

Report to parishes for the month of September 2023 by Suffolk County Councillor Judy Cloke

Bungay:

At the beginning of the month I participated in a meeting organised by a Bungay resident , who had initially proposed a meeting of business leaders in the town with Peter Aldous MP and I , but on the evening , quite a number of people who were neither residents not business owners attended. The main thrust was for people to air their views about various different issues in the town which concern them. There were no substantive outcomes though I know Peter took away a couple of issues which he has followed up.

Following on from the town centre traffic flow suggestions from Wayne Saunders and I , I attended a Zoom meeting with an Independent Traffic plan company at the invitation of the Town Clerk . They were complementary about the work which had been undertaken already with regard to data, but also that funding has been sourced to install dropped kerbs in Earsham St. I am waiting to hear further developments

Along with District Councillors Specca and Hammond and members of the Town Council I attended a site meeting at the King's Head with staff members of VC Cooke and Mark Harvey , Building Control officer from east Suffolk Council. A really fruitful conversation , led by Mark ensued, he explained carefully why work should not have started without detailed descriptions and plans of the work proposed. His presence was very helpful to both sides, he advised VC Cooke can work to make the building safe and watertight and once planning and Listed Building Consents have been granted, work can resume.

I chaired the Bungay Stakeholder Group meeting . Now Sam has stepped down , Sheline has been trying to find alternative publishers for a parish magazine , this was one of the first objectives of the group nearly a year ago and we have been very badly delayed by Leiston Press being less than straightforward with us about their commitment to our project, much time has been wasted unnecessarily.

I also attended a Dementia Friendly Town online meeting and meetings to set up a Dentaaid service at the Community Centre , as well as a Plug in Suffolk meeting about EV charging services in the County. At the latter I was relieved to discover we are not the only community building having issues with the points.

Flixton:

Flixton Parish Council asked me to speak against the quarry development by Breedon on land known as the Buck Land between the pub and Water Lilies pool, at the Development and Regulation Committee meeting of 14 September. In order to do this , I had to recuse myself from the meeting and take no part in any discussion or voting. The resident whose property will be most affected by this proposed quarrying also spoke , far more eloquently than I could have done . After much discussion and debate the decision was deferred for a site visit before the next meeting. It is likely I will not be able to participate in the meeting and any decision making.

No progress has been made regarding reopening of the lake path and it has been decided this cannot be taken further, which is disappointing . I think we tried everything we could.

Generally : I have attended the Parish Council meetings of Bungay (online) , St Andrew, Flixton Joint PC, Three Saints South Elmham , Shadingfield , and Homersfield , the Waveney Citizens' Advice AGM in Beccles and the Suffolk Libraries Awards in Woodbridge . I have also attended information sessions regarding the transfer of the Suffolk Highways contract to Milestone.

Suffolk wide news :

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) announced in June it would be withdrawing from the shared control room arrangement in place since 2011 with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire and Rescue Service, based in Huntingdon.

The report recommending approval to Suffolk County Council's Cabinet, which sat on Tuesday September 12, says fire control would now be brought back into the county by the end of 2024.

The report says the move is necessary because a project to replace the current mobilising technology agreed by both services in 2019, is currently two years overdue.

A Suffolk care worker and her boss who saved a 101-year-old woman from an international scam that saw her fleeced of nearly £50,000 are being formally recognised.

Sally Mills and Paul Watts are to receive Certificates of Merit from Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service for stepping in when they realised the vulnerable woman was being targeted by heartless hoaxers in Austria.

They were conning the woman through a clairvoyant scam, where people pose as spiritual guides offering insights into a person's life and the future.

Inflation, school transport for children with SEND, and looking after children in care are the main factors for SCC forecasting to spend £22.3m over its £688.1m budget for this year.

This is a similar story for many councils across the country, due to higher demand for their services, inflation remaining higher than expected for longer, and interest rates rising to levels not forecast by financial markets.

[Recent research by the County Councils Network](#) suggests that England's largest councils will need to make at least £1bn in savings to balance their current 2023/24 budgets.

A [BBC investigation](#) also reported that councils expect to be £5.2bn short of balancing budgets by April 2026, the average council facing a £33m predicted deficit by 2025-26.

Suffolk County Council projects a 4% overspend (£29.3m), to be partially offset by an additional Section 31 grant from Government, and additional income from the pooling of business rates with the district and borough councils in Suffolk, totalling £7m.

The march of pylons

In a [joint letter to National Grid](#), the leaders of the three councils address the extensive impact on landscapes and local communities that the scheme would bring.

They also highlight that an offshore solution has not been sufficiently investigated, and the opportunities that this could bring to co-ordinate with other large-scale energy projects off the region's coast.

Suffolk County Council has been awarded nearly £11.7 million to develop active travel schemes, including measures such as cycle lanes, shared-use paths, and improved crossing points on roads.

It is hoped that the improvements would help more people to walk, wheel and cycle in their everyday lives and to enjoy safer streets, reduced congestion and better health and air quality.

Judy Cloke 4 October 23