full report attached to these Minutes)

Cllr Burnett's report was circulated prior to the meeting and would be published on the village website.

No questions were asked.

i) **Wattisham Airfield – Martin Kinsey**

Martin Kinsey was not present at the meeting and a report had not been received.

GB05/25/26 - PUBLIC FORUM

No matters were raised.

The meeting closed at 7.05pm.

Chairman

Date

Chairman's Report 2024-25

We have had quite an eventful year which saw a longstanding Councillor Judy Walsh, resigning, we thank her for her input over the years and for working hard to ensure that our Village Hall is well used. We welcome Steve Tetlow to the Parish Council.

The PC considered whether or not we should try to create a Village Plan, it was generally decided that it would be a considerable amount of work which we were not prepared to take on, however it seems possible that this may be considered again in the coming year.

There may be an opportunity to purchase some land in the Village, this matter has had considerable support from the Village. We wait to hear more.

Sometime ago we decided we would try to get the Village Green registered at the Land Registry as belong to the village to ensure its future. This has been going on for ages, but we have just been notified that nothing has been found that would make this possible – oh well we tried.

National Grid plans to install a series of Pylons across East Anglia, Norwich to Tilbury. Great Bricett along with many other villages have protested that there are other alternatives available including offshore and underground, rather than the unsightly environmentally unfriendly option. The protest goes on.

Many problems on the village have been overcome for example: clearing of the ditches in the village, plans for double yellow lines at Three Releet corner to restrict parking at this hazardous spot and action to ensure that dog owners use the Poo Bins provided in the village.

Suffolk Highways has advertised a 'Self Help' scheme so that some maintenance can be carried out locally. Two Councillors have volunteered to go on the day course to get more information and to prepare for this opportunity.

An update on the Community Woodland is included in the Tree Warden report.

Our thanks go to Arland for moving our SID machine regularly, to Lesley for sanding the Noticeboard. Also to Kay (County Councillor) and Dan (District Councillor) who work on our behalf, not to mention Jennie, our Clerk for all her hard work, and managing to negotiate a new email address.

March 2024

Even more potholes filled as Roadmender trial hits Suffolk

The Roadmender has arrived in Suffolk, as the county sees a 34% increase in pothole repairs through extra investment, more resource, and new ways of working.

The county council has been working to repair the increasing number of potholes which have been breaking out following very wet and cold weather recently. One way in which the council is increasing its repair rate is by trialling new methods of fixing potholes.

Suffolk Highways welcomed ‘Highway Workforce’ with their Roadmender Elastomac solution - a repair method which results in sealed, longer-lasting pothole repairs, which are quicker to carry out. The trial which began on 11 March, is eco-friendly and lowers the carbon footprint of repairs by 80% is effectively supporting Suffolk Highways in its fight against the rising number of potholes on the county’s roads. The ‘Roadmender’ works on both asphalt and concrete roads and is designed for repairs to all types of road defects and is capable of overlaying areas with multiple defects in a single visit. The process is more efficient, reducing material and waste by 90% and avoiding unnecessary disruption on roads.

April 2024

Highways Report and Statistics

Since Storm Babet in October 2023 (which generally coincided with the commencement of the new highways contract with Milestone) there has been a substantial increase in the number of customer reports received by Suffolk Highways.

Annual data from 2022/23 (40,003 customer reports) and 2023/24 (60,043 customer reports to 23 February) shows there has been an increase of over 20,000 reports so far in 2023/24.

If this continues at the same rate, it is expected that the volume of customer reports could top 65,000 representing a 63% increase on last year.

Between October and February, Suffolk Highway completed in total **10,533 safety defect repairs**, a 45% increase on the last 2 years. **7,328 road defect repairs** have been completed since October. During the period October to February, the average number of reactive gangs provided is 20.2 per day (excluding Dragon Patcher).

For the same period during 2022/23, the old contract provided an average of 12.6 reactive gangs per day.

May 2024

East of England local authorities collaborate to appeal for more foster families to work with their council

Eleven local authorities across the East of England have joined forces in a bid to collectively recruit more foster carers to look after some of the region's most vulnerable children.

Suffolk is taking part in a new initiative for fostering under the banner Foster East. There is an urgent need for foster carers in the East of England with more than 7,000 vulnerable children already in the care of their local authority, and a further 150 children coming into care every month.

The Foster East initiative which is funded by the Department of Education and launched today Wednesday 29 May 2024, is a new, collaborative approach to foster carer recruitment and support.

Councils will work together to provide more comprehensive training, support and best practice. Each applicant will be nurtured through their fostering journey with their local council and via a buddy network. Foster East advisors will help people find out how fostering can become part of their life.

In Suffolk there are more than 900 children and young people ranging from babies to 18-year-olds who need safe, loving and nurturing homes where they can thrive and develop. Every local authority aims to keep children and young people local to their support networks, but a shortage of foster families in our area means this is not always possible.

Fostering is a flexible role with options for short term care from a weekend a month to longer term opportunities, all providing life-changing support for local children.

June 2024

Residents advised - don't do business with cold callers

Suffolk Trading Standards is reminding people to stay alert to the risk of being ripped off by cold callers knocking on their doors.

The warning comes after recent incidents of people approaching householders on the doorstep and touting for business.

Suffolk Trading Standards advises people to only use businesses registered with the Suffolk Trusted Trader scheme.

Trading Standards urged anyone thinking of having home improvement work done to use a business that has been vetted and approved under the Suffolk Trusted Trader scheme.

Residents can also protect themselves and their neighbours by nominating their area to become a No Cold Calling Zone, of which there are now more than 200 across Suffolk.

July 2024

Councillors recommended to approve an extra £9.1 million for SEND services

Suffolk County Council's Cabinet will discuss a further investment of £9.1 million over three years to expand special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) services at its meeting next Wednesday 24 July.

- Funding would pay for new permanent SEND staff to support children and young people
- If approved, this year more than £20 million would have been committed to expanding the service
- Investment to be discussed at Cabinet next week

The additional investment would mean that more than 30 new permanent members of staff could be recruited to help the council keep up with expected need for SEND services and deliver its important improvement plans. It would also pay for contracts to secure more educational psychology capacity – key to helping children and young people access the help they need.

This investment is in addition to the £11.2 million over three years agreed by Cabinet in February 2024, which is being used to grow the SEND team by 15% or around 60 members of staff.

In total, the council is proposing to commit more than £20 million over the next three years to bolster SEND services.

Of the £9.1 million, £2.6 million will be spent in 2024/25. This investment in permanent staff will recur in subsequent years as they continue to support children and young people with SEND. In 2025/26, £500,000 will be added to the SEND budget and in 2026/27, a further £500,000 will be added – both of which will be recurrent in subsequent years.

This investment follows an Area SEND inspection by Ofsted and CQC in November 2023, which found widespread failings across the Local Area Partnership. As a result of this, the partnership, which delivers SEND services and is made up of Suffolk County Council, the NHS Suffolk and Northeast Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB) and NHS Norfolk and Waveney ICB, published a Priority Action Plan. One of the actions in the plan includes increasing the timeliness and quality of Education, Health and Care plans and Annual Reviews. The proposed new staff would, in part, support the delivery of this work.

August 2024

Small improvements needed as children’s services’ Ofsted report published

Ofsted has published its report into Suffolk County Council’s children’s services. The report rated the service as ‘requires improvement to be good’.

The ILACS (Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services) report conveys a mixed picture across Suffolk. Importantly, inspectors concluded that children’s safeguarding is strong and that the experiences and progress of children in care were good. They also reported that ‘children in care thrive’. However, they highlighted weakness in some of the processes and systems in place. These included inconsistencies with the way first contact with children and young people is processed, and the quality and support to children aged 16 and 17 who present as homeless. It also found inconsistencies in the level of understanding that care leavers have about the range of support available to them.

The report outlined seven points for improvement, which have either been implemented already through small amends to systems or processes or are in progress.

September 2024

Uncertainty looms for 177,000 Suffolk residents currently eligible for winter fuel payments

As many as 177,000 Suffolk residents are currently eligible for winter fuel payments and should be protected from Government plans to cut the allowance, Suffolk County Council has warned.

According to 2023 mid-year population estimates from the ONS, around 177,000 people over the age of 66 in Suffolk are eligible for these crucial payments, leaving them potentially vulnerable if they are withdrawn.

In response, Suffolk County Council's leader, Councillor Matthew Hicks, has written to all the county's MPs - urging them to vote against the proposed changes. The council is particularly concerned that rural areas, like much of Suffolk, will be disproportionately affected due to reliance on expensive oil heating and the added burden of rural deprivation.

Rural homes are statistically less energy efficient compared to urban homes, meaning they require more energy to maintain a healthy temperature. Furthermore, many rural homes are not connected to mains gas, forcing households to rely on more costly heating sources like wood, canister gas, or oil. The price of heating oil has now risen to 66p per litre, a 12p increase since 2020.

October 2024

Suffolk County Council set on major investment to further protect Suffolk from flooding as it calls on Government to 'step up'

Suffolk County Council has announced its intention to invest another £1.5 million to carry out important flooding prevention work.

- Council set to agree £1.5 million to deliver first phase of works identified in initial flood investigation reports
- Authority calls on Government to recognise ongoing impact of Storm Babet and fund £20 million of further prevention work urgently needed
- Extensive work already completed since Storm Babet including more than 111,000 drains cleared and significant road repairs.

The commitment comes as initial flood investigation reports have identified that a further £20 million is needed to complete the work – a figure that the county council can't afford. The council has therefore written to the Flooding Minister, Emma Hardy MP, and demanded the government step up and plug the funding gap.

- [Read the council's letter to DEFRA](#)

Examples of the kind of projects that could be delivered include:

1. Creating flood water retention ponds in land above villages and green spaces within communities to capture water and slow the flow into residential areas.
2. Installing flood doors and non-return valves on drains to stop water entering properties that are particularly at risk of flooding.
3. Help landowners with advice and guidance, especially those within responsibilities to maintain ditches and streams on their properties (known as 'riparian ownership').
4. Bolstering Suffolk Highways' resources to deliver planned and reactive maintenance on the county's roads and footpaths.

Storm Babet struck between October 18 and 21 last year and caused substantial flooding and disruption across Suffolk. A month's worth of rain fell in 24 hours, flooding more than 900 homes and businesses. The impact of the storm was exceptional and demanded an urgent multiagency response.

So far, Suffolk County Council has committed more than £13.75 million for work to aid recovery from Storm Babet. Suffolk County Council has made several achievements as part of our continued commitment to reduce flood risk.

The council has already committed £12.25 million, including:

- £1 million on bringing in additional flood investigation specialists
- £1.25 million for repairs to Suffolk's highways following the flood damage
- £10 million funding, which was committed in 2021, to address long-standing drainage issues over three years. This complements £2 million a year invested in drainage repairs and improvements funded from the Department for Transport maintenance grant.

The council has completed seven location-based flood investigations, with an estimated 50 to complete. This compares to an average of three or four investigations in an average year. These reports provide a detailed account of events for each flooding location and recommendations for other organisations, landowners, businesses and residents.

Carried out extensive works on Suffolk's highways. Specifically:

- Cleared 96% of highway drainage gullies across Suffolk, more than 111,000. This involves lifting the iron grates and sucking up the debris that has washed off the roads
- Attended more than 3,500 emergency call outs for flooding related incidents – an unprecedented number. This includes pumping an estimated 2.5million litres of water from the roads, removing 53 tonnes of debris and clearing 121 fallen trees
- Rolled out the [DEFRA-funded Recovery Scheme](#) which meant that flooded property owners could apply for up to £5,000 to make their homes and businesses more resilient to future flooding. Suffolk County Council is administering the scheme on behalf of government. [Applications are open until April 2025.](#)

The new money is set to be agreed by the council's Cabinet on 5 November.

November 2024

Suffolk's new gritting fleet to keep county safe and moving during the colder weather

With temperatures forecast to drop, Suffolk's new gritting fleet will commence its winter season shortly, treating thousands of miles of roads to help minimise risk for highway users.

During the warmer autumn months, highway teams have been carefully planning for the winter gritting operations, preparing for the potential snow and ice that winter will bring.

In total, there are 36 gritters ready for action, with two additional spare vehicles available to be deployed to any location, if needed.

The new fleet is equipped with advanced digital systems and the latest route planning software to support winter maintenance drivers and enable them to grit their routes efficiently and effectively.

All gritters in the fleet use hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO), which reduces carbon dioxide emissions by around 90%, supporting Suffolk County Council's continued commitment to protect and enhance our environment.

During the last winter season, Suffolk used around 7,822 tonnes of salt to treat a total distance of 198,594km/123,400 miles – which equates to travelling the circumference of Earth five times! Suffolk Highways currently has a stock of around 21,000 tonnes of salt across the county for the season ahead and is well prepared for any drop in temperature.

Our highway teams are responsible for gritting 36 Priority 1 (P1) routes, which amounts to around 1,259 miles, including all A and B roads, roads to fire stations, hospitals, main bus routes and rail stations.

There are also 34 Priority 2 (P2) routes, which amounts to around 843 miles of the network. This includes other bus routes where the service level is 5 days a week in the school term, roads leading to rural villages and access to schools.

P1 treatments are considered when road surface temperatures are forecast to drop below 1°C, whilst P2 routes are carried out when the forecast predicts there to be a longer period of cold weather conditions.

Further details of which roads are gritted can be found on [one.network](#), by selecting the 3 lines on the search box, then data layers, driver information then winter gritting routes.

All gritting decisions are based on forecast road surface temperatures, not air temperature, as the road surface temperature is often cooler and reflects the true risk to highway users. The timing and amount of salt we use considers factors such as traffic levels, wind and rain.

During the lead up to the winter season, our teams also dedicate their time to refilling grit bins across the county at registered locations, such as the bottom of hills, or on junctions of minor roads. To date, we have filled over 50% of the total grit bins and will conclude the remaining refills over the next few weeks ahead of the commencement of the core winter season.

Suffolk Highways fills grit bins that are approved and owned by [parish and town councils](#), however, to ensure that the contents of grit bins are used to make roads safer, communities are encouraged to monitor how and where the grit is used and request grit refills via [the reporting tool](#). Suffolk Highways do not fill private grit bins.

Suffolk's residents are requested to support us, as well as emergency services throughout the year, by parking considerately and leaving enough room so that our vehicles can grit the road – if we can't fit, we can't grit!

Drivers are reminded to always drive to the conditions; although the gritting teams have treated the roads, this doesn't mean they are completely risk-free.

Those wishing to know when and where we are gritting over the coming months, should follow Suffolk Highways' X (formerly known as Twitter) and Facebook, to keep updated of our teams' movements this winter season. Safety messages will also be issued during spells of cold and wet weather.

December 2024

Suffolk and East of England councils seek fairness in the face of energy projects

Suffolk County Council is joining with other local authorities in the region to challenge National Grid and the government on energy projects, demanding fairness for their communities and environment. The county councils from Suffolk, Essex, Norfolk and Lincolnshire all face similar challenges with Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) being planned for their counties.

These are typically related to energy projects, including solar farms, wind turbines, pylons and the infrastructure associated offshore wind farms, such as substations and cabling.

Two of Suffolk County Council's main concerns, shared with the other counties, are:

- The uncoordinated approach to NSIPs - this is creating significant challenges for Suffolk's rural communities under the current planning policy as applied by the planning inspectorate and Secretary of State
- The government's 2030 target for decarbonising the electricity grid – this is too hasty, making it impossible to deliver alternative solutions to pylon projects like Norwich to Tilbury

January 2025

Unique landscape to be changed forever by pylons

A large area of landscape on the Norfolk/Suffolk border with uniqueness, rivalling those of other nationally protected landscapes, is set to be decimated by pylons as part of National Grid's Norwich to Tilbury project.

In a letter to both Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council, and other local leaders, National Grid has outlined that it has decided to install overhead lines through the Waveney Valley, rather than running cables underground, as they had set out in their previous consultation.

This is a significant blow to local communities and the natural environment, especially following last year's [Valued Landscape Assessment](#), a report jointly commissioned by Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council.

The report concluded that "the length of the Waveney Valley expresses many special qualities, and in the context of Suffolk and Norfolk, it is considered to be a valued landscape. Conserving and enhancing the special qualities articulated in this report is a key aspiration of existing planning policy."

The councils will now look to take up their concerns with National Grid and discuss the issue further.

February 2025

Suffolk prepares for another significant solar farm proposal

Suffolk County Council is preparing to respond to another large solar farm proposal, set to cover around 1,500 acres, near Eye.

EcoPower Suffolk is putting forward plans to build a solar farm and battery storage facility, which would impact Yaxley, Brome, Gislingham, Mellis, Eye and Occold, with connections made at the existing substation to the north of Yaxley.

The project aims to deliver around 250 megawatts of renewable energy. At that size, it will be classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), requiring planning approval from the Secretary of State, rather than the local authority.

Several consultations, beginning in March 2025, will be held by EcoPower Suffolk as it shapes its final planning application.

The county council will be contributing to these, to support and represent residents, businesses, agriculture, our landscape and ecology.

EcoPower Suffolk hopes that the project will connect to the Grid in 2030.

More information can be found at www.ecopowersuffolk.com

County leaders to propose one council for Suffolk

One council for Suffolk would make delivering public services simpler, cheaper and quicker, and better meet the needs of residents and businesses, county leaders have said.

Following a recent government announcement that Suffolk's County, district and borough councils will be replaced with a single-tier system, Suffolk County Council argues that consolidating all services under one unitary authority is the only effective way to deliver against the government's criteria for local government reform.

The move would see all council services, such as waste collection and disposal, housing, social care, planning, highways maintenance, leisure, school placements and travel and street cleaning, all provided by one authority - rather than the six that currently exist in Suffolk.

Bringing together district, borough and county council functions is expected to reduce duplication, lower administrative costs and ensure a more coordinated and cost-effective approach to delivering essential services.

The council warns that splitting services among multiple bodies would force the duplication of essential functions - such as social care, highways maintenance and schools - currently managed at a county level.

The key benefits of one council are:

- **Simpler for residents** – one council would make it easier to understand and contact local government
- **Clearer accountability** – there would be less confusion over who is responsible for what
- **Better use of funding** – a more coherent, strategic, financially sustainable, county-wide approach to budgeting
- **Better alignment of services** – since everything is under one roof, services can be more easily coordinated, creating opportunities to improve services for residents
- **More efficient decision-making** – with just one council, decisions can be made more quickly
- **Stronger leadership** – a single, visible and accountable body providing a clear strategic voice for Suffolk.

The council will submit its initial proposal to the government by 21 March, with a more detailed business case to follow later in the year.

The government will then undertake a public consultation.

The government's plans will also see the election of a mayor for Suffolk and Norfolk in May 2026, who would take control over strategic policy areas like transport infrastructure, economic development, health improvement and blue light services – along with devolved government funding to deliver positive change.

March 2025

Suffolk County Council confirms decision to bring Library Services back In-House

Suffolk County Council has confirmed that it will be bringing all 45 libraries back under its care and control. The decision, made at the Cabinet meeting, will ensure continued access to high-quality, community-focused library services across the county. As part of this move, the council plans to:

- Keep all 45 libraries open
- Maintain opening hours
- Create job security for all frontline staff
- Secure a sustainable future for Suffolk's library services

In addition to continuing its core library services, the council is investing £200,000 in mobile libraries, with a further £157,000 for new books and to replace public computers in libraries across Suffolk.

Libraries have long been at the heart of Suffolk's communities. They are essential spaces for learning, connection, and support, and the council is committed to ensuring they remain hubs that bring people together. The focus is on building upon the excellent services already provided, strengthening libraries' role as trusted local resources that meet the evolving needs of residents.

Looking to the future, Suffolk County Council envisions libraries becoming even more integrated into the wider community, serving as convenient access points for a range of essential council services. This includes providing information and support around Adult Social Care, offering health and social care services, facilitating Family Hub activities, and promoting digital inclusion. The aim is to make it easier for residents to access vital services and support, all within the welcoming, familiar setting of their local library.

Suffolk County Council would like to express its sincere gratitude to Suffolk Libraries, who have run the library contract for the past 12 years. Their passion and hard work have been integral to the success of library services in the county, and the council appreciates all they have done to support local communities. We look forward to welcoming library staff back into the county council and continuing to support them in delivering outstanding services to the public.

We would also like to thank the 1,250 volunteers whose commitment has been essential in delivering high-quality services to residents across Suffolk. As we transition the library service back under council control, we remain fully committed to working with our volunteers. Their invaluable contributions will continue to play a central role in the future of our libraries, and we are excited to explore new opportunities to expand volunteer involvement.

The library service will officially return to Suffolk County Council control on 1 June 2025.

Mid Suffolk District Councillors' Annual Report (2024/25) for the Annual Parish Meeting

Budget

In 2024/25, net expenditure on services was budgeted at £18.5 million with a 2% increase in council tax.

Council home rents increased by 7% and sheltered housing service charges also increased. This was to ensure the Council could afford the repairs and maintenance that are needed.

Approval was given to increase council tax on empty homes and on second homes to support the best use of homes in the district.

The council began the year reserves of £28 million and received a further boost of £20 million from the Gateway 14 business park dividend. This fortunate position has enabled the district council to support several schemes and projects, including:

- Launching the Cosy Homes scheme with grants to add insulation to homes.
- Continuing for the second year the Living Well in Winter Grant, to help local organisations deliver accessible spaces and activities during the colder months.
- Continuing for the second year the Pride in Your Place grant, available to all communities in the district, to promote local identity, explore the area's heritage and history, and improve the appearance of the environment.
- Community Grants to improve sports and play facilities and upgrade village halls.
- Introduction of the Mid Suffolk Tax Bus scheme connecting the surrounding villages and communities with Stowmarket.
- Support for the Stowmarket Town Rangers scheme to provide additional cleaning and improvement of the local environment.
- Creation of a Skills and Innovation Centre at Gateway 14, to bring businesses and training together in one centre with a focus on the green economy, and digital and AI technology.
- Establishing a £1.5 million fund for the enhancement of Stowmarket town centre.
- Funding feasibility work towards introduction of a residents parking zone scheme in Stowmarket.

The budget for 2025/26 sets out a commitment to a capital spending programme of £36 million covering items including:

- Commitment to invest further in sports and health facilities across the district, primarily the ongoing Stowmarket Health, Education and Leisure Facilities (SHELF) project.
- Further investment in the Skills and Innovation Centre at Gateway 14.
- A £300k fund for projects in market towns and rural communities outside Stowmarket.
- A fund to acquire land to boost nature recovery and flood resilience in the district to support the objectives of our Biodiversity Action Plan
- Investment in cycling and walking infrastructure to support the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

- An increase in Locality Grant awards to £10,000 for each ward.

Planning and Housing

Mid Suffolk and Babergh's Joint Local Plan had its first year of full operation. The purpose of the plan was to provide essential clarity for communities about how the district was to develop until 2037, delivering the government required number of 535 new dwellings annually.

However, in December 2024, the government revised our housebuilding targets increasing them to 734 dwellings per year. If we cannot demonstrate that this target will be met via a 5-year land supply, there is a risk that National Planning Policy would take priority over our Joint Local Plan. This situation could force the Council to approve planning applications on sites contrary to the Local Plan.

Consequently, the Joint Local Plan is now under review and will continue to carry planning weight whilst the review takes place. Additionally, it is important that Parish Neighbourhood Plans are brought up to date with the new figures and Parishes currently without a Neighbourhood Plan are recommended to consider preparing one.

The Council is continuing to work on Part 2 as well as publishing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's) to support the JLP including the Housing SPD, Biodiversity and Trees SPD and the Intensive Livestock and Poultry SPD.

In Willisham plans to create 11 homes and commercial space in Willisham was not granted permission by Mid Suffolk District Council and an appeal has been lodged with the Planning Inspector against the decision. The plans, which included footpath upgrades, affordable housing, recreation facilities, and accommodation for a shop were widely supported by Offton and Willisham Parish Council.

In Offton Mid Suffolk is working to ensure the hedge is planted on the Tollemache Grove site as part of the ecological mitigation works for that development. We will resume enforcement proceedings when the planting season returns in autumn.

In Battsford Mid Suffolk is working with builders and residents of Bowl Meadow to complete the scheme of works on the landscaping plan including a range of bird, bat boxes, hedgehog access and tree planting.

Waste and Recycling

Mid Suffolk has developed plans to comply with the forthcoming new requirements for waste and recycling set out by National Government. New procedures will be publicised in advance of implementation scheduled for 2026.

Communities, Public Realm and the Environment

Two new community transport routes were launched utilising the MSDC Taxi Bus scheme connecting Stowmarket with the surrounding villages and communities across Mid Suffolk. These currently serve Thurston and Bacton. A third route through Debenham will eventually be added.

Mid Suffolk have published a new and more ambitious Biodiversity Action Plan with a focus on priority habitats and species in our district. The plan aims to inform how we manage our land and open spaces and carry out our statutory functions such as housing and development.

The Cosy Homes scheme re-launched for Winter 2024 to improve insulation and energy efficiency within homes across Mid Suffolk.

Mid Suffolk has supported the establishment of a Community Rail Partnership for the Ipswich to Cambridge line to help develop and promote services along the route.

Mid Suffolk has funded a Highways design engineer to work exclusively on progressing the schemes included in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan including a segregated cycle path connecting Stowmarket with Haughley.

In Willisham, residents and councillors planted 750 new hedge trees adjacent to a public footpath near Willisham Church. We planted a mixture of native species including Hawthorn, Hazel, Goat Willow, Hornbeam, Dog Wood and Guelder Rose provided by the Suffolk Tree Warden Network.

The Suffolk Tree Warden Network have also kindly provided a range of hedge and fruit trees for planting in the parishes of Battisford, Great Bricett and Offton and Willisham. Thank you to Cllr Pinson-Roxburgh for helping with distribution.

Supporting the community

Almost £550,000 was allocated by Mid Suffolk District Council Direct to communities across the district from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Offton and Willisham Village Hall were awarded the Rural Communities Fund towards the costs of installing a new rooftop photovoltaic panel and battery scheme. The setup currently provides the village hall with around 95% of its electricity requirements.

Orchard Barn in Ringshall were awarded a Community Development Grant towards ongoing works to reinstate a Suffolk long house which will function as an education building.

Battisford and District Cricket Club (located just outside of Battisford) were awarded CIL funds towards a new wastewater treatment facility.

The following projects in Battisford and Ringshall ward were support from the Locality Budget:

- Barking Village Hall – funding for village hall kitchen refurbishment
- Battisford Punchbowl Inn CIC – funding for re-rendering works
- Battisford and District Cricket Club – funding towards the installation of a new sewage system
- Great Bricett Community Woodland – funding for pond plants
- Offton and Willisham Village Hall – funding towards rooftop solar panel and battery installation
- Orchard Barn CIC – funding towards volunteer flooring project in the Education Building

Mid Suffolk District Council information is available via www.midsuffolk.gov.uk or by phone **0300 123 4000**

I would like to thank the Parish Council for all their work done throughout the year.

Dr Dan Pratt

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ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT - May 2025

May I firstly record the thanks from the PCC for the continued support of the Parish Council with churchyard mowing and for providing the illumination of the South side of church during the winter months. With the support of Kate & Phil Hatch we were again able to illuminate the North side of the church this year and we remain grateful to The Hall Farm for providing additional parking space for special occasions and services.

The project to replace the unsightly cement render around the lower section of the inner walls and fully redecorate the interior was completed during the year. The cost was £36,500 towards which we received grants of £30k from the Valencia Communities Fund and £3k from Suffolk Historic Churches Trust with the balance from local fund raising support. The Church interior now looks superb and is much commented on by visitors!

As part of this work a structural engineering investigation is being undertaken into cracks in the East wall and also apparent movements of the porch. The outcome of this will enable the cost of remedying these problems to be identified.

As a reminder we are one of eight churches under the care of Rev Dan Harrison and we continue to have our regular monthly service of communion on the 3rd Sunday.

Arland Shawe-Taylor
Churchwarden

Written by James Gough, Headteacher - Ringshall Primary School

This report will give an overview of the current learning provision and plans in place at Ringshall Primary School.

Learning outcomes - SATs 2024

For the third consecutive year, Ringshall School's Key Stage 2 SATs results demonstrate attainment and progress significantly above the national average across all subject areas. Furthermore, our children's progress from their individual starting points was also notably higher than the national average.

In the previous academic year, children at Ringshall School achieved significantly above the national average in the combined measure of Reading, Writing, and Maths, with 67% reaching the expected standard compared to the national average of 61%.

Our results in individual subjects were also exceptional:

- Reading: 92% of our pupils achieved the expected standard (national average: 74%), with an impressive 42% reaching the higher standard (national average: 28%).
- Grammar, Punctuation, and Spelling (GPS): 92% of our pupils achieved the expected standard (national average: 72%), with a remarkable 58% reaching the higher standard (national average: 32%).
- Maths: 75% of our pupils achieved the expected standard (national average: 73%), with a notable 42% reaching the higher standard (national average: 24%).

While this year's Year 6 cohort has yet to sit their SATs, their performance in practice assessments indicates another set of highly successful outcomes, providing a strong foundation for their transition to secondary education.

The year so far - a commentary

This academic year once again started with a 'learning to learn' week. The following half terms then also started with a single 'learning to learn' focus day. These 'learning to learn days' focus on reviewing our core values and curriculum drivers, working on mindset and behaviour expectations and teaching the children wellbeing and self regulation skills. Children also have an e-safety lesson and a wellbeing lesson in each of the 6 learning to learn sessions that span the year.

This academic year has seen our strong focus on children's wellbeing and mental health continue to be a priority. For the second consecutive year, we successfully delivered the MyHappyMind programme, a whole-school intervention designed to promote positive wellbeing and mental health. Our established Mindful Monday initiative also continued to provide a comprehensive programme of nurture and

support for our children, aligning with our Trauma-Informed approach to wellbeing, behaviour, and mental health.

Significantly, this year marked the expansion and relaunch of our Complete Human Strategy (CHS). This enhanced support intervention now encompasses programmes for our pupils, their families, and the adults working within the school. We invite you to visit our website for further details on the comprehensive support offered through the CHS.

This year has been one of building and strengthening our curriculum. We draw upon established frameworks such as White Rose, Cornerstones, and Kapow to inform our subject planning. Excitingly, we are also exploring the potential of AI, specifically Google Gemini, to further enhance our planning process. Two of our teachers have become Gemini champions, and all staff have received training in this technology. Our aim is to ensure that lesson planning is increasingly relevant, engaging, and tailored to the unique needs of our children.

We have also made significant progress this year towards achieving the ArtsMark. Our focus has been on enriching the breadth and depth of creative opportunities available to our pupils. This has included termly ukulele performances, more frequent dance sessions in PE, visits from musical professionals, increased opportunities for singing and performance throughout the school, and a greater emphasis on creative arts and design across all subjects. The arts, music, and creativity are truly taking centre stage at Ringshall.

Physical Education continues to be a strength, expertly delivered in-house by Mrs Draper, a former secondary PE teacher. Our younger children in EYFS, Year 1, and Year 2 also continue to benefit from year-round Forest School sessions.

Our new School Development Plan was launched at the beginning of the year to guide our teaching and learning. The five key areas of focus within the plan are:

- To further develop a positive school culture that supports behaviour, mental health, and wellbeing through restorative and Trauma-Informed practices.
- To ensure every child leaves Ringshall School as a fluent reader with strong oracy skills and a rich vocabulary.
- To promote equity for all children, with a particular focus on those with special educational needs.
- To cultivate excellent teaching across all subject areas within the school.
- To develop children's technical and creative writing skills.

On a final note

Ringshall School has experienced a highly successful academic year in 2024-25 to date. Our pupils have benefited significantly from a rich and varied programme of learning experiences. Throughout the year, numerous class excursions, visiting experts, and engaging themed days have enriched the curriculum and fostered a sense of wonder in learning. We anticipate a memorable conclusion to the academic year with our planned production of 'Aladdin,' providing valuable opportunities for pupil performance and participation in exciting activities.

Furthermore, this year marks the third successful year of our termly 'Parent Cafés,' which offer parents the opportunity to engage directly with their children's learning in the classroom on specific subjects. We are also pleased to report the successful launch of 'Asset Arrows' this year, a trust-wide initiative designed to amplify pupil voice within our school community.

As always, Ringshall Primary School intends to position itself fully within the communities it serves. Developing links and partnerships within the community is a central ambition for the school as it moves forward. If you have any questions. Please don't hesitate to contact me.

Community Speedwatch

The Team, Lesley Jefferson, Bill Dewick and myself have continued to do Speedwatch whenever possible. Bill's wife has had a health problem which has restricted his availability so on occasions it has just been a team of 2.

We had a planned visit from the Community Support Officers to see how we worked and to compare our speed gun's reading with theirs and all was well.

One of our signs got destroyed in the wind and a new sign was organised quickly and installed.

Community Woodland and Tree Warden Network

As mentioned before I am still a member of the Tree Warden Network, receiving all information, emails and Whatsapp messages. Some of which are useful and informative.

The Community Woodland progresses well, and advertisement in the Parish Magazine for more volunteers to join our group this has brought us Richard Cage from Barking, also Steve Tetlow has joined the group. We also have had help from the Paddock, Wixfield residents.

Interesting happenings:

Dan Pratt arranged for Richard Parmee, the Diversity Manager at MSDC to visit and to give us suggestions and advice, which has been very useful.

Dan's locality budget enabled us to purchase some more pond plants which were planted in April (thanks to Richard Cage and his waders).

We have had a donation of two Black Poplar trees, this species is in decline and efforts are being made to save them.

Barry Abbott purchased a quantity of yellow rattle seeds which he has planted – thanks to him. Thanks also to Colin Carter who continues to cut the footpaths for us and who also cut the wildflower area prior to Barry planting his seeds.

A local garden maintenance company did a good job cutting back the brambles along the fence, these threatened to engulf some of the new trees, hopefully we will not need to do this again as the trees go from strength to strength.

Steve Tetlow installed his trail camera in the shed/stable and managed to film a barn owl using the rafters to perch on.

We have also put up two bat boxes.

We have had a few new trees requested from villagers who wish to plant a tree in memory of a lost loved one.