

Parish Report – March 2021

Councillor

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Suffolk County Council Budget

The Suffolk County Council Budget was voted through Full Council on February 11th. This year's budget is based on a 12-month financial settlement from government, rather than the 3- or 4-year agreement which is usually offered. Key points include:

- A council tax rise of 3.99% (1.99% basic council tax and 2% Social Care Precept), representing an increase of £53.55 for a Band D property, from £1,343.61 in 2020-21 to £1,397.16 in 2021-22.
- A council tax shortfall of £7.9m less than expected, to be met by using reserves.
- Planned spending is £597.9m, 7.4% more than 2021-21.
- £15.3m of spending to address ongoing COVID-19 costs.
- No proposed reductions in council services or personnel.

LDGI Group Budget Amendment and Group Leader's Speech

The LDGI Group submitted a Budget Amendment to Full Council on February 11th alongside the administration's Budget. The amendment would have authorised the use of the full 3% social care precept to avoid impacting SCC's reserves and generate an extra £3.452m for social care at a cost of only £13.41 per year to a Band D household. The extra income would have provided funding for a wider service offer for Suffolk residents, including a new officer for the flooding team to unlock more government funding, and the re-enablement of concessionary bus passes on community transport. The amendment was unfortunately not passed.

Suffolk & Norfolk County Council submit joint bid for £6m flood funding

Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils have submitted a joint bid to the £200 fund for Flood and Coastal Resilience, requesting £6m to invest in flood protection schemes across both counties. The proposed projects would also capture water for reuse. If the bid is successful town and parish councils will be encouraged to get involved through measures like permeable paving, water butts and 'rain gardens' that can cope with occasional flooding. These projects would be in place by 2027 if the bid is approved.

LDGI Group opposes Government's last-minute approach to local authority grants

Suffolk County Council will receive £27m for highways repairs, maintenance and drainage in 2021-22, a reduction in from £31m the previous year. This has necessitated the use of £2m of reserves to top up the grant. In the view of my Group, these cuts in Government funding make it impossible to plan long-term for road maintenance and repair. Due to the uncertainty as to whether this grant would materialise at all, some vital work has already been postponed.

CHANGE TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT CONTRACT.

the cabinet has agreed to give the new contract to Vertas, a wholly company of the county council. This has been challenged by Ipswich buses, as to do so could be illegal. We do not have details of whether there will be changes to how the contract will be run.

CYCLCLE TO SCHOOL SCHEME; to encourage pupils are being encouraged to cycle to school by offering a voucher worth upto £70 if they trade in their bus pass. They must have done cycle training

WEST SUFFOLK HOSPITAL: I have forwarded details of consultation on proposal for new hospital in Bury St Edmunds

NEW CAR PARK AT WOOLPIT HEALTH CENTRE.A deal has been made with eh developer to give land to the health centre to improve parking facility, which is overloaded particularly when doing vaccinations sessions

COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTIONS: it has been confirmed that these will still go ahead on 6th May. There will have to be COVID safe arrangements for polling stations.

POLICE COMMISSIONER ELECTION; this will take place at the same time.

MIDSUFFOLK

Council tax settled at a rise of 1.66%. some of us felt there was not need as there is £millions in reserves

NEW PURCHASE OF PROPERTY IN COVENTRY; the council has purchased a property in Coventry at the cost of £5.5million with money loaned form the public works loan board.

BROWN BINS as this service has been suspended you will not be charged for weeks not collected. I have reported the delays in bin collection

GATEWAY 14; this is a proposal for a large business park off the A14 near Cedars park Stowmarket, which could include jobs in warehousing, technology and manufacturing. This has now been linked to the possibility of a Free Port at Felixstow and Harwich.

CENSUS: the 10-year census will take place on March 21; you will be sent letters with a code to fill in o-line.