

STOWLANGTOFT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

**MONDAY 21 JULY 2025 AT 7.30 PM
St GEORGE'S CHURCH, THE STREET**

Present: Cllrs D'Lima (Chair), Suggett (Vice Chair), Catchpole, Cuff and Marsh. A Osman (Clerk) was also in attendance along with County Cllr Mellen, District Cllr Richardson and a member of the public.

- 16 **Apologies for absence.** Cllrs Bourne and Wales sent apologies which were accepted.
- 17 **Declarations of Interest.** Cllr Cuff declared an interest in Item 10 – finance report.
- 18 **Public Forum.** None.
- 19 **County Councillors Monthly Report.** County Cllr Mellen's monthly report had been pre-circulated and the following was highlighted:

- Local Government Review. Likely timelines:
 - Final submission of Suffolk bids by 28 Sep 25.
 - Autumn – potential government managed public consultation on Suffolk proposals.
 - Feb/Mar 26 – likely government decision.
 - 7 May 26 – Election for Norfolk and Suffolk Mayor and County Council elections.
 - May 27 – Suffolk Shadow authority(ies) elections.
 - 2028 – New unitary authority(ies) in place.
- A1088 Lorries. The ongoing issue of lorries using the A1088 was acknowledged but there was currently little appetite for enforcement action by Police or County Council.

County Cllr Mellen left the meeting at 8.37pm

- 20 **District Councillors Monthly Report.** District Cllr Richardson's monthly report had been pre-circulated and the following was highlighted:
- Revised Refuse Collections. When the new refuse collection arrangement come into place next year for wider recycling of materials, the collection days for existing bins will remain unchanged.

District Cllr Richardson left the meeting at 7.40pm

- 21 **Minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2025.** Cllr Suggett proposed that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2025 be approved. Cllr Cuff seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

The June 2025 meeting was cancelled due to no planning applications being received and no urgent actions.

- 22 **Matters arising from the last meeting:**

No matters arising.

23 **Finance:**

Finance Report. The meeting noted the financial report (current bank balance of £5,070.91 and the projected outturn at the end of the FY of £300 current account and £1,500 savings account), circulated before the meeting. Payments authorised:

Suffolk CC (Quiet Lane)	£4,000.00
Gipping Press (Newsletter)	£89.00

The Chair agreed to authorise payments.

24 **Planning matters.** It was agreed not to provide any comment on DC/25/01992.

25 **Highways matters:**

'The Street' Repairs. It was **agreed that the Chair would report faded road markings and Cllr Cuff would report damaged kerbs**, both due to increased traffic when A1088 bridge was closed, on the Suffolk Highways reporting tool.

26 **Correspondence.** The meeting noted correspondence on Community Governance review and Local Government Review public consultation that had been previously circulated.

27 **Councillors' Forum:**

Nil

28 **Date of next meeting:**

The next full meeting will be held on Monday 20 October 2025 at 7.30pm in Badwell Ash Village Hall.

If any planning applications or urgent actions are identified after the July meeting, these may be considered at a short meeting on Monday 18 August 2025 at 7.30 pm.

It was agreed that there would be no September meeting of the Parish Council.

The meeting concluded at 8.05pm.

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Chair

July 2025

Parish Report

Cllr Andy Mellen, Thedwastre North

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Funding for Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution

On Tuesday 17 June, Cabinet approved allocating £1.9m from council reserves towards the cost of work the council needs to undertake to set up the new mayoral authority with Norfolk County Council and to prepare its business case for a single unitary council, which needs to be submitted to the government in September. Mayoral elections are due to be held in May 2026, with the mayoral authority set up a few months earlier, in February. The government has provided £1m towards the costs of the mayoral authority, which Suffolk County Council and Norfolk County Council have agreed to split between them. The government has also allocated £290k for Suffolk towards Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), which is to be shared with the other councils who are also preparing their proposals for the government to consider in September. The council is not planning to use all of the £1.9m from reserves, which it is allocating as the financial outturn for 2024-25 was better than expected – it just wants to put aside some money it can use if necessary. The costs of setting up the mayoral authority and reorganising local councils is more likely to be tens of millions; it is the potential long-term savings that makes the process worthwhile to the government, who provide council funding.

Raising Educational Attainment in Suffolk

On Tuesday 24 June, the council's Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee considered the educational attainment of children in the county and how to improve it, as Suffolk is currently below national attainment figures at Key Stage 2 (year 6) and at Key Stage 4 (year 11). The council works closely with headteachers and the leaders of multi-academy trusts (MATs) so that schools can learn from each other via the Suffolk Education Partnership, which was established in January 2023. The Department for Education's RISE (Regional Improvement in Standards and Excellence) programme also undertakes targeted work with schools to help them improve grades, and council officers in the education team

also provide support to all local authority-maintained schools, with mentoring and advice for governing bodies. Support is also offered to academy schools, although they do not have to engage with it; while the council still has statutory responsibility for school improvement for all of Suffolk, academies receive their funding directly from the government and not from local authorities. The meeting also noted that Suffolk still receives a low level of funding compared to other counties, and council leaders regularly lobby the government for fairer funding.

Suffolk Libraries Changes to Suffolk Community Libraries

From the 1 June, libraries across the county were taken back in-house by Suffolk County Council at the end of the contract with Suffolk Libraries, who had been running the libraries since 2012. This was a controversial decision which attracted a lot of public and press interest, including a petition against it which was signed by over 20,000 people. The new name for the service is Suffolk Community Libraries, with new branding, but the council's political administration has given assurances that all libraries will remain open, with no reduction in opening hours.

Local Businesses Celebrate Carbon Reduction

On 11 June, the council held its annual Carbon Charter event to recognise local businesses for their efforts at carbon reduction. The awards were set up by the council in 2010 and since that time more than 500 businesses of all sizes have been given Carbon Charter awards for taking action on climate, reducing their carbon emissions or developing green spaces. Speakers at the event included CNH Tractors, Groundwork East and Home Farm Nacton, and prizes were given to Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, Shepherd Engineering, Kelling Heath Holiday Park and Woodhill Park. If you are a business owner and want to find out about how to reduce carbon and make your enterprise more environmentally friendly, please visit www.carboncharter.org where you can find advice, tips and webinars/local events.

Council Gains £8m for Bus Service Improvements

Suffolk County Council has been awarded a grant of £8m from the Department for Transport to fund new and enhanced bus services across the county. The new funding from the government's Local Authority Bus Grant can be used for the following:

- £2,805,076 revenue funding for new or enhanced services
- £5,229,805 capital funding for new and improved bus stops, bus stations or vehicle upgrades

The council plans to use the money to improve bus priority on congested streets, upgrade the Real Time Passenger Information system (giving live updates in bus arrival times), and improve bus stops and routes. It will also use some of the money to look into the journeys people take with a view to creating more innovative fare offers in future and get more people to use bus services. Previous funding has been used for projects such as the first Sunday and evenings service between Bury St Edmunds and Sudbury in over 20 years, and

direct links from Haverhill and Mildenhall to West Suffolk Hospital. Details of successful local bids for the funding will be posted on the Suffolk on Board website, and if you are interested in putting forward a bid for future funding, you can find information on how to do that here: <https://www.suffolkonboard.com/news/2024/06/bus-service-improvement-plan-where-should-the-money-be-spent/>

Flood Team Wins Local Government Chronicle Award

The council's Flood Investigations and Grants Team are celebrating after winning a national award for its work supporting the communities affected by flooding caused by Storm Babet in October 2023. The team, which was set up in the immediate aftermath of the storm to help flood victims to apply for grants, won the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) award for Small Team of the Year at a recent awards ceremony at Grosvenor House in London. Over 900 homes and businesses were affected by Storm Babet, which caused the worst flooding in Suffolk for more than 70 years.



District Councillor Report – Harry Richardson

1 July 2025

<p>New Councillor</p>	<p>Dr Agnes Watson (Green) was elected as the District Councillor for Haughley, Stowupland and Wetherden at a by-election on Thursday 12 June. The vacancy arose following the sad death of Cllr Rachel Eburne, lately Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources, who had represented the ward since 2010.</p>
<p>New link between Elmswell and Woolpit</p>	<p>Mid Suffolk District Council has approved £3 million for a new footpath and cycle way connecting Elmswell and Woolpit, to be delivered by Suffolk County Council. This project is part of wider efforts to improve walking and cycling infrastructure in the district, with additional funding already allocated to several similar projects over recent years, including bridge repairs, path upgrades, and support for cycling schemes.</p>
<p>Food Museum grant</p>	<p>Mid Suffolk District Council is considering a £1 million grant to support a major redevelopment of the Food Museum in Stowmarket. If approved, this would help refurbish historic buildings, improve exhibitions, and enhance access. The council's funding could also help secure a further £3.95 million from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. The museum, which attracts about 70,000 visitors annually, would use the funds for restoration work, new displays, and a programme of educational activities for all ages. The council cabinet is also being asked to underwrite a £533,000 fundraising gap so that work can begin in September.</p>
<p>Stowmarket town parking</p>	<p>Mid Suffolk District Council is seeking feedback from users of Stowmarket's council-owned car parks through an online survey running from 23 June to 10 August. The aim is to gather insights on parking habits and needs to help improve parking provision, support the town centre, and encourage sustainable travel. The survey covers reasons for car park choice, frequency and duration of visits, and will inform future parking strategies.</p>
<p>Proposed planning changes for listed buildings</p>	<p>Mid Suffolk and Babergh councils, in partnership with Historic England, are proposing to streamline the process for upgrading energy efficiency in listed buildings. Under the new plans, owners of Grade II listed properties could install secondary or double glazing on certain windows without needing formal consent, provided they meet specific conditions. The aim is to help reduce energy bills, support environmental goals, and make it easier to sensitively retrofit historic homes.</p>

Cllr Harry Richardson

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District Councillor Report: David Bradbury

For July 2025 meetings

Council Meeting	Mid Suffolk's monthly council meeting took place this month on the 26 th June. This included discussing annual reports regarding Joint Audit (alongside Babergh council), and Overview & Scrutiny, a review into CIL expenditure by Cllr Stringer, and Mid Suffolk's new plans regarding the transformation of the Creeting Road waste depot in Stowmarket, in preparation for the rollout of the Simpler Recycling scheme. Additionally, there were three motions discussed on during the meeting. The first was a motion from Cllr Overett, proposing for Mid Suffolk to adopt 20mph speed limits across residential areas to improve road safety, and for Suffolk County Council to make the process more transparent and cheaper, the second was from Cllr Carter, regarding the appointment of a disability champion to improve disability awareness within the council, and the third was from opposition councillor Cllr Richardson, regarding a council response to the spending review. The first two were discussed and approved, the third was deferred due to overrun of time.
Devolution and local government re-organisation update	Survey is still available for those who wish to sign it. Closing date is soon, and there is expected to be an update from national government within the next month.
Haughley, Stowupland & Wetherden by-election	The Haughley, Stowupland & Wetherden by-election took place on the 12 th June, which saw Agnes Watson (Green) elected.
Elmswell & Woolpit footpath and cycle link	£3m as part of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding has been given to a new scheme linking Elmswell and Woolpit with a new foot/cycle path. This is to assist in connectivity and accessibility between the two villages without use of a car, including services such as local schools, Elmswell Rail station, and Woolpit Business Park.
Rattlesden Church Warmth Project	£33k as part of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding has been given to Rattlesden Parochial Church council for a new heat and light chandelier for the church, allowing for a warmer, comfortable, and environmentally sustainable system for the church. Both this and the footpath were discussed and agreed upon in this month's council meeting
Additional Information	Cllr Bradbury met MP for Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket, Dr Peter Prinsley, at the opening of his new constituency office in Stowmarket. We had a discussion about the lack of a GP surgery in Thurston, and progress being made with East West Rail and the Haughley/Ely upgrades required to increase the number of trains. The tunnel under Thurston Station was briefly mentioned. A more formal meeting to discuss GP provision in Thurston will be at his surgery will be scheduled for later in the year.