

Report of County Councillor Judy Cloke to Bungay and Wainford parishes for October 2023

Bungay:

Early in the month we welcomed the Dentaaid charity to the town , they sited their converted horsebox at the Community Centre so they could have access to refreshment facilities, loos and a private room for assessments as well as a waiting area. There had been rather a disconnect between what the staff who attended expected and what the team at 'head office ' had been told was available, but in the end it all worked well and I think most customers were satisfied – as expected ,, demand exceeded supply.

I was unable to attend the Dementia friendly online meeting, but Jo brought me up to speed when I met her.

I attended the Bungay Stakeholder Group meeting and am delighted we have now made a decision regarding a Community magazine, to which I can put some of my Locality funding as promised. Sheline has worked extremely hard to bring this to fruition and was congratulated during the meeting for her efforts.

I have had a meeting with the Town Clerk, Roz Barnett, I think we both find these ' catch up ' meetings useful.

I have been in touch again with VC Cooke regarding the state of the King's Head, because I had understood following our site meeting in September work would begin to secure the building and make it watertight , which has not happened . I have been told now this work should start w/c 6 November. I had also met Mark Harvey, ESC Building Control officer socially and we had a long discussion about the hotel . He lives locally, he checks the building regularly and has had several conversations with VC Cooke, so rest assured he is 'on the case ' . I am sure he would tell you he wants to see the building restored as much as everyone else does.

Flixton:

As you know at the September meeting of the Development & regulation committee meeting, the decision about the expansion of Flixton Quarry was deferred for a site meeting. This took place on Friday 27 October, together with Cllr Warne from Flixton, St Cross and St Margaret South Elmham joint Parish Council. This decision was the only agenda item for the subsequent committee meeting of 31 October at which I again spoke as did the two residents most affected. I was unable to vote. The decision went in favour of the quarry expansion, 4-2. I know residents will be disappointed.

Ilketshall St Andrew:

The Parish Clerk , Mrs Tina Newby and I attended a meeting of the Land Management Committee . I have to admit I had just a vague understanding of their work until this meeting and I would encourage every resident to attend their AGM , which is due in the early part of next year.

Suffolk wide

Highways:

Suffolk Highways' new partnership has launched, as Milestone Infrastructure and Suffolk County Council join forces to deliver highways services fit for the future. The new contract, which is worth in the region of £800 million - £1 billion, will deliver highway projects and improvements across Suffolk for up to 20 years, including maintaining roads, pavements and rights of way, improving drainage, hedge trimming, construction of new road schemes, snow-clearing and gritting and much more.

Milestone Infrastructure is part of M Group Services, and was awarded Suffolk's new highways services contract in February and since then has been working with Suffolk County Council to mobilise the new contract ahead of it commencing on 1 October.

When seeking a new highways partner, the county council wanted a keener focus on delivering greater social value, building on the council's commitment to carbon reduction and protecting the environment, using local skills and talent, and giving young people the opportunity to work in the sector.

Cycling:

Suffolk County Council has launched a 'Bike Library' for year 5 and 6 pupils at Phoenix St. Peter Academy, Lowestoft as part of a pilot project to promote active travel.

The free loan bikes were secured using funding from Active Travel England's Capability and Ambition Fund and support the county council's ambition to look after residents' health and wellbeing.

Following additional funding from Scottish Power Renewables, supporting partner of the Suffolk stage of the Tour of Britain, the pupils and their parents or carers will also be offered a Bikeability training course to give them the skills, confidence and understanding they need to take their bike on the road.

The course will also teach them the basics of bicycle maintenance, such as how to fix a puncture, and how to stay safe while cycling.

Off shore power:

Suffolk County Council is preparing its response to proposals for a significant off-shore electricity connection which could affect Saxmundham and Aldeburgh. It is encouraging local residents and businesses to do the same.

Sea Link is a proposal for a new 2 gigawatt subsea high voltage direct current electricity connection developed by National Grid Electricity Transmission. It is approximately 140km in length and predominately offshore.

A [statutory consultation](#) opened to the public on 24 October, and closes on 18 December 2023.

County Budget:

Suffolk County Council is keen to hear from Suffolk residents, businesses and local communities, as it decides how it will spend money next year.

[An online consultation](#) has been launched, and a number of focus groups will be held, to explain the council's current financial situation, along with the chance for Suffolk residents and businesses to have a say on Council Tax proposals.

The council's budget setting process will take into account the responses to the consultation, advice from council officers, elected members from political groups, businesses and partners in health and other public service organisations across Suffolk.

Results of the consultation will be included in the report considered by the council when agreeing the budget in February 2024.

A public consultation has been launched today (Monday 30 October), encouraging Suffolk Residents to tell Suffolk County Council what they want from their library services in the future.

Libraries:

Suffolk County Council's contract with Suffolk's Libraries Industrial and Provident Society (IPS) Limited, the independent charity which runs the library service, comes to an end on 31 May 2025, with a new contract set to begin in June 2025. The Council is therefore seeking views from the public about what is important to them, ahead of awarding the new contract.

The 13-week consultation will be followed by a competitive Tender Process, before the new contract is awarded in November 2024.

The value of the new contract will be £6.8m per year, increased from the previous contract value of £5.9m. The increase takes into account increased service costs, management of the Library Outreach service, and to allow for innovation in future years.

The term of the contract will be 6 years, with the option to extend for a further 6 years.

The consultation is open until Friday 26 January.

Residents can have their say by visiting www.suffolk.gov.uk/LibraryConsultation

Alternative formats of the consultation are available on request, please email: Libraries.consultation@suffolk.gov.uk

Those who cannot access the consultation online can request a printed copy or assistance with completing the survey by calling 0345 603 1842.

The results of the consultation will be considered by Suffolk County Council at its meeting of the Cabinet in March 2024.

Judy Cloke Nov 2023