

**Minutes of Combs 129th Annual Parish Meeting
Tuesday 9th May 2023 at 7.00pm, Battisford Cricket Club, Combs**

Present: T Kitson (Parish Council Chairman); S Ottewell (Parish Council Vice Chair); T Betchley MBE (Parish Councillor); A Tomlinson (Parish Councillor); J Stephens-Row; D Shelley

Attending: T Bamber (Parish Clerk)

1. Introductions

Parish Council Chairman Tony Kitson took the chair and welcomed those present..

2. Apologies for absence

Stuart Scarff, while now an ex-councillor, would have attended but was on holiday.

3. Minutes of the 128th Annual Parish Meeting held on 10th May 2022

The minutes were signed as a true and accurate copy of the meeting by Cllr Kitson (Chairman)

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Chairman's Report

The chairman referred to his report, attached as Appendix 1, and took the opportunity to express his appreciation for the support and help provided by all councillors. Through careful planning, the parish council had been able to avoid any increase in its annual precept and while there was still a lot of good that could be done it was important to bear in mind that there are currently only four councillors so ambitions for the coming year should be tempered by reality. The chairman finished with his best wishes and gratitude to ex-cllr Scarff for all the excellent work he had done as councillor and chair over the past 30 years.

6. Report from Suffolk County Councillor

Cllr Oakes had previously circulated her report and this is attached as appendix 2.

7. Report from Mid Suffolk District Councillor

Cllr Matthissen had previously circulated his report and this is attached as appendix 3.

8. Councillor Reports

Cllr Betchley reported on the cemetery and this is attached as appendix 4.

Cllr Ottewell reported that the parish newsletter, which is delivered three times annually throughout the village, has been well received. She thanked all those who had made contributions to it and all councillors expressed their appreciation for her work in producing it.

Cllr Tomlinson introduced himself as a new councillor and thanked fellow councillors for their welcoming approach and support.

9. Local Organisation/Club Reports

See appendices 5,6,7 and 8 for reports from Battisford & District Cricket Club, Oaks Meadow, the fete committee, the and the Gardening Club.

10. Parishioner questions, comments and suggestions

Mrs Stephens-Row commented on the issue of speeding through Moats Tye and Little London, and the parish clerk confirmed that a further request for installation of a SID had been sent. He will follow this up. In addition to speeding in the area, there has been a problem with inappropriately large farm vehicles damaging the verges. The chairman asked the clerk to raise this with the county council.

Mrs Stephens-Row enquired as to the capacity of the cemetery and councillors informed her that there was currently capacity, at present rates, for over 20 years. Furthermore the new pricing structure, aimed at discouraging non-residents seeking lower cost burials in Combs, should help improve that capacity.

Cllr Kitson thanked all those attending for doing so and closed the meeting.

The Meeting closed at 7.54pm (there had been a delay while parish councillors helped to secure a cricket club marquee that had been the victim of a violent squall in a thunderstorm).

Appendix 1:

Chairman's Report

Combs Parish Meeting, May 2023

Chairman's Annual Report

People

This year in the life of Combs Parish Council both started and finished with the stepping down of two valued councillors. Happily we were joined in the interim by another who has already contributed his substantial business knowledge to the way we do things.

Back to the start of the year, Councillor Stuart Scarff stood down from his position of Chairman, a role he fulfilled with distinction for 10 years. This included the period that covered the whole of the COVID pandemic through which he led the council with assurance and sensitivity. Thankfully, he continued his work as a councillor and for that the other members were grateful and not a little relieved. Councillor Ian Walker and I (Tony Kitson) were duly elected Chairman and Vice Chairman respectively with councillors Terry Betchley and Suzanne Ottewell working alongside them.

Unfortunately Councillor Walker had to step down almost immediately for personal reasons. I became *de facto* Acting Chairman and the Council, now 4 members from a possible contingent of 7, girded its loins to face the new administrative year. Thankfully we have the expertise of our Parish Clerk Tony Bamber who has guided us – and especially me – through this period of change.

We were delighted to co-opt Alan Tomlinson onto the council in October. Alan is a seasoned businessman who has already contributed much in the way of operational discipline as we face ever-mounting challenges.

We will continue to seek out and encourage further Council participation from residents.

I am able to report that councillors Betchley, Ottewell and I have attended online training courses provided by the Suffolk Association of Local Councils. This comprised 6 modules and fulfilled two purposes: reinforcing our understanding of the duties of our office and, listening to the experiences of some of the other participants, affirming that Combs Parish Council under Councillor Scarff's leadership was run exceedingly well and that we are very well supported by our County and District Councillors Kay Oakes and John Matthissen.

For the record, and possibly for my sins, I was formally elected Chair at the November meeting of the PC.

Finally, Councillor Scarff decided not to stand for re-election to the Council for 2023-24 having completed some 30 years of service to the Parish. He takes with him our profound thanks and respect.

Financial

The key challenge this year has been pressure on the budget due to unexpected increases in the energy bill for street lighting, printing and elevated insurance costs. We re-calculated and agreed to increase our budget by £2,400 in respect of outgoings. The overall budget came to £19,678 and we brought it in at £17,542. This allowed us to carry some reserves over into the 2023-2024 budget and thereby keep our precept at the same level, a small contribution to households in an elevated cost of living climate.

Our total income this year was £23,786, the bulk of which was precept (£9,000), burial ground income (£5,560) and Community Infrastructure Levy and is made up as follows:

Category	Amount
Reclaimed VAT	£599.93
Deposit Account Interest	£0.19
Burial Ground Income	£5,560.00
Precept	£9,000.00
CIL	£8,626.19
Total	£23,786.31
Total excluding CIL	£15,160.12

We took the decision to change our banking arrangements. We were obtaining decreasing levels of service from our incumbent provider and after researching alternatives have identified a new one. My thanks to Tony Bamber and Councillor Ottewell who have steered us through this process and, now we have secured our April precept and CIL payments, have set the necessary wheels in motion.

Donations and Support

We were pleased to be able to provide financial support to several local causes. Oaks Meadow has grown from a glint in Desiree Shelley's eye to a highly impressive village amenity which has attracted attention far and wide. This year the Council was pleased to support the Midsummer's Day event and funded Health and Safety training and insurance. Councillor Betchley has provided excellent liaison between Oaks Meadow and the Council and we intend to continue to support this project.

The Cricket Club at Moats Tye has undertaken a recent refurbishment with new toilet facilities and a veranda. We understand that our support helped to secure other funding streams and we look forward to working with Julia Stephens-Rowe and her team as they grow the club facilities further.

We also provided support to Stowmarket Citizens Advice and the popular annual Bicycle Belles cycle ride (along with our colleagues at Battisford PC.)

Newsletter

Councillor Ottewell has once again driven the thrice-yearly publication of the Parish Newsletter which has proven to be popular with residents. She took the task on at short notice and has impressed us all with her energy and dedication. She collates input, formats and edits the material, arranges for 330 copies to be printed and assigns them to Councillors to distribute. Feedback has been consistently warm and we thank Suzanne heartily for her commitment.

Cemetery

Councillor Betchley and Parish Clerk Tony Bamber have administered dealings with the cemetery with focused sensitivity. They noticed that most of the new plots were sought by people from outside of the Parish and so have designed and implemented a pricing structure intended to deter this practice in favour of our own residents. The cemetery is kept neat and tidy and we thank Hartley's Garden Services for their services.

Platinum Jubilee

Thanks are due to Councillor Scarff and his wife Jill who were the driving forces behind the events celebrating the Platinum Jubilee of the reign of HRH Queen Elizabeth. The Jubilee Beacon lighting on

2nd June was a great success, attended by some 2-300 people who enjoyed a barbeque and refreshments and there was a splendid rendition of a specially written song by a choir put together under very short notice beforehand.

Sadly of course HRH Queen Elizabeth passed away on 8th September. The PC cancelled its usual meeting, instead holding an informal one for urgent and vital business as a mark of respect. The website was reconfigured and a message of condolence posted on the landing page.

Parish Boundaries

There was a Communities Governance Review in August in which Parish Councils were invited to submit proposals for boundary changes. We asked for the inconsistency in Combs Green to be considered as some houses in the road are within the boundary of Combs while others are in Little Finborough. We await a response.

Planning Applications and Development

Councillors considered 19 Planning Applications over the course of the year, supporting those where due consideration to the built and natural environments and neighbourliness had been evidenced.

There has however been considerable disruption resulting from the development on land north of Bildeston Road. We lobbied both our County and District Councillors, Kay Oakes and John Matthissen, providing them with the evidence to take up the cudgels on our behalf. We are grateful to them both: they've obtained two Stop Notices and put the development under condition enforcement. We've also compiled and sent a file of the various problems caused to the owner of the development company and received an apology and a stated aim to reduce disruption.

Christmas Tree Festival

The PC were pleased to procure and decorate a Tree for display at St Mary's Church Christmas Tree Festival, light-heartedly titled 'While Shepherds Washed Their Socks By Night' in line with the chosen theme of Christmas Carols.

ANPR

The Council has applied to have an Automatic Number Plate Recognition device placed at Moats Tye to monitor traffic flow. The device will be able to record the plates of speeding vehicles and for repeat offenders Police warnings may be issued.

Litter Pick

The PC organised its annual Litter Pick on April 2nd. Excellently organised by Tony Bamber and Stuart Scarff, a team of volunteers salvaged nearly 30 bags of rubbish from our road verges.

Parish Infrastructure Investment

Finally, Councillors put not inconsiderable effort into the production of a Parish Infrastructure Investment Plan (PIIP). This maps out a 5 year programme of investment in Parish infrastructure projects and enables us to anticipate and control our Community Infrastructure Levy income and subsequent expenditure.

Anthony (Tony) Kitson

Chair, Combs Parish Council for 2022-2023

Appendix 2

County Councillor report

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April 2022

Violence Against Women and Girls funding announced

Suffolk County Council has announced £350,000 of funding to support the ambitions set out in the Suffolk Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2022.

This fund has been provided by Suffolk County Council to support the work of the strategy in preventing violence, supporting victims, pursuing perpetrators and strengthening the system.

Organisations will be able to apply for this funding to support initiatives that are synonymous with the objectives of the strategy and aim to stop violence against women and girls.

Cllr Bobby Bennett, Cabinet Member for Equality and Communities, and chair of the Safer, Stronger Communities Board said:

This funding cements our continued commitment to protecting our communities. Our focus for these projects is women and girls, due to the gendered nature of the crimes, but there is also scope to include projects to support men and boys as well as those that are transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming. This is a real opportunity to boost funding across Suffolk to harness creativity and innovation to help tackle this very important issue.

The fund is to be launched in partnership with Suffolk Community Foundation. Any organisations wishing to make an application can do so by visiting [Suffolk Community Foundation](#) or contacting them on grants@suffolkcf.org.uk or 01473 602602.

Organisations can make an application for funding for up to £5,000 for pilot projects or up to £50,000 for projects which have already been piloted. These grants are available for up to 3 years.

Suffolk has launched its 3-year strategy for Violence Against Women and Girls, in line with the Government's plan to reduce and prevent this type of crime, improve collaboration between services and ensure perpetrators are brought to justice. The strategy has been prepared collaboratively by the Safer Stronger Communities Board (SSCB) – consisting of representatives from Suffolk County Council, district and borough councils, Suffolk Constabulary, Suffolk's Police & Crime Commissioner,

community safety partnerships, health and probation services, the Norfolk & Suffolk Criminal Justice Board and Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership.

The SSCB have a shared commitment to tackle the incredibly important issue of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) which includes, but is not limited to, domestic abuse, sexual violence, stalking, coercive and controlling behaviour, and revenge porn – all of which have a devastating impact on victim-survivors, families, and communities.

The Strategy is available to view online at: [Suffolk VAWG Strategy 2022-25](#)

150 miles of new road surfaces in Suffolk

Suffolk Highways begins its programme to resurface and surface dress 150 miles of new roads across 173 different sites across the county this year.

The two separate programmes provide new surfaces for vehicles to travel on, with the treatments expected to last between 5 and 20 years; depending on the type of treatment and volumes of vehicles using the roads amongst many other factors.

Road resurfacing is a process where the old surface is either overlaid with a new surface or removed to a certain depth and a new surface is applied, whereas surface dressing is a preventative process that is used to seal and improve the surface of the roads, slowing down the deterioration of the road surface and improving its skid resistance. The rapid speed of this process means that disruption to road users, local businesses and emergency services is minimised. The process involves an application of hot bitumen emulsion, followed by a layer of stone chips. Sites may be patched and prepared in advance of the surface dressing.

Following several trials across the UK, it has been demonstrated that the removal of some road markings can have a positive effect on road safety by reducing vehicle speeds. Therefore, road markings may not always be replaced like for like. This approach also supports the need for Suffolk Highways to reduce its ongoing maintenance liabilities.

As part of the surface dressing process, it is essential that once the road is reopened to traffic, the 20mph speed limit is adhered to, this avoids damage to vehicles and

the slow-moving traffic further embeds the chippings. The road is swept at regular intervals to remove any excess chippings.

- First sweep: within 24 hours after completion of the works
- Second sweep: within 7 days after works are completed
- Third sweep (if required): within 14 days of works being completed.

Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for Ipswich, operational highways and flooding, said:

Each year Suffolk Highways uses a range of data to identify a number of roads across our county that are in need of a new surface. This process covers over potholes, stops them from forming in future and provides a new surface for all to travel on. These programmes are extensive and weather-dependent, so regular progress updates will be issued via Twitter @Suff_highways and on the Suffolk County Council website. I appreciate that these works can be disruptive to Suffolk residents, however these improvements do provide long-term benefits to all and are very much welcome across the county.

For further details, including the programmes of work, please visit the [road resurfacing](#) and [surface dressing](#) pages. Both programmes are subject to change due to the operations being weather dependent. Therefore, they will be updated regularly.

May 2022

Suffolk County Council has planted 198,547 trees across Suffolk in just the last two years (at an average of 272 per day).

Much of this was possible thanks to £400,000 of the council's own Suffolk 2020 Fund, to protect and encourage biodiversity in the county.

In one year, 198,547 average adult trees could absorb the equivalent CO2 emitted by:

- 8,845,898 miles travelled in a typical petrol car
- 903 typical household gas boilers running for a year
- 199 Suffolk residents each year

The planting includes 12 miles of new mixed native species hedgerows across 15 county farm holdings, delivering new wildlife habitat, ecological corridors and enhanced landscapes.

The council worked with many partners to make the tree planting a success, including The Woodland Trust, Suffolk Tree Warden Network, county farm tenants, landowners, local authorities and communities, and contractor Giles Landscapes.

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for Environment and Public Protection, said:

This amazing achievement would not have been possible without all the partners we work with, to whom I'm grateful for getting these trees in the ground. From the support of our exceptional Suffolk Tree Warden Network volunteers, through to the children at local schools, we really have put Suffolk on the UK map for tree planting. Once the healing wood is completed at Howard Community Academy later this year, we will have surpassed our target of 200,000 trees for Suffolk.

All the trees have been registered as part of the Queen's Green Canopy to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, and contribute to the continuing Suffolk-wide ambition of Creating the Greenest County.

June 2022

New scheme based in Felixstowe reuses over 800,000 tonnes of water.

Since its launch in February 2021 a unique scheme to the UK, based in Felixstowe, has saved over 800,000 tonnes of water being lost to the North Sea - and reused it to grow Suffolk crops.

Drainage water has traditionally been pumped away to the River Deben and North Sea, damaging saltmarsh along the way. Instead, it is now pumped back inland, conserving the saltmarsh and refilling 14 reservoirs, which six local farms are using to irrigate their crops.

Last week (9-10 June 2022) local landowners and national organisations were invited to visit the site, to hear first-hand from the scheme's operators, Felixstowe Hydrocycle, and from farmers who are benefitting from the scheme.

Organised by Suffolk County Council, working with the Environment Agency and University of East Anglia as key partners of the project, the event aimed to inspire more schemes to be trialled around Suffolk, the UK and Europe.

Councillor Steve Wiles, County Councillor for Felixstowe Coastal and Suffolk County Council's Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways, said:

I'm extremely proud that Suffolk and the council is a national leader with projects like this. I'm grateful for the vision and commitment shown by all the partners and landowners who are making this a success. Our region is a dry place and already faces challenges with its water supply – it's estimated that by 2050 we'll need to double our supply if we continue to use water at the current rate. Any way that we can conserve water is crucial and if we can do this whilst supporting our farmers and landowners, then it reaffirms Suffolk's importance to providing for the UK. This project epitomises the council's ambition to protect and enhance our environment. It also complements our aim for the authority, and Suffolk, to be Net Zero by 2030. Sustainable projects like this really do confirm how Suffolk can be the greenest county.

The Felixstowe scheme is one of only four being trialled across Europe, overseen by FRESH4Cs, a cooperation project between 10 UK, Belgian and Dutch partners. FRESH4Cs has received funding from the Interreg 2 Seas programme 2014-2020 co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

The drainage water is sourced from the Kingsfleet near Felixstowe and travels along a 12km pipeline to local farms where it is stored in existing reservoirs ready for

irrigation. The pipeline route has been carefully plotted to avoid areas of conservation and archaeological sites.

Extra funding agreed by Cabinet to fund new SEND places

Funding for second phase of £45 million five-year project agreed by Cabinet.

Suffolk County Council's Cabinet has today agreed an additional £15.9million to complete the funding for the creation of at least 879 specialist places for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

This money marks the second phase of a £45million five-year project to deliver specialist provision for SEND students in Suffolk. These places include units attached to mainstream schools and three new special schools.

So far, 500 new places have opened across the county, with another 325 due to open between September 2022 and September 2024 under phase 1. The additional money will enable the completion of phase 2 of the project, and the creation of between 54 to 72 new places, depending on design and planning.

The new SEND places support the growing number of children and young people in Suffolk who need specialist help at school. Between September 2021 and May 2022 there have been 1,333 referrals for specialist placements for children currently in mainstream schools.

Rachel Hood, Cabinet member for education, SEND and skills at Suffolk County Council, said:

I have had the privilege of visiting some of these new units and seeing first-hand the significant difference they make to children and young people and their families. It is vital that we continue to increase not only the numbers of places we offer, but also the mix of help and support we offer so we can continue to meet the varied need of lots of young people. This significant investment shows our ongoing commitment to improving our SEND provision and making sure all children and young people in Suffolk have the best education to suit their needs.

Plans for new SEND places under phase 3 will come before Cabinet from September. The newly-approved £15.9million includes £6million to complete phase 2, £4.6million to cover overspend and a grant from the Department for Education of £5.3million.

The special schools include Castle EAST, a new communication and interaction school in north Suffolk; a new social, emotional and mental health school in west Suffolk named Sir Peter Hall; and a communication and interaction school in south Suffolk, Woodbridge Road Academy.

DRAFT

July 2022

County Councils unanimously agree “no” to damaging pylons proposal

Authorities in Essex and Suffolk have united to condemn the current proposals for a 180km network of 50m tall electricity pylons.

Essex County Council and Suffolk County Council have passed motions at their full council meetings in July, to oppose the East Anglia GREEN proposal put forward by National Grid for a 180km network of electricity pylons between Norwich, Bramford and Tilbury.

Norfolk County Council is expected to consider the motion at its next full council meeting, following a planned debate yesterday (19 July 2022) being postponed.

The councils agree that the plan for pylons is destructive and outdated, and will cause irreversible damage to the countryside, wildlife habitats and local communities.

A new electricity network is needed to transmit the ambitious 50 GW of offshore wind that the Government aims to be delivered by 2030, and to connect new projects like Sizewell C. So much of this ambition falls on East Anglia, to provide energy for much of the country.

The councils fully support the need to generate this renewable and low carbon electricity, to meet local and national Net Zero ambitions. However, they believe that more suitable, sustainable and modern alternatives for the network have not been properly investigated and presented, such as undersea cable routes around the coastline of East Anglia.

Formalising their long-standing positions on the East Anglia GREEN proposal, the two councils join a group of 13 MPs who recently signed a letter criticising the consultation, along with a growing public petition with thousands of signatures

Councillor Matthew Hicks, leader of Suffolk County Council, said:

We are sending a strong message with the councils coming together to reject this completely unacceptable project to get electricity onshore. There is significant momentum against the pylon proposal from our residents, businesses, and our MPs. There has been no clear and detailed information presented on alternatives, particularly an offshore solution. In Suffolk, we have been lobbying for strategic electricity networks since 2011 and we will continue stand firm alongside our neighbours to ensure that Suffolk, Norfolk, and Essex are not damaged by the serious shortcomings in these current plans.

National Grid completed the East Anglia GREEN non-statutory consultation in June and later this year, it is anticipated they will publish a report outlining the key themes from the feedback received and explain the next steps. They expect the first statutory consultation to take place in early 2023, with an application to the Planning

Inspectorate in late 2024.

Council looks to protect Suffolk following Sizewell C decision

Suffolk County Council will now focus its attention on protecting Suffolk, ensuring that the county sees the maximum benefits from Sizewell C project.

Today (20 July 2022) the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy granted the Development Consent Order to build and operate a new nuclear power station, Sizewell C.

The council remains disappointed that a number of key issues have not been fully resolved, but is now looking ahead to the boosts for the local economy and protecting the local environment.

Whilst the council has been successful in securing many improvements to the scheme, it had raised several concerns where the impact on the natural environment could have been improved:

- The blight of the additional pylons at the main site
- Unnecessary and damaging outage car park at Goose Hill
- Sizewell Link Road should be removed after construction to prevent lasting damage to the environment.

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Environment, said:

During the process, the council's voice has been strong, and our influence has resulted in a number of significant improvements to the proposals, to make them more acceptable for Suffolk. We have taken the concerns of Suffolk residents to the highest levels, from the Planning Inspectorate to the Secretary of State. We are disappointed that, in our opinion, some of these have not been listened to. It is now our role to ensure that as Sizewell C proceeds, it does so with the least possible impact on Suffolk's residents and unique natural environment, whilst doing all we can to maximise the economic opportunities for our county.

The council has been instrumental in recent changes made to the proposals, which will see Suffolk benefit from nearly £200m of investment to mitigate the impact on communities, the environment and infrastructure. Assurances have also been secured to see a far greater quantity of construction materials will be delivered by rail and sea, reducing the number of lorries on the county's rural roads.

Following the decision to grant the Sizewell C Development Consent Order, there is now a six week period in which judicial review challenges may be made. Subject to any legal challenges, Suffolk County Council will work with EDF Energy, local communities and local authorities, to ensure that the scheme is constructed accordingly and that opportunities for Suffolk are maximised.

New routes added as Suffolk County Council issues updated HGV map

A new map for hauliers plotting routes for journeys across Suffolk has been drawn up.

The Suffolk County Council Lorry Route Plan now incorporates new developments and roads, schemes such as Air Quality Management Areas, and changes in road safety on lorry routes.

Changes to the map include utilising new by-passes and link roads at Beccles, Eye and Haverhill to divert traffic away from town centres, and downgrading of routes at Leiston and Stowlangtoft. The new edition also features, for the first time, routes in Ipswich.

The map, compiled following a three-month consultation with all parish and town councils in Suffolk, was last updated in 2011 although a minor review was held in 2017.

While hauliers are not compelled to use the routes it does help them identify the best roads for their journey. It also discourages them from taking routes that can cause disruption, road safety concerns and environmental concerns to local communities.

Councillor Richard Smith, Suffolk County Council Cabinet member for Economic Development, Transport Strategy and Waste, said:

We have consulted with town and parish councils across Suffolk to establish what changes they would like to see. Where possible and practical to do so we have made changes but, inevitably, some people are going to be disappointed that changes they proposed could not be implemented. Suffolk is a predominantly rural county and we can only work within the road network available to us to accommodate modern-day traffic requirements.

Councillor Smith advised that parishes who feel that local HGV weight restriction traffic orders were not being adhered should sign up to the [Suffolk Lorry](#)

[Watch](#) scheme. This is run by Trading Standards, in partnership with Suffolk Highways, who ensure weight restriction orders are enforced. These orders are in place to protect old or weak structures and minimise use of a route unless access is necessary.

[Read more about the review and view the new map here.](#)

August 2022

Council to boost electric vehicle charging across Suffolk

The council submitted a bid of £1,362,000 to the Department for Transport, as part of the Local EV Infrastructure (LEVI) pilot scheme.

Suffolk's residents and visitors will see further improvements to the county's electric vehicle (EV) charging network, following Suffolk County Council's successful bid to fund more charging points.

With additional contributions such as commercial funding, the project will see a total investment of around £2.75m.

The new LEVI funding will allow the council to develop the county's EV charging network by:

- PV solar power and battery storage upgrades to approximately 10 existing sites
- Installing community EV charging, PV solar power and battery storage at over 30 further sites in urban and rural areas
- Identifying key commercial sites for 7kW, rapid and ultra-rapid chargers, which will benefit the local community

Suffolk County Council has led the way in electric vehicle charging, following the launch of Plug In Suffolk in 2019. It was the UK's first 'fully open' public EV fast charging network and has seen other local authorities around the country follow that model.

Plug In Suffolk has now installed 100 charging points around the county, with an emphasis on installations in rural locations and supporting households without off-street charging capabilities.

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Environment, said:

This is excellent news for those living in Suffolk, and those who are visiting to enjoy everything our county has to offer. We have had over 70 expressions of interest for potential sites, which will offer over 200 new charging points, including proposals for installations of solar carports, as well as regular charging points. These are places such as community centres, village halls, sports clubs and park and ride sites, many of which are within walking distance of people who do not have access to off-street parking. Through Plug In Suffolk we have a history of successfully creating these EV charging community hubs, for example at the Coddendam Centre. We will now be able to create more sites like this, and working with parish councils and local groups makes the installations a real community effort.

This project contributes to Suffolk's commitment to be Net Zero by 2030. The Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan identified that decarbonisation of vehicles in Suffolk was a key aspect of meeting that target.

September 2022

Suffolk Roadsafe Partnership rolls out ANPR devices to target speeding motorists

Speeding motorists are to be targeted with a mobile number plate recognition system to be rolled out across Suffolk.

Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) will be rotated around sites where there is a problem with speeding or rat-running on roads with a 20 or 30mph speed limit.

The devices, 10 in total, will display the speeds of drivers to them as they approach, encouraging them to slow down.

If they continue to ignore the speed limit the ANPR camera will take a picture of them and record the date, time, speed, vehicle registration and a photo of the vehicle.

In certain cases, persistent offenders will be reported to Suffolk Constabulary and, while no one will be prosecuted as a direct result of the devices, they may be visited by a police officer who will speak to them about their driving.

The information shared with the police may also influence the deployment of speed enforcement vans to problem areas.

This project is part of the Suffolk Roadsafe Partnership between Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Constabulary.

Suffolk County Council provided £400,000 from the 2020 Fund to support a two-year trial.

A grant of £30,000 has also been awarded by the Road Safety Trust to evaluate the project and establish whether the camera scheme is effective in reducing speeding.

Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council Cabinet member for Ipswich, Operational Highways and Flooding, said:

Speeding traffic is a danger to everyone and a blight on the community it passes through. This scheme tackles this problem by reminding drivers that they need to slow down - and if they don't, they can expect to be contacted and told their driving is unacceptable. If it makes motorists reflect on how fast they drive and understand the need to slow down, then it has done its job.

Tim Passmore, Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk, said:

As a member of Suffolk Roadsafe I am very pleased to support this County Council initiative to improve road safety across the county. Speeding is one of the main issues the public raises with me, so anything we can do to remind drivers to keep to the speed limit is to be applauded.



October 2022

£7.8 million redevelopment of Foxhall Recycling Centre to begin

Work on a major expansion of the Foxhall Recycling Centre near Ipswich is set to begin.

RG Carter Ltd has been appointed by Suffolk County Council as contractor for the £7.8 million project, with work scheduled to start on October 17.

The new design will increase capacity for cars on site, reduce queuing and improve access from Foxhall Road, and provide greater capacity to meet future growth.

The site will have a raised level construction, giving better access to the containers for users without the need for stairs.

Containers can also be emptied without the need to close the site.

The funding includes £794,414 from East Suffolk Council through the Community Infrastructure Levy collected from new housing developments in the East Suffolk area.

Work is scheduled to complete in early 2024 and the site will remain open to the public during construction.

RG Carter will work alongside [Concertus Design and Property Consultants](#) on the scheme.

The project will be conducted in phases to keep the centre operational throughout the build, but at certain times this may result in fewer booking slots being available to the public.

The Re-use shop will change location in the new layout and will need to be closed for a period early next year to allow this to take place.

The project will also see the installation of a feeder lane from Foxhall Road, making access into the site safer.

Of the 11 recycling centres around the county Foxhall accounts for 19% of recycling and waste, collecting more than 12,500 tonnes a year.

Councillor Richard Smith, Cabinet member for Economic Development, Transport Strategy and Waste, said:

This is a significant investment in Foxhall recycling centre that will bring benefits to its users for many years to come. Whilst the centre will remain open during work this will be a complex project which will, inevitably, result in some disruption at times, so I would ask the public to be patient while improvements are being made. Foxhall is the busiest recycling centre in the county, so once complete this really will be a flagship site for Suffolk residents.

Councillor James Mallinder, East Suffolk Council's cabinet member for the Environment, said:

We are committed to making it as easy as possible for residents to dispose of their waste correctly, so it is fantastic to see Community Infrastructure Levy funds – which we collect from developers - support these essential improvements. Once completed, the work will help ensure the site is more user-friendly, accessible, and safe for everyone. Caring for the environment is one of East Suffolk Council's priorities and making the right choices when it comes to disposing of our waste makes a really positive contribution towards dealing with our climate concerns.

For more details about the scheme go to the [Suffolk Recycling website](#).

The Council's Cabinet has this afternoon agreed a new wave of funding to continue its programme to provide places for children and young people with SEND.

The £3million agreement marks the start of Phase 3 of the Capital Programme to create three additional specialist units providing 42 additional places for students with special educational needs and disabilities. This follows Phase 1 of the programme which created 825 new places across Suffolk and Phase 2, which was signed off in June 2022, and will create up to 73 new places.

So far, £45million has been allocated by Suffolk County Council to deliver the new places for Phase 1 and Phase 2 - £15million of which has been provided by the Department for Education.

In addition, Cabinet also agreed to support the Department for Education's High Needs Provision Capital Funding (HNPCF) for 2023/24 of £7million to be spent on the development of units attached to mainstream schools to support students with social, emotional and mental health problems and speech, language and communication needs. This will create up to 168 new spaces, and is an addition to previous funding agreed from the Department for Education in 2022/23 for up to 78 new places.

The third item signed off today was Cabinet's support for the application for funding for two free schools from the Department for Education. One of these will be in east Suffolk and support children with severe learning difficulties and the second will be built in Sudbury for those with autistic spectrum disorder and complex social, emotional and mental health problems. If the bids are successful, both schools will teach children and young people from across Suffolk.

In total, Suffolk will deliver up to 1,317 new places for children and young people with SEND by 2025/26.

Rachel Hood, Cabinet member for Education, SEND and Skills at Suffolk County Council, said:

We are seeing a continued increase in demand for specialist places for children and young people with SEND in Suffolk and it is vital we continue to stay ahead of this increased demand. I have seen first-hand the positive impact that these units have for children with additional needs, and their families.

The next step for Phase 3 is for schools across Suffolk to express an interest in having a specialist unit and, following these expressions of interest, the most suitable sites will be chosen. This programme for improved provision is informed by the SEND Sufficiency Plan 2022-25.

New special schools opened in Suffolk include Castle EAST, a communication and interaction school in north Suffolk; a social, emotional and mental health school in west Suffolk named Sir Peter Hall; and a communication and interaction school in south Suffolk, Woodbridge Road Academy.

November 2022

£2.5 million saved on energy costs as LED streetlight project nears completion

A project with the aim of replacing all 43,400 streetlights across Suffolk with sustainable, longer-lasting, and cost-saving LED bulbs nears completion.

It has saved more than £2.5 million pounds so far.

The change to LED streetlights supports Suffolk County Council's aim to reduce carbon, light pollution, and bring down ongoing maintenance costs for the council, all whilst providing the best value to residents.

It was expected that the council would reduce costs by around 76%, however, the target was exceeded, with 77.64% savings made to date.

In June 2021, Bouygues Energies and Services were announced as the partner to deliver the project to upgrade 43,400 Suffolk streetlights with new, reduced energy LED lanterns. The total number of upgraded streetlights is currently at 40,692 excluding any of the Ipswich Borough Council, or Town/Parish council owned streetlights. There are approximately 1,700 upgrades outstanding, which includes any remaining heritage lantern upgrades. It is hoped that around 1200 of the remaining lanterns will be completed by the end of the year.

Prior to the commencement of the project, Suffolk Highways contacted towns and parishes to provide them with the opportunity to have their parish-council owned street-lighting upgraded at the same time. All heritage-style lanterns are also being upgraded as part of the project.

The upgrade of the lighting system will include a further rollout of SCC's central management system which will allow lights to be switched on or off and dim individual or groups of lights.

This smart technology will increase the control the council has over its power consumption which will further reduce costs. The system will also automatically flag any lights that are not working which reduces the need for night-time inspections.

Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member Ipswich, Operational Highways and Flooding, said:

It has been very exciting to see the incredible progress made on the LED streetlight replacement over the past 15 months. Our partner contractor, Bouygues has shown such resilience throughout which has resulted in a very well-managed programme and successful project. The shift over to these new LED lanterns has enabled the council to save a considerable amount on energy costs and supported our organisation's ambition to become carbon-neutral organisation by 2030. I would like to extend my congratulations and thank you to all those working on this project and ensuring its resounding success. I look forward to seeing its continued positive impact in the coming years as we reap the benefits of stronger, cheaper and more environmentally friendly streetlights.

Suffolk County Council adopts new Streets Guide for building more sustainable, people-first developments

Ground-breaking new guidelines for developers to help them design sustainable and low-carbon neighbourhoods have been launched by Suffolk County Council.

The [Suffolk Design: Streets Guide](#) is the first document of its kind to prioritise walking and cycling in the routes people will use - and the infrastructure required to make them safe and attractive - over the needs of private vehicles.

The guide can also be used by highway engineers, drainage engineers and Public Rights of Way officers in responding to planning applications and in the technical review and approval of new highways infrastructure.

While not compulsory, the guide has been prepared with Suffolk's other authorities using [government policies, guidance and best practice](#).

It replaces the Suffolk Design Guide for Residential Areas, last updated in 2000, and has been drawn up with [Stantec – a global leader in sustainable design and engineering](#).

In 2019, every local authority in Suffolk declared or acknowledged a climate emergency.

The design of streets has a significant role to play in the reduction of carbon emissions by prioritising walking, wheeling, cycling and access to public transport, as well as managing the effects of flooding through effective sustainable drainage systems.

By placing greater priority on designing for people as pedestrians - whether wheeled or walkers - and cyclists, the council is contributing to its ambitions for reducing carbon.

Councillor Richard Smith, Suffolk County Council Cabinet member for Economic Development, Transport Strategy and Waste, said that as the authority responsible for public rights of way the council has an important role in helping the planning system support transition to a low-carbon future.

Streets are more than just routes to travel or park, they provide places to enjoy, where people meet and socialise, they define the character of our towns and villages and support how our utilities are provided underground to our homes and businesses. All these different elements need careful consideration as we look forward to a low carbon future and adapt to climate change, so in this context, a street design guide needs to be much more than a prescriptive guidance document. It needs to provide a basis for designers to interpret and deliver streets and places that reflect much broader objectives such as increasing social value, better accessibility, helping to achieve a low carbon future, ensuring better air quality and enhanced biodiversity.

Suffolk Archives receives national accreditation

Suffolk Archives Service has received its Provisional Archive Service Accreditation from The National Archives.

Representatives from The National Archives visited The Hold on Ipswich Waterfront on Friday 11 November, where they met staff from Suffolk Archives and were given a

tour of the new archives and heritage centre building. The Hold is a partnership between Suffolk County Council and the University of Suffolk and was partly funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Members of partnership organisations, heritage groups and volunteers from across the county also attended the celebratory event, which showcased the work that has been achieved in transforming and diversifying the archives service.

The visit comes just over a year since the building was officially opened by His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester and provided an opportunity for Suffolk Archives to be officially presented with their Provisional Archive Service Accreditation.

The accreditation defines good practice and agrees standards for archive services across the UK. It allows archive services to participate in a scheme supporting the ongoing development of their service against a nationally agreed standard.

Councillor Bobby Bennett, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Equality and Communities said:

I am delighted that after being delayed by the pandemic, Suffolk Archives has now been officially presented with their certificate of Provisional Accreditation. Suffolk Archives preserves our local history so that people of all ages and backgrounds can discover more about their heritage, and this national accreditation formally recognises the important work they do.

[New scheme 'Multiply Suffolk' to offer adults a chance to improve their numeracy skills](#)

A new initiative named Multiply Suffolk, which will offer adults an opportunity to improve their numeracy skills, has launched in Suffolk.

The scheme is for those who do not already have a GCSE grade C/4 or higher in Maths or equivalent.

Adults can sign up for free courses and activities including Money Management and Numeracy for Parents/Carers. Unaccredited, informal learning as well as Level 1 and Level 2 accredited learning is available to residents on either a part-time or intensive basis and are offered in flexible settings to fit around people's lives.

Multiply Suffolk has been created thanks to a £3.7m government investment from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund aimed at boosting opportunities for more people to progress and secure well-paid jobs. SCC's Multiply Suffolk Team will work with subcontractors Realise Futures and Menta to deliver the scheme.

Councillor Rachel Hood, Cabinet Member for Education, SEND and Skills said:

This is an exciting new initiative that will help adult learners across the county. The scheme is aimed at improving numeracy skills, and it has been widely shown that people who improve their numeracy skills are more likely to be in employment, have higher wages and have better mental well-being. We are pleased to be delivering Multiply Suffolk alongside Realise Futures and MENTA and I hope that adults in Suffolk take full advantage of the scheme.

Multiply Suffolk was officially launched during the adult learning engagement event at Trinity Park, Ipswich on 9 November 2022.

For more information and/or to sign up for the scheme visit: <https://learnsuffolk.org/multiply-coming-soon/>

Funding awarded for projects to stop violence against Women and Girls

Almost £300,000 of funding has been allocated to six new projects which aim to support victims and prevent violence against Women and Girls.

At the beginning of 2022 Suffolk, launched its [Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy for 2022-2025](#).

Alongside the strategy, Suffolk County Council released more than £350,000 of funding, to be allocated across two phases, so that bidding organisations could help progress the aims and ambitions that had been identified in the Strategy including preventing violence, supporting victims, pursuing perpetrators and strengthening the system.

The fund has been administered by the [Suffolk Community Foundation](#) with all decisions carefully considered and made by the county's Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Steering Group. The VAWG Steering Group includes representation from Police, Police & Crime Commissioner, Health, County Council, District & Borough Councils, Anglia Care Trust, Probation and representatives for Voluntary & Community Sector organisations representing victims and survivors.

The VAWG Steering Group are pleased to announce that the following organisations have been successful organisations and three-year projects have been awarded as follows in phase one:

Families Together Suffolk - To provide 1:1 emotional support through the keeping safe programme. The programme also offers practical support around patterns of domestic abuse and forming healthy future relationships. Families Together Suffolk (FTS) also run a Dads Group which allows them to build trusting relationships with those who attend and start conversations as men often have abusive partners too. Visit [Families Together Suffolk to find out more](#).

Fresh Start - new beginnings - To reach children and young people who are slipping through the net. The request will pay for an outreach worker to raise awareness of sexual abuse, sexual violence and exploitation of children and young people with staff and managers of supported accommodation, children's homes, and education facilities. In addition to this, Fresh Start New Beginnings will run workshops with CYP and families to raise awareness and help through the disclosure process. Visit [Fresh Start new beginnings to find out more](#).

Lighthouse Women's Aid - Grant request towards a newly developed children and families service for women and children suffering Domestic Abuse. The programme includes advice sessions (including legal, debt and child contact arrangements); Emotional Literacy Support Assistants; Stronger families' programme. Visit [Lighthouse Women's Aid to find out more](#).

Suffolk Law Centre - The grant will help to fund a caseworker, supervisor, and paralegal to support domestic abuse survivors in Suffolk to access legal advice and representation. Visit the [Suffolk Law Centre website to find out more](#).

Terrence Higgins Trust - This grant will expand current Relationships and Sex Education service for children and young people to tackle VAWG problems through six, eight or twelve week programmes, one off workshops, weekly zoom meetings and drop-in clinics at schools and pupil referral units. The sessions will focus on healthy relationships, wellbeing, consent, empowerment, safety planning, signposting, support, and information. In addition to this, there will be professional training around these topics including online safety, safety planning, how to support young people in abusive relationships. Visit [Terrence Higgins Trust to find out more](#).

The Mix Stowmarket - To expand the diadem project; a group of up to 12 young people aged 13-23 where topics are discussed, including healthy friendships, the fine

line between banter and bullying, safe romantic relationships, spotting the signs of exploitative relationships, coercion, consent, and body image. The project aims to increase confidence and self-esteem and will be offered to females, non-binary people, people with special educational needs, those from LGBTQIA+ community and the programme will be developed and offered to males to recognise their role in VAWG. The mix will also develop posters, short films (for use in schools and other venues) and 121 support. Visit [The Mix Stowmarket to find out more](#).

Councillor Bobby Bennett, Cabinet Member for Equality and Communities, said:

It is so important that many valuable projects will be supported through this fund. I have no doubt that they will succeed in making a difference to those that need it throughout the lifetime of the current strategy and its objectives. This is another positive step in our efforts to prevent Violence Against Women & Girls in Suffolk.

Successful projects for phase two funding will be announced in January 2023. Suffolk's Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy for 2022 – 2025 can be viewed on the [Suffolk County Council website](#).

December 2022

Historic half a billion pound devolution deal hands Suffolk regeneration and skills powers to level up

A landmark devolution deal, which puts money and power over building, regeneration and skills into the hands of leaders in Suffolk will be signed today.

Suffolk will be devolved power over their Adult Education budget, so they can shape provision in a way that best suits the needs of the local community and will receive immediate support to build new affordable homes on brownfield sites, as well as more capital funding to improve energy efficiency in houses.

The deal will also see Suffolk County Council handed control over a £480 million investment fund – this will be guaranteed for the next thirty years. This will enable the county to drive growth and plan for the long-term with certainty as it looks to level up and unlock its full economic potential.

Suffolk will also get a directly elected leader of the council. This not only provides a single person who is accountable to the people of Suffolk but gives the county a local champion who can attract investment and be a stronger voice in discussions with central government.

The Levelling Up Secretary will today attend a ceremony in Bury St Edmunds with Cllr Matthew Hicks to officially sign the deal. Michael Gove will also visit Norfolk to sign a devolution agreement with Norfolk County Council, which will transfer further money and power out of Whitehall. The deals follow Cornwall Council who just last week signed their own devolution deal with the government, unlocking powers and long-term funding of £360 million.

With three new devolution deals signed in the last seven days, 50% of England will now be covered by a devolution deal and reaffirms the government's commitment in the Levelling Up White Paper to offer a devolution deal to any area that wants one

by 2030.

The deal also sets out the government's plans to devolve more power to Suffolk County Council through:

- **Investment:** It will bring decades of funding worth £480 million to improve the lives of Suffolk's residents and spend on their local priorities.
- **Housing:** The deal will provide £5.8 million to regenerate brownfield land into beautiful, affordable homes and drive economic growth across the area; Suffolk will also receive greater compulsory purchase powers.
- **Education:** The agreement devolves the Adult Education Budget so they can shape provision in a way that best suits the needs of residents and the local Suffolk economy.
- **Transport:** An integrated transport settlement starting in 2024/25, to support the area to improve key transport infrastructure priorities.
- **The Environment:** The new deal will help Suffolk deliver on its ambitions to be the country's greenest county with £3 million to improve energy efficiency in homes.

Levelling Up Secretary Michael Gove, said:

I said we would give devolution deals to all that wanted them and today we are keeping that promise by putting power into the hands of the people who know best what Suffolk needs so they can level up the county and unleash its full economic potential.

It is now people in places like Ipswich, Felixstowe and Newmarket who will have a greater say on how their areas are run. Because we know important decisions are best taken by those who know their areas inside out, not by those many miles away in Whitehall.

This new deal will empower leaders in Suffolk to shape policies and direct spending to address issues that are unique to them, and I will commit to working with them even further to help drive through that change.

Cllr Matthew Hicks, Leader of Suffolk County Council, said:

This devolution deal is the first of its kind between the Government and a county council, making it a truly historic moment for Suffolk. The deal recognises Suffolk's ambitions, would put more powers in the hands of local people and bring more than half a billion pounds of investment into the county.

On the table are greater decision-making powers around transport, infrastructure, skills and more resources to help us achieve our net zero ambitions. Ultimately, this significant additional investment will improve the lives and outcomes of Suffolk's residents.

Devolution is a journey, not a one-off event. This deal for Suffolk is the first step towards an exciting future for our great county.

These deals are just the first steps in transferring power away from Whitehall into areas that want them. The East Anglian agreements mean that six of 13 places invited to negotiate devolution deals in the Levelling Up White Paper have now signed agreements with government. Suffolk and Norfolk join Cornwall – who signed their own deal just last week - York and North Yorkshire, and the East Midlands who have already signed devolution deals this year - these deals equate to another five million being covered by a devolution deal in 2022 alone.

The deal is now subject to local consultation, a council resolution to change their governance model so that electors directly elect the council leader, and elements, such as the transfer of new powers, require parliamentary approval to secondary legislation. The deal envisages the election of a directly elected leader in May 2024. Subject to the passing of the relevant measures in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, Suffolk and Norfolk would call the directly elected person the “elected leader” of the County Council.

[Proposed agreement for a devolution deal between the government and Suffolk County Council \(gov.uk\)](#)

January 2023

Council to protect frontline services and increase funding in budget proposal

Adult care services and children's services will receive £47m more funding as part of Suffolk County Council's £685m budget proposals, published today.

Adult care services and children's services will receive £47m more funding as part of Suffolk County Council's £685m budget proposals, published today.

Despite an incredibly challenging economic climate, the council has been able to produce a balanced budget. This will protect the services that people rely on the most and continue to care for the most vulnerable, which accounts for 75% of the whole budget.

Adult care services will have £34m more in their budget, and children's services will have a further £13m. This will help with the extra expense needed to meet the huge increase in demands for services, as well as higher costs due to inflation.

The budget-setting has been achieved with input from the council's partners, officers, departments and notably, Suffolk residents. Over 2,600 local people contributed to an online survey and focus groups, asking where they would spend more money, spend less money, and their views on Council Tax.

The top service areas where people wanted to spend more, were social care services for adults and children.

Some of the service areas where people also said they wanted to see more money spent, will receive additional funding:

- £700,000 for SEND services to support new recruitment, which is on top of the £1.1m invested this year
- £500,000 for Highways: to use environmentally friendly weed treatments, and stop using glyphosate which can damage wildlife
- £110,000 for tree management: to support the 'right tree right place' policy, having an appropriate inspection regime and supporting the resulting tree management requirements.
- £45,000 for Citizens Advice: to support work during cost of living challenges

A budget gap for next year - the difference between what money is available and what needs to be spent - had already been identified, resulting in savings of £15.5m for next year.

Under the proposals, the council's budget would increase by 9.6% (from £625.3m to £685.3). Additional funds would come from a total 3.99% increase in Council Tax, and an increase in funds from the Government for adult and children's social care.

Regarding Council Tax, the proposed 3.99% increase would be made up of a 1.99% increase in general Council Tax and a 2.00% increase dedicated to funding adult care.

This means costs for a household would look like:

- Band B property: £22.32 per week (85 pence per week increase from 2022-23) (Band B properties are the most common in Suffolk)
- Band D property: £28.70 per week (£1.10 pence per week increase from 2022-23)

The proposed budget will be discussed at the council's Scrutiny meeting on 10 January 2023, then presented at the Cabinet meeting on 24 January, with the final budget debated and voted on at Full Council on 9 February.

The Scrutiny meeting will be available to stream on [Suffolk County Council's YouTube channel](#), and public questions can be submitted in advance, details available at www.suffolk.gov.uk

Read [papers for the SCC Scrutiny meeting on 10 January 2023 here](#).

Council's net zero plans making progress

Suffolk County Council has reduced its carbon emissions by 15% (or 4,000 tonnes CO2e) in the last two years, on its ambitious journey to net zero by 2030.

The council has been keen to lead from the front with its ambition to reduce its own emissions and energy costs, while inspiring and supporting others to do the same.

It is one of only a few local authorities in the country to publish a 'Carbon Budget'. This looks in detail at its environmental impact, to identify actions and costs needed to reduce emissions.

Calculating the council's carbon emissions is a complex process. Papers released last month, ahead of a Council Scrutiny Committee meeting on 9 January, explain the work that the council has been doing in the last year, as it works towards net zero by 2030.

The council is reducing the emissions that it is directly responsible for, following a £12.8m 'spend to save' investment to decarbonise its buildings, making them more energy efficient and cheaper to run.

Changes it is making include moving its small vehicle fleet to fully electric by 2025, it has upgraded street lighting across the county, changed to a renewable electricity tariff, and is increasing the number of solar panels across its estate.

But one of the elements that will determine the council's progress to net zero, is the ambition shown by the businesses in its supply chain. Although these are not carbon emissions directly produced by the council, its suppliers and contractors still affect the council's target.

The Carbon Budget will be presented at a Scrutiny Committee meeting on 9 January, and will then be discussed at the Full Council meeting on 9 February 2023.

More information on support available to businesses and residents can be found at www.greensuffolk.org

February 2023

New highways services arriving in Suffolk as multi-million-pound contract awarded

Milestone Infrastructure, part of M Group Services, has been awarded Suffolk's new highways services contract, which will begin on 1 October 2023.

Following an extensive procurement exercise, Suffolk County Council has confirmed Milestone will be its new contract partner for up to 20 years. The new partnership, which is worth in the region of £800 million - £1 billion, will be delivering highway projects and improvements across Suffolk, including but not limited to maintaining roads, pavements and rights of way, drainage, hedge trimming, construction of new road schemes, snow-clearing and gritting.

When searching for its new highways partner, the county council worked with leading industry analysts to understand the different types of arrangements that other local authorities have in place, to look at which specialist providers are in the marketplace, and to find out what aspects of contract agreement may work best for Suffolk.

The council wanted the new contract to focus on delivering greater social value, utilising local skills and talent, giving young people the opportunity to work in the sector as well as building on the council's commitment to carbon reduction and protecting the environment.

A rigorous procurement exercise was carried out over many months, with various stages of discussions with service providers, to evolve their solutions to meet the various contractual requirements and deliver an effective and efficient highway service for Suffolk. Final submissions were evaluated and extensively moderated before the final winning contract was awarded.

Fire service finalises plan to protect Suffolk's communities

Councillor Andrew Reid, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Public Protection, brought the CRMP to Cabinet to seek approval for its adoption from April 2023.

The plan details Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service's priorities until 2027, including:

- Updating how response times are reported to include from the time of call and focus on the areas of highest risk, such as dwelling fires
- Addressing climate change to support Suffolk County Council's ambition to be a carbon-neutral authority by 2030, with a view to introducing more non-fossil fuel vehicles in the fleet
- Developing preventative safe and well visits, including continued work with the National Farmers' Union to tailor advice to rural and farming communities

- Assessing how the service works with partner agencies, such as supporting the ambulance service when appropriate and if capacity and resources allow for this
- Reviewing the recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters and specialist support staff to ensure Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service remains a diverse employer of choice

These priorities were identified during extensive research and pre-consultation engagement with staff and stakeholders. In addition, hundreds of Suffolk residents helped to inform the final document by providing feedback on proposals during the CRMP public consultation, which ran from October to December 2022 and included a series of public events held at six supermarkets across the county.

Jon Lacey, Chief Fire Officer for Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, said:

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has a fantastic reputation both regionally and nationally, as demonstrated by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) recently rating us as "Good" for our effectiveness and well we manage staff.

Our new CRMP will allow this great work to continue, with it identifying risk and how we can reduce this to ensure that Suffolk is a safe and healthy place to live.

The document also considers emerging challenges for our county, including an increase in wildfires and floods as a result of climate change, helping us to plan ahead and remain a resilient service that is there for you when you need us most.

Suffolk County Council will support Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service with implementing its CRMP and has allocated over £5.3million to fleet replacement in its 2023/24 budget, which includes the purchase of 20 state-of-the-art fire engines to ensure that firefighters have the equipment needed to help meet the service's priorities.

The new CRMP replaces Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service's previous Integrated Risk Management Plan, which was implemented following approval by Cabinet in July 2019

Appendix 3

District Councillor report

John Matthissen - Mid Suffolk District Councillor Annual Report for 2022/23

- Budget

In the 2022/23 budget a scheme to provide two electric buses, proposed by our group, was agreed. This scheme was put on hold by the Cabinet and it is hoped to get this going in 2023.

The budget for 2023/24 was approved for approximately £15.5 million on core services (up from £13 million the year before, mainly due to inflation) with no increase in council tax. Council home rents increased by 7% (against 4.1% last year) and a 7% increase in sheltered housing service charges (against no increase last year) as well as increase in utility charges. All these increases are due to inflation, costs of energy and other cost increases.

Our group put forward budget proposals for a £2 million investment in energy efficiency measures for housing in the district and this was agreed. We hope to see this implemented in the next six months or so.

The Council has reserves of over £21 million as at the end of the financial year. This is expected to increase to nearly £23 million over 2023/24. We hope this funding can be allocated to projects across the district.

- Investments

The Council has continued with local projects and after some delays the café at Needham Lakes opened in 2022 and the solar car port at Stowmarket Leisure Centre came into use.

Work continue on Gateway 14 and a first contract was signed with The Range for the company to move to the site. Discussions continue with other potential companies to be located here.

In Stowmarket, investment for a new Sports, Health, Education and Leisure facility was agreed and also funding to develop a new site for a depot for Mid Suffolk and Babergh districts.

Mid Suffolk District Council continues to hold investments in commercial property, outside the district, via its company CIFCO. This property, all outside of the Mid Suffolk area, ranges from gyms to car showrooms, in places including Epsom, Harlow, Lincoln, Peterborough, Norwich and Milton Keynes. Approximately £1-1.5 million is earned each year via rents however the overall value of this property portfolio has fallen.

- Economy

The Council continues to support the development of Gateway 14 which is now part of Freeport East. The Council is investing in an “innovation hub” specifically to support businesses in the Mid Suffolk area.

A new partnership with the University of Essex was set up to provide innovation opportunities for businesses.

The Women's Cycle Tour was calculated to have brought about £1 million of economic benefits to the region. There is unlikely to be a Women's Tour in 2023 due to a lack of funding nationally.

- Climate Change

The Council invested in new environmentally-friendly bin lorries – 22 out of a fleet of 35 across Babergh and Mid Suffolk. They are fuelled by HVO (Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil) produced from waste cooking oil and will reduce the carbon footprint of this service by 90%.

There was continued support for parishes with advice from the new post of biodiversity manager.

The Council encourages local groups to improve areas for wildlife and continues with the Tree for Life scheme as well as tree-planting across the district.

- Cost of living

In conjunction with the County Council, Mid Suffolk provided a number of initiatives to help with the cost of living crisis. This included an increase in the amount of funding available for those in hardship, community funding for "warm rooms" and a change to council tax for those on very low incomes.

A team at the Council worked to encourage groups and individuals to apply for funding.

- Planning and Housing

For most of the year, the Council's planning policy team continued to work on the Joint Local Plan following the Plan having been spilt into two parts as agreed with the Planning Inspectors last year. Part 1 covers all the social, environmental and economic policies and Part 2 covers those relating to housing numbers, distribution etc. Part 1 was progressed and is currently out at consultation. It is expected that, if agreed, this might be adopted in late summer / early autumn of 2023.

With regards to Part 2, the Inspector had acknowledged that 90% of Mid Suffolk's housing target is already allocated (either via existing permissions or sites allocated via Neighbourhood Plans) and that this is central to future policies. It is expected that work will commence on this during 2023 but that full adoption of a Part 2 would not take place until 2025.

Mid Suffolk's annual monitoring report showed that 862 new dwellings were built in the district in 2021/22 - 168% of the current annual target (513 dwellings) set by the national standard methodology. There are 7,929 outstanding planning permissions (as at 01/04/22) which are either not started or under construction. Separately, it was confirmed that Mid Suffolk now has 10.88 years of housing land supply, well above the Government target of five years.

Over £2 million was provided to parish and town councils in the form of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

A number of significant planning applications and housing developments have progressed during the year:

- Tannery Road – although the house designs were modified after some pressure, the effect on the trees and hedge within the site was greater than anticipated, and we can hope the new planting will gradually heal the landscape
 - The site in Bildeston Road has commenced with general disregard for planning conditions and the local community, but repeated visits by the enforcement team has brought the development into line.
 - I have opposed some proposals in Moats Tye by intervening with the planning officers, but earlier precedents have been set and it is hard to find policies which would justify refusal.
- Supporting the community

Almost £400,000 was allocated by Mid Suffolk District Council to communities across the district.

My locality fund benefitted the following schemes:

- Bench for Paupers Graves
- Speeding Gates for Finborough
- Street lights replacement for Finborough
- Jubilee event in Onehouse
- Plants for Oaks Meadow – Combs & Little Finborough
- Trinity Hall floor – Onehouse, Harleston, Shelland
- John Peel Centre – sound system
- Tree work - Harleston

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

John Matthissen

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Appendix 4

Report on the Cemetery for Combs Annual Parish Meeting

May 2023

Combs Cemetery is owned and maintained by Combs Parish Council. Once again it has been kept in good order throughout the year and feedback to this effect has been received from several family grave owners.

During the year April 2019- March 2020 there were 13 interments (8 burials and 5 cremated remains), all for non-residents of the civil parish of Combs.

During the year April 2020- March 2021 there were 18 interments (8 burials and 9 cremated remains), all but one were for non-residents of the civil parish of Combs.

During the year April 2021- March 2022 there were 14 interments (8 burials and 6 cremated remains), all for non-residents of the civil parish of Combs.

During the year April 2022- March 2023 there were 16 interments (8 burials including one green burial, and 8 cremated remains), all but two for non-residents of the civil parish of Combs.

Our new ground keeper has done a good job of maintaining the cemetery and councillors are content to continue the arrangement as it is working very well.

In light of the numbers of non-residents being buried in the cemetery, councillors agreed to a new fee structure that is aimed at discouraging economic non-residents and encouraging residents. This will be monitored.

Thanks must go to all parish councillors who have helped with the maintenance of the cemetery during the year, in particular Stuart Scarff, and ex councillors Jamie Crooks and David Thorpe.

Cllr Terry Betchley MBE

Appendix 5

Combs parish council report from BDCC May 23

I am really pleased to be attending the meeting this evening particularly as you are continuing to hold your meetings here.

I would like to take this opportunity again to thank you for your very generous grant of £8,000 which I hope you see has been put to excellent use with regards to the new extension, improvements to the showers and internal layout and also the fact that we have redecorated the external cladding on the old pavilion.

It was good to see you represented at the opening event on 8th May and we were really pleased to promote the new facilities to so many people and to thank those who had volunteered on the project as part of Big Help Out during the Coronation weekend. Over 575 hours of volunteering has been focused on getting the pavilion to this point. Throughout the year we have volunteers behind the bar, preparing the ground, doing cricket teas and coaching our youngsters as well as undertaking all the behind the scenes work of treasurer, secretary, getting grants and sponsorship etc etc

It was really special that last year two people have been recognised for their hard work and commitment to the club. In August at an event at Essex Cricket ground David Stephens-Row received a lifetime achievement award as part of the England Cricket Board Grassroots Cricket awards and Jane Doughty received the Les Francis trophy from the Hunts County Bats cricket league in Suffolk at their AGM in October. This trophy is awarded every year to someone who has served their particular club in a "behind the scenes" capacity.

We hope that you agree that this is now an excellent community asset that you can promote to the residents of Combs. We have very recently used the club for a 70th birthday celebration and have held parties, wakes and a wedding here in the last twelve months.

Cricket

We have two senior teams and T20 side, a ladies team and this year we are running 4 junior teams. We hold coaching for juniors and seniors during the summer on a Friday night and we also run Allstars and Dynamos which are ECB initiatives to introduce youngsters aged 5-11 to the game.

The Saturday team finished 7th in our league with some great cricket played from everyone. The Sunday side played in a higher division this year and did well and came fourth. Our T20 side won the trophy which was really special having come runners up for the last 4 years. The ladies season was great fun, albeit rather short however the limited games we played were a great success, and it was really good to see some of our developing youth players joining the ranks.

We always have lots of junior fixtures and festivals which are great fun and it's so encouraging to see so many youngsters keen on developing their cricket skills.

We also held a number of friendly games with farmers, hockey club etc which will be repeated this year.

We were very proud to host a 2 day Suffolk V Hertfordshire under 18 game and two separate county games. The same is taking place this year which is a really great way to raise the profile of the club. We are also strengthening our links with Wattisham.

We are always looking for new players for all the teams so please do promote the club to your friends and family.

Social

We have a Vice Presidents scheme for individuals who are non playing, who want to support the cricket club financially and as a thank you, we have an annual lunch in a marquee at the end of August. The theme for 2022 was the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Social events are also important putting on a pie and pint night, a race night and the juniors and seniors award evenings at the club. This year an Auction of Promises is planned as part of a summer gala event in August.

Financial information and plans for the future

Again I would like to take this opportunity to thank yourselves and Battsford Parish Council, district and county councillors, Mid Suffolk, the ECB and a number of private individuals for the grants they have given to us or are due to be received. Over £43,000 was committed in grants and the money was used for the extension however the club has had to contribute more than anticipated and we have used a significant amount of our reserves on the project. It is important to be able to raise other funds for finishing touches and to put some money back into club funds. For example we are still to finish the car park and the entrance. We have also refurbished our nets.

We are looking to gain a grant for an electronic scoreboard and we are looking to upgrade our treatment plant facilities however at an approximate cost of £13/15,000 we will need to look to gain grants for this.

As a relatively small club run by volunteers we punch significantly above our weight both in terms of our cricket, our facilities and our place in Suffolk cricket. We are at heart, a family friendly club we want to inspire youngsters to take up the game. We were formed in 1973 and are proud to be celebrating our 50th season this year. We look forward to many more years to having cricket played here.

Julia Stephens-Row
BDCC secretary
May 2023

Appendix 6

OAKS MEADOW PROJECT REVIEW 2022-2023

The Oaks Meadow Trustees, volunteers and supporters have worked tirelessly during the past year to progress the vision that we first had back in 2019. We have encountered drought, torrential rain and funding trials, all dealt with using the community spirit that drives the project.

The composting toilet and the entrance gate were both constructed in time for our midsummer event which was a very successful community gathering. The Medicine Wheel Garden was started, stones were painted, plants were donated and neighbours and friends socialised well past the setting of the sun.

The orchard managed to produce it's first crop of fruit, enough to make some individual apple pies. This year the blossom looks promising and any fruit harvested will be distributed in the community or made into edible delights for sharing.

The Reflective Space Garden has evolved over the past year with trees, bushes and plants being added. A water feature, some seating and a dead hedge around the perimeter, which is an ongoing part of the project, have been put in place. Four arches have been ordered and will be installed shortly.

A specimen silver birch tree, from the Queen's Green Canopy, has been planted behind the bench overlooking the pond.

Three vegetable beds have been constructed, compost bins made from old pallets and water tanks installed behind the composting toilet. It has been challenging getting people involved in this part of the project.

We are indebted to the Indigo Opportunities Group who attend every week to help maintain the veg patch, create their own sensory garden and work on the Reflective Space Garden.

2022 finished on a high with the construction of the play area and the wooden gazebo. The play equipment has proved very popular with local children and those from further afield with parents saying that this is the place to take your children. It has all the right equipment, a toilet nearby and space to run around as well as walking in the green space and appreciate wildlife and the countryside.

Currently, we are requiring funds to put in drainage from the playground and along the roadside end of the meadow, and to make a 20 space car park just inside the vehicular entrance. This will be the only major construction and funding need for 2023.

The challenges that we face over the next year are inspiring volunteers to help with general maintenance. There is a band of regular volunteers whose help is invaluable but we could always do with more to share the load.

The Trustees are grateful to Combs Parish Council for their continued support financially and for including our updates in the newsletter which is the best way to promote the Oaks Meadow activities and achievements to the residents of Combs and Little Finborough.

DRAFT

Appendix 7

Combs and Battisford report May 2023

Firstly, my apologies for not being able to attend in person.

Wow what a wonderful fete we had back in July 2022 seems a distant memory now, but a great weekend had by all. The scarecrow competition seemed to get everyone ready and in the spirit. We ended up having 37 entries which was pleasing and filled the villages with colour.

Friday night we had the pig race which was a popular addition to the fete and worked well to kick the weekend off. Saturday we were full of anticipation as to whether we would be well supported. Luckily, the weather was on our side and the people came. Once again people were very complimentary towards the committee which is always nice to hear and makes the hard work worthwhile. Saturday night we saw the barn dance sadly this was not as well supported, and the weather wasn't as kind. I feel we need to try different events to see what works best.

Once again, the gardening show was an added pull to the fete and the competition was fierce. The dog show is proving more popular year on year, and we had 97 entries which is the most to date.

Luckily, we were able to borrow a generator which cut our costs massively. Sadly, we are unable to do this in the future but definitely helped us out for this year.

We once again would like to thank combs parish council for there funding towards the toilets and insurance. This was a much-needed boost to funds to cover the escalating costs of running the fete.

Sadly, due to the cost-of-living crisis and lack of committee we had to come to the hard decision not to have a fete this year. As a committee we have 6 active members and 1 who has had to step away with the hope to return next year.

We made the decision to still hold a pig race albeit a scaled down version. We felt we still wanted to do something so people don't forget about us.

We have already set the date for next year's fete with it falling on Friday 28th and Saturday 29th June 2024. As always, we are looking out for more committee members and a new chairperson to lighten the load on the volunteers we have.

Although the fete isn't on this year there is still work going on in the background.

Rachel Williams

Appendix 8

Battisford & District Gardening Club

Just a short report

The Gardening Club is up and working after the COVID hiatus and our membership is back to a solid 55 after we started collecting membership subs again. We had suspended the fees during the lockdown.

We have a full schedule of activities, although with no Fete there is no annual public show this year.

Our last Show, a year ago, attracted some 600 entries(back to our pre-Covid volumes). The Show has a range on non-horticultural classes as well as the standard fruit, veg and flowers. We typically find get about a third of the Show entries from non-members and 2022 was no different.

I have attached our schedule for your interest.

I am sorry that because of other commitments I can't come to either of your meeting but remain available to answer any questions you may have.

Denis