

STOWLANGTOFT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

**MONDAY 16 MARCH 2026 AT 7.30 PM
BADWELL ASH VILLAGE HALL, BADWELL ASH**

Present: Cllrs Suggett (Chair), Bourne, Cuff and Wales. A Osman (Clerk) was in attendance with County Cllr Mellen, District Cllr Richardson and two members of the public.

71 **Apologies for absence.** Cllrs Catchpole and D'Lima sent apologies which were accepted.

72 **Declarations of Interest.** Cllr Cuff declared an interest in Agenda Item 9 - Finance.

73 **Public Forum.**

Clay Shoot. A clay shoot between 23 and 25 May was highlighted.

74 **County Councillors Monthly Report.** The meeting noted County Cllr Mellen's monthly report which had been pre-circulated. County Cllr Mellen highlighted the following:

- Local Government Review. A government decision on Suffolk unitary council options was expected by the end of March/early April.
- Elections. County Council elections will take place on 7 May.

75 **District Councillors Monthly Report.** The meeting noted the monthly report from District Richardson which had been pre-circulated. District Cllr Richardson highlighted the following:

- Council Tax. Council tax for Mid Suffolk area had been increased by 2.99%.
- New Bins. New bins were starting to be delivered along with leaflets explaining the new collection system.

Cllr Cuff briefed that work to install a water supply, kitchen and compostable toilet in the church as part of changes to create a community space were ongoing. District Cllr Richardson **agreed to fund the Anglian Water quote (£400) for water supply from next year's locality budget.**

County Cllr Mellen and District Cllr Richardson left the meeting at 7.43pm

76 **Minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2026.** Cllr Cuff proposed that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2026 be approved. Cllr Bourne seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

77 **Matters arising from the last meeting:**

No matters arising.

78 **St Georges Church.** Cllr Cuff reported that:

- The new Church sign had been installed.
- The 3rd Sat of the month working party had restarted.
- A meeting had been held with Mid Suffolk District Council Community Interest Levy Officers to understand how grant funding from this source could be obtained to help fund planned changes in the Church.

79 **Finance & Administration:**

a. Finance Report. The meeting noted the pre-circulated financial report (current bank balance of £2,202.84 and the projected outturn at the end of the FY of £750 current account and £1,500 savings account), circulated before the meeting. Payments authorised:

HART Farm Service	£810.00
Badwell Ash Village Hall	£40.00
Clerks Salary & Exps	£489.85
HMRC Tax	£110.00

The meeting also authorised payment for a late invoice not included in the agenda pack for £22.80 to SALC for payroll services.

Cllr Suggett agreed to authorise payments.

80 **Planning matters.**

DC/26/00318 - application for Listed Building Consent - Reconfiguring the existing toilets to create an additional bedroom and convert the existing office and reception areas to create an additional two bedrooms. Location: Stowlangtoft Hall Nursing Home, Kiln Lane, Stowlangtoft, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP31 3JY .

The meeting agreed to **support this application.**

81 **Highways matters:**

- Quiet Lane. The Chair reported that a meeting had been recently held with Suffolk Highways to confirm positions of Quiet Lane signs at either end of Kiln Lane plus a number repeater signs along the road.
- LorryWatch. The Clerk indicated that he had not received any information from Norton Parish Council and Cllr Cuff confirmed he had received information about the LorryWatch scheme from Suffolk County Council. The meeting agreed to monitor the situation.

82 **Correspondence.**

- Mid Suffolk Better Recycling Briefing Pack. The meeting noted the briefing pack which had been pre-circulated.

83 **Councillors' Forum:**

- Village Gates. Cllr Cuff reported that the village gates were looking tired and needed repainting. The community caretaker, provided by HART Farming Services, was present at the meeting and agreed to assess this issue, including replacement with recycled material versions if needed.
- Community Fund. Cllr Cuff reported that new trustees were now in place for the village Community Fund that is aimed at supporting the provision of a community space.
- Church Events. Cllr Bourne highlighted several planning concerns regarding upcoming events proposed at the Church, including risk assessments and available facilities. The meeting agreed that, as these concerts are being organised by the Church, they fall under Church responsibility rather than the Parish Council.

84 **Date of next meeting:**

The next meeting will be the Annual Parish Council Meeting on Monday 18 May 2026 at 7.45 in St Georges Church, Stowlangtoft (this follows the Annual Parish Meeting starting at 7.15pm). If any planning applications or urgent issues are identified after the March meeting, these will be considered at a short meeting on 20 April 2026 at 7.30pm.

The meeting concluded at 8.09pm.

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Chair

DRAFT

March 2026

Parish Report

Cllr Andy Mellen, Thedwastre North

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Local elections in May 2026 reinstated

At the end of January, the government announced that a number of local elections around the country would be postponed, where councils had written to them saying it would be helpful for delivery of Local Government Reorganization (LGR). This included Suffolk County Council's elections, which were due to be held on Thursday 7 May 2026. However, following legal challenge, the government has reversed its plans and has now announced that county council elections – as well as those due to be held by Ipswich Borough Council – will take place as originally planned. New councillors elected in May will hold office until the new unitary authority/ies are vested in 2028, with councillors for the new unitary authority/ies elected in 2027 and 'shadowing' the existing councillors for a year.

The government is due to make an announcement by the end of March on how many unitary councils will be set up in Suffolk.

Energy, Water, Transport, Commercial and Adaptive Infrastructure Policy

At Cabinet on Tuesday 24 February, revisions to the council's Energy and Climate Adaptive Infrastructure Policy were approved, including a change in the name of the policy to the Energy, Water, Transport, Commercial and Adaptive Infrastructure Policy. This policy details how the council will respond to large developments such as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs), solar farms and data centres that may be attached to them, and changes to road systems in the county that may be needed following the projects. Suffolk County Council is a consultee on NSIP proposals, but it is not the decision-maker, and the policy sets out how the council will respond to such consultations, such as protecting best and most versatile agricultural land for food production, wellbeing of local communities where projects are disruptive and especially where there is cumulative impact of multiple projects, such as the coastal area around Sizewell C. The

policy notes that solar farms may soon have data centres attached, so the council needs to have an agreed approach for developments that are large scale and energy-intensive. The policy also sets out that Suffolk County Council expects developers proposing projects to fund Planning Performance Agreements – this means that responding to all the proposals for these developments does not come out of the council's budget.

Vehicle Removal Trial for Resurfacing Works

Suffolk Highways have announced that they will trial removing vehicles that have not been removed for planned resurfacing works. The council plans to make sure that residents are made aware at least two weeks in advance of any works, with cards placed under windscreens and put through residents' doors. Two days before the works are due to begin, cones will be put out along with signage to say when the works are due to begin. If there are still cars parked on the road on the day works are due to start, officers will knock on doors to try and find the owner to move it, but as a last resort, vehicles will be moved, ideally nearby where they are still in sight, but if this is not possible, they may be moved to a facility in Bury St Edmunds with a £70 fine issued. As with other Penalty Charge Notices, the amount payable is halved if the fine is paid promptly. Although it has long had the power to remove vehicles for planned works, until now Suffolk County Council has not exercised it – compared to Essex County Council, for example, who have been doing this for about a decade. This approach will be adopted by the council for a period between March to June 2026 initially, with a report prepared on the trial and making recommendations for the future.

Changes at the Top

On 13 February, it was announced that Nicola Beach, the Chief Executive of Suffolk County Council, would be leaving her role. Nicola has been Chief Executive since 2018 when she replaced Deborah Cadman, and will be stepping down at the end of March 2026. The council proposes to appoint two existing directors – Andrew Cook and Mark Ash – into new joint chief executive roles for the remaining two years of the council's existence. As these directors' existing posts would not be recruited into, the number of senior staff at the council will reduce by one, saving up to £92k a year. This decision must be ratified by councillors at the next meeting of full council on 19 March 2026.

Suffolk Sustainability Initiatives Nominated for Awards

Suffolk County Council has been nominated for a national award for its work on energy and sustainability. Only 24 local authorities in the UK have been shortlisted for the first APSE Energy Awards, which are held in partnership with the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

The awards celebrate innovation and the role local authorities play in responding to the challenges of energy transition, climate change and long-term sustainability. The 'Accessing & Managing Finance' category recognises Suffolk County Council's Warm Homes Suffolk Loan Scheme (administered by Lendology CIC), and the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders group's Home Energy Efficiency Assessment Scheme (administered by Reed In Partnership). The loan scheme offers an interest-free loan to make energy efficient

improvements, such as insulation, solar panels or heat pumps. Through countywide Sustainable Suffolk initiatives, the county is also up for a second award, in the 'Working in Collaboration' category which involves a range of projects such as a study into supporting taxi drivers to move to electric vehicles, and launching the Suffolk Sustainable Schools Network.

You can find out more about these initiatives here: <https://sustainablesuffolk.org.uk/>

Social Media and Helpful Links

Follow us on:

Twitter - [Suffolk Green, Lib Dem & Independent Group \(@SuffolkGLI\) / Twitter](#)

Instagram – https://www.instagram.com/suffolkgli_group/

Facebook - [Suffolk GLI - Green, Liberal Democrat & Independent Group | Facebook](#)

Website - [Suffolk Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent Group – The GLI Group at Suffolk County Council \(suffolkgli.wordpress.com\)](#)

Cost of Living help and advice:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/family.page?familychan>

[nel=6](#) Benefits advice and support:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/adult.page?adultchann>

[el=0](#)

Flood preparation advice: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolk-fire-and-rescue-service/fire-and-rescue-safety-advice-in-the-community/what-to-do-in-a-flood>

<https://suffolkprepared.co.uk/get-prepared/risk-advice/flooding/>

Flood recovery advice and support: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/flood-recovery-information-for-suffolk>



District Councillor Report – Harry Richardson

1st March 2026

<p>Suffolk County Council elections</p>	<p>As you may be aware, the elections to Suffolk County Council on Thursday 7 March will now be going ahead as planned following a legal challenge by the Reform UK political party.</p> <p>The elections will be organised and conducted by Mid Suffolk District Council in the usual way and more details on deadlines for postal vote applications, proxy vote applications, etc. can be found on our website: https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/elections</p>
<p>Mid Suffolk Council Tax</p>	<p>Mid Suffolk’s Council Tax will rise by 2.99% in 2026/27 following a decision on 26 February. Mid Suffolk is currently forecast to achieve a surplus of £3.6m for the next financial year. A proposed budget amendment by the Mid Suffolk Independents to freeze Council Tax was rejected by 22 votes to 6.</p>
<p>Objections to pylons</p>	<p>The National Grid is proposing 159km of new overhead power lines between Norwich and Tilbury, along with 21km of underground cabling and several compounds linking the two. Public hearings on the plans are underway.</p> <p>At a recent hearing in Ipswich, Mid Suffolk District Council urged a pause on the project so alternative options—such as an undersea route or fully underground cabling—can be properly considered, citing significant concerns about environmental, community and business impacts.</p>
<p>Tech recycling</p>	<p>FCC Environment has donated ten refurbished laptops to the Rural Coffee Caravan to support digitally excluded residents in rural Suffolk. Working with Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils, the organisations identified those most in need to ensure the devices improve digital access.</p> <p>The laptops will go to residents who cannot afford their own, and volunteers from the Rural Coffee Caravan will help recipients gain confidence using technology and staying safe online.</p>

Cllr Harry Richardson

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