

Cllr Elaine Bryce

Carlford Division

## March 2022 Parish Council Report

### Introduction

I'm pleased to report that at its Full Council meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> February, Suffolk County Council approved its financial budget for 2022-23, along with its first-ever full Net Zero carbon budget. In particular, I'm pleased that the budget will deliver more money to support children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), extra resources for adults in need of care and additional funds to help prevent flooding and fix footpaths. In particular, I'm pleased to see an additional £21 million investment into our highways - £10 million for improvements to drainage, £10 million for footpaths and pavements and a further £1 million of additional capital expenditure for our highways.

I'm also especially pleased to see the commitment from Suffolk County Council to commit to further enhance Suffolk's precious natural environment by enhancing the biodiversity of at least 30% of its land and assets by 2030. This commitment will see the council progress its work around managing highway trees, planting more hedgerows, delivering nature-based flood management solutions, roadside nature reserves and much more.

I hope this report is a helpful update but as ever, please don't feel you must wait until your next Parish Council meeting before raising any issues or concerns with me. My door is always open, so to speak, so please drop me an email and I will always do my best to try and help.

With best wishes,

*Elaine*

Cllr Elaine Bryce

Carlford Division

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## **Council focuses on children's services, adult care and the environment, as budget confirmed**

Suffolk County Council has approved its financial budget for 2022-23, alongside its first-ever full Net Zero carbon budget. Both items were passed at the Full Council meeting on Thursday 17 February 2022, **providing a focus on children's services, adult care and the environment.**

The council's budget will rise by 4.5% (from £598.2m to £625.4m), with the additional money generated by a 1.99% increase in council tax, a further 1.00% from the Adult Care Precept, and an increase in grants received from the Government.

The Net Zero carbon budget will allow the council to measure its carbon emissions, and monitor and evaluate the impact of decisions it makes. This will mean it can report each year on its progress, tracking its ambitions towards Net Zero.

### **Councillor Richard Rout, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Environment at Suffolk County Council, said:**

"Today was the first time the council chamber has witnessed a financial budget and a carbon budget being approved. It is important to give our Net Zero Carbon Budget equal weighting to our financial budget – it highlights our commitment to responding to our climate emergency declaration.

"Our financial budget means we will not see any reductions in our services, and we're further investing where it is most needed. Our aim is always to provide the best possible services for everyone in Suffolk and provide value for money."

The overall increase of 2.99% to council tax, will see a Band D property's bill rise by 80 pence per week. The council's Cabinet had the option to increase the adult care element of council tax by a further 1%, but decided against this.

### **Councillor Rout explained:**

"By paying this extra each week, we are all helping the council to provide its key services, and helping support those who need it most.

"We recognise Suffolk residents are seeing increases in the cost of living, whether at the supermarket, on the high street, and of course with energy bills. We did not feel it right to ask everyone for even more from their council tax bill - there is a balance to be had.

"We have been facing huge challenges, particularly the increase in demand on children service's and adult care. But we are confident that our budget addresses these challenges without the need to ask even more from our residents."

Some of the key detail of the budget, includes:

- £1.1m increase for the family services budget, specifically to address recommendations made by the recent independent SEND review
- £1m additional funding for Suffolk Highways over the next four years, for example to fund road signs and responsible verge cutting

- £10m to specifically deliver an increasing number of drainage schemes (over the next three years)
- £10m to improve footpath quality and access (over the next three years)
- £12.8m to decarbonise the buildings that SCC owns (by 2030)
- Investments this year to set up future borrowing for bigger schemes, such as SEND and carbon reduction

75p of every £1 Suffolk County Council spends goes towards supporting those who need it most through Adult Care, Children’s Services, and Public Health.

The remaining 25p in every £1 is then used to cover the cost of other vital services, including Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, road maintenance, footpaths, waste services, libraries and addressing the challenges surrounding climate change, to name just a few.

## Good news for Suffolk Government gives the green light to negotiate a County Deal

As part of the Government’s Levelling Up Paper, Suffolk has been successfully chosen as one of nine areas across the country to have been given the opportunity of negotiating a new County Deal. This is fantastic news for Suffolk, but we don’t have a Deal just yet and we have many more months of negotiations and discussions with Government ahead of us before we can look to finalise an actual deal.

Some of the areas included in Suffolk’s initial discussions centred around the development and roll out of Oyster style travel cards to increase the attractiveness and effectiveness of public transport and longer term funding for major transport infrastructure upgrades, not just one-off funding.

We also discussed with Government the opportunity of keeping all the apprenticeship levy funding raised in Suffolk in Suffolk, benefiting more people here. This could create the opportunity to work with the University, colleges, business and others to explore how this money could be better used.

Negotiating the devolution of the powers necessary to develop more innovative projects to help deliver further action on Climate Change and make good on our promises around net zero by 2030 are also possible.

Suffolk County Council has been ranked as the **third-best county council nationally for our response to the climate crisis**, and our ambitions in this area could be taken further still via a County Deal.

One of the areas which attracts attention is the potential for a directly elected Mayor of Suffolk, like the Metropolitan Mayors across the country in areas like the West Midlands. **This is not something which Suffolk has asked for and importantly not something we need to secure a deal with Government.**

So the opportunity of a County Deal is the result of an ongoing dialogue to promote Suffolk to central Government strongly supported by our MPs and the partnership working with district and borough councils. Going forward this partnership working will continue alongside health partners, emergency services, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chamber of Commerce.

A Deal would help to unlock more potential in Suffolk and help us level up across the county; especially as we start to slowly escape the clutches of COVID. We will negotiate hard for a deal that will give us the tools we need to build back better, build back stronger and build back greener.

### **Council's commitment to further enhancing Suffolk's natural environment**

Suffolk County Council will be doing even more for the county's natural environment, as it **confirms plans to enhance the biodiversity of at least 30% of its land and assets, by 2030.**

This means it will be progressing its work around managing highway trees, planting more hedgerow, nature-based flood management solutions, roadside nature reserves, and much more.

The council already planted 100,000 trees last year, and is on course to plant another 100,000 this year. It has also put in around 20 kilometres of mixed species hedgerow.

Biodiversity is in decline nationally, and across the globe. These plans are not just about stopping its decline here in Suffolk, but reversing it. By 2030 SCC wants to see much more biodiversity on its estate than there is now. The council can have great influence on the natural environment, as it is a significant landowner, it is also the highway authority and it builds new housing.

SCC has made a lot of progress in recent years, not least with its tree planting, having committed to £400,000 from its Suffolk 2020 Fund. Just a few months ago SCC secured more funding from the Forestry Commission, on behalf of the borough and district councils, to plant trees in neglected and disused community spaces, bringing them back to life.

SCC will ensure it manages its highway verges for biodiversity wherever possible; it will support its county farm tenants to enhance biodiversity across SCC's farm estate; and it will deliver twice the biodiversity net gain required through its housing programme.

By working with partners and local communities, SCC can help wildlife to thrive, increase habitats and species across the county, and reverse the decline we've seen.

#### **Ben McFarland, Head of Conservation, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, said:**

"To tackle the twin crises of the climate and biodiversity emergencies it's essential that nature is embedded into our collective decision-making. This bold, ambitious plan from Suffolk County Council does just that.

"We need at least 30% of our land and sea in recovery for nature by 2030. Showing leadership, working collaboratively, and acting on carbon and nature together will underpin

a healthy and thriving Suffolk for everyone. This is a hugely positive step forward for our county.”

The plans will also help work towards the council’s ambitions of being a Net Zero organisation by 2030, with Suffolk’s nature being an integral part of the carbon cycle.

The policy’s ambitions stretch across the whole organisation, from looking at the impact of street lighting, to how it procures goods and services.

One example of the positive changes that the council will make, is to stop using Glyphosate in all highway maintenance operations. This will happen as soon as it is able to deploy a suitable alternative, and at the latest by 2023 for routine weed treatment programmes. The council will work with other local authorities, both locally and through the Local Government Association, in reaching this goal as soon as possible.

The proposals were agreed at Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet meeting on 1 February 2022, following the work undertaken by the Policy Development Panel which was set up in July 2021.

## £6.4 million project to ‘Reclaim the Rain’ and tackle flooding

Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils have been successful in winning £6.4 million to implement innovative sustainable water management projects. Both councils placed a joint bid into DEFRA’s 6-year Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme and were 1 of 25 successful projects chosen to take part.

The joint project, named ‘**Reclaim the Rain**’ sets out to improve flood and drought resilience in at least six small rural communities across Norfolk and Suffolk.

Norfolk and Suffolk both face considerable surface water flood risk, while also being the driest region in the UK. The project will deliver beneficial flood water reuse by agriculture, industry, communities, and the environment combined with nature-based flood management solutions. The project will involve both partner organisations and the community in the development of suitable flood water reuse schemes. The schemes will address the community’s needs in terms of flood risk and water resource requirements, and could result in provision of:

- Habitat creation and restoration;
- Rain Gardens;
- Rainwater Capture and Reuse for community, agriculture or business use;
- Retrofitted sustainable drainage systems (SuDS);
- Smart Leaky Water Butts and more...

To find out more about Reclaim the Rain and how you can get involved, visit: [www.reclaimtherain.org](http://www.reclaimtherain.org).

## Otley Bottom bank repairs to start next month

Important maintenance works to stabilise and repair the damaged bank on the B1079 at Otley Bottom are to start next month. This is something which I have been pressing hard to deliver and have had regular meetings with Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways, Cllr Paul West, and senior highways officers.

I use this stretch of road very regularly and fully understand, and share, the frustrations caused to local residents and road users. I have been working alongside Otley Parish Council and pressing Suffolk County Council hard to try and reach a prompt and satisfactory solution.

The works, which are finally due to begin on Monday 28 March 2022 and last approximately six weeks, have been planned in to repair a highway bank collapse due to erosion from the river. Currently temporary traffic signals are in place to keep vehicles off the area - avoiding further subsidence, and to ensure the safety of the travelling public.

There have been a number of complexities associated with the location; such as its proximity to the river and the potential for further erosion, the need for consent from the Environment Agency to work adjacent to the watercourse and the need to reposition an undermined telecoms pole. These complexities alongside resource issues related to COVID has resulted in a delay of repairs.

A solution has now been agreed, which once complete will mean the road can fully reopen to traffic. The new bank will be made up of rock-filled gabion baskets laid to heights of two metres from the bottom of the watercourse, for approximately ten metres. There will also be an installation of erosion control matting to the watercourse and bank for approximately twenty metres, new drainage added to the road, reinforced kerb line, a new post and rail fence, and road repairs.

Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways, Councillor Paul West has thanked Otley Parish Council and the local community for their patience and has apologised that the works have taken longer than usual to complete.

Whilst I appreciate the further disruption that will be caused during the road closure, this is a very complex repair and I'm just really pleased that plans are now finally in place to bring the matter to a conclusion.

A full road closure will be required from Monday 28 March 2022 to allow for the works to be carried out safely and a diversion route will be in place. The official diversion is via B1078, B1077, A1214, A12, B1079 and vice versa. This route has to take into account every size of vehicle, however it is recognised there are shorter routes for smaller vehicles.

More information regarding the closure and improvement works can be found on [the temporary road closures page](#).

## **Suffolk cements commitment to keeping its communities safe**

A new strategy has been launched outlining how Suffolk will address Violence Against Women and Girls. The strategy has been prepared collaboratively by the Safer Stronger Communities Board (SSCB) – consisting of representatives from Suffolk County Council, district and borough councils, the police, Suffolk’s Police & Crime Commissioner, community safety partnerships, health and probation services, the Norfolk & Suffolk Criminal Justice Board and Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership.

All board members hold a shared ambition 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.

Much work has been done on preventing VAWG since the launch of the county’s first strategy in 2018, which led to the establishment of Suffolk’s 24/7 domestic abuse helpline, additional accommodation for survivors and the creation of a Domestic Abuse Perpetrators Unit to help offenders address and alter their behaviour. However, with recent figures showing an increase in sexual offences and domestic violence nationally, the board recognises the need to continue to drive forward positive change through effective partnership working.

**Suffolk’s new VAWG Strategy outlines how this will be achieved in the county, with four key objectives – prevention, supporting victims, pursuing perpetrators, and strengthening the system – forming the basis for its approach.**

**In addition, the strategy will be accompanied by an action plan for 2022 – 2025 to help ensure meaningful activity.** This has been informed by members of the board, local charities, and domestic abuse survivors – who praised the system for enabling them to co-create proposals and have their say.

To support the board in implementing both the strategy and action plan, Suffolk County Council has contributed £350,000 towards this.

**Councillor Andrew Reid, Chair of the Safer Stronger Communities Board and Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet Member for Public Health, Public Protection and Communities, commented:**

“Although Suffolk remains a safe place to live and work for many, crimes against women and girls are still happening daily, with these often underpinned by outdated attitudes and prejudice.

“Whilst much work has already been done to tackle this horrific behaviour, we will not stop until every woman and girl in Suffolk feels safe in their community or at home.

“I welcome the new Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy to help achieve this aim and would like to thank all those who have been involved in its creation, especially the survivors who have been instrumental in helping us to shape proposals to stop others from being victims of this devastating abuse in future.

“It’s great news that the strategy will also be supported by significant funding from our council – cementing our continued commitment to protecting our communities.”

Whilst the strategy is focused primarily on preventing VAWG, due to these crimes often disproportionately affecting this gender, work will still be undertaken to support men and boys, as well as those that are transgender, non-binary or gender non-conforming.

The strategy is available to view here: [www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/community/communities-and-safety/Suffolk-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy-2022-25.pdf](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/community/communities-and-safety/Suffolk-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy-2022-25.pdf)

## **‘Women don’t do such things!’ – new women’s history free exhibition to open at The Hold**

A new exhibition - “Women Don’t Do Such Things” has opened at The Hold, featuring Suffolk women past and present who have broken down barriers in their lives throughout history. From activists to doctors, archaeologists to pilots, visitors to the exhibition will be able to experience these and many more moving and poignant stories of women who have challenged expectations and led change.

**Councillor Andrew Reid, Cabinet Member for Heritage at Suffolk County Council, said:**

“The ‘Women Don’t Do Such Things!’ exhibition offers a fascinating insight into the lives and experiences of some inspiring women from Suffolk.

“Suffolk Archives have put together a full programme of events to support the exhibition including curator tours and craft workshops, as well as talks from our archivists and local historians. This is a great chance to find out more about local history, and to come and visit The Hold, and bring that history to life.”

The exhibition includes ‘Women Like You’: a photo mosaic portrait of the leader of the suffragette movement, Emmeline Pankhurst, produced by Suffolk artist Charlotte Newson. On loan from Manchester Town Hall the portrait work is made up of photos representing what women of today want in comparison to the suffragette movement over 100 years ago.

Displays exploring the Women’s Land Army in Suffolk during World War Two have been compiled by local historian Nicky Reynolds, and will include original Women’s Land Army uniform, documents, and photographs.

A special event will also be held at The Hold to launch a new film by documentary maker Holly Brega about the Women’s Land Army in Suffolk about The Land Girls and Horses of Suffolk.

The exhibition includes contemporary artworks and displays telling women’s stories. A selection of works produced by members of the More than Mum group run by the Future Female Society, reflects the women in the group and their own personal journeys supported by the society.

It will also showcase female leaders in Suffolk’s community today. Franstine Jones was awarded a BEM in the New Year’s Honours list for her work as a volunteer and trustee at the National Black Police Association and for her services to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities in Suffolk.

## Residents urged to support Suffolk spectacular

Her Majesty the Queen will become the first ever British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee, on Sunday 6 February, after 70 years of service and Suffolk is set to stage a host of exciting Jubilee celebrations during 2022 – bringing the county’s communities together to mark this momentous milestone.

The unprecedented anniversary will be celebrated throughout the year, with a four-day UK bank holiday taking place from Thursday 2 to Sunday 5 June to enable people to commemorate the occasion.

Plans are already in place for a Festival of Suffolk – the county’s biggest ever community event. This year-long spectacular will incorporate much-loved existing events, such as the Suffolk Show, alongside dedicated Jubilee celebrations, including a race day and torch relay. Details on the latest line-up can be found at: [www.festivalofsuffolk.org/](http://www.festivalofsuffolk.org/).

A highlight of the festival is the **Big Jubilee Lunch**, set to take place on Sunday 5 June. The initiative encourages people to come together and celebrate, either by hosting their own street party or simply enjoying a cup of tea with a neighbour.

**To help facilitate this, Suffolk County Council has set up a dedicated webpage: [www.suffolk.gov.uk/PlatinumJubileeEvent](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/PlatinumJubileeEvent) and will waive its fees for any road closures for events on this day, as well as providing free assistance with traffic management for all applications received before 11pm on Sunday 27 March.**

The council is also supporting the Queen’s Green Canopy in Suffolk, which aims to plant over 775,000 new trees in 2022 – one for each resident in the county.

Almost a quarter of a million trees have been planted to date, with everyone urged to visit [suffolk-lieutenancy.org.uk/queens-green-canopy/](http://suffolk-lieutenancy.org.uk/queens-green-canopy/) and find out how they can ‘Plant a Tree for the Jubilee’ either directly or via one of the many organisations taking part in the scheme.

In addition to using the Jubilee as an opportunity to create a greener county, a focus on health and wellbeing will also form an important part of the celebrations, with plans for themed park runs across Suffolk and a County Community Games tournament currently in development.

While primary school children across the county can participate in a Time Capsule Competition – enabling them to showcase how their school, students, teachers, and community have changed over the Queen’s reign.

Schools have until 11 February to express their interest in the competition: [www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/education/time-capsule/](http://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/education/time-capsule/) and must submit their entry by 25 March, ahead of the winner being announced on 1 April. The winning school will get the opportunity to visit The Hold – home to 900 years’ worth of Suffolk’s history – which will also house their time capsule entry to preserve it for future generations to enjoy.

Businesses can also benefit from the occasion by attending the **Suffolk Business Expo, scheduled for Monday 20 June to Friday 1 July**. The event – organised by Suffolk County Council, the Suffolk Chamber, and other partners – aims to showcase Suffolk businesses, whilst helping them to capitalise on the expected increase in tourists to the county and bounce back from Covid-19.

## Halfway mark reached as over 20,000 Suffolk streetlights replaced

Suffolk County Council's programme to replace 43,400 streetlights with new energy-efficient LEDs has reached the halfway mark. To date, the teams have replaced 21,215 new streetlights with the new lanterns and are well on the way to successfully delivering the project on budget and to programme timescales.

These LED lanterns use less energy and produce a more natural and focused light than the traditional orange glow of streetlights. They are extremely long-lasting products and have an expected lifetime of up to 100,000 hours. This is approximately two times longer than a typical conventional street lighting lamp. As a result, Suffolk County Council is expecting to reduce its annual electricity costs on the streetlights by around 76%, saving more than £1.7 million a year. This is 16% more than what was originally anticipated.

The programme is on schedule to be completed by the end of May 2022, with all heritage-style lanterns being upgraded towards the end of the programme. Prior to commencing in towns or parishes, Suffolk Highways is contacting those councils in case they wish to upgrade their parish-council owned street-lighting at the end of the project.

Keep a look out for signs in your area to see where the teams are working next and follow [@Suff highways](https://twitter.com/Suff_highways) on Twitter for regular updates.

## Suffolk Fostering and Adoption Service swoops into The Big Hoot

Suffolk Fostering and Adoption Service has been announced as a proud sponsor for Suffolk's biggest ever mass participation public art event – 'The Big Hoot'.

The Big Hoot Ipswich 2022 is the third art trail brought to Ipswich by St Elizabeth Hospice in partnership with creative producers Wild in Art, following the success of Pigs Gone Wild 2016 and Elmer's Big Parade Suffolk 2019.

As part of the Big Hoot 2022, 50 ornately decorated owl sculptures, featuring designs celebrating all things Suffolk, will be scattered throughout Ipswich showcasing the wealth of artistic talent of the county and beyond, as part of the biggest free art event in Suffolk which attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors to the town.

Suffolk Fostering and Adoption's owl, named 'Big Hoot-Little Hoot' will represent the care that foster carers and adopters provide to children in the local community. The owl which features a baby owl nestling safely under the wings of its parent, will be painted by artist, Sandra Reynolds and perfectly depicts the loving and nurturing nature of foster carers and adoptive parents caring for Suffolk children.

In addition to The Big Hoot, Suffolk Fostering and Adoption Service will take part in the Little Hoot. The Little Hoot is predominantly aimed at schools who design their owl and fundraise for St Elizabeth's hospice.

However, as a focus on Suffolk's children in care and adopted children, Suffolk Fostering and Adoption Service has been gifted an Owl by local business Highway Assurance. Children in care will be able to take part in a drawing competition to design the owl and the winning design will be chosen by The High Sheriff of Suffolk, Edward Creasy, and Highway Assurance Managing Director, Robert Watton. The owl will then be painted by a local artist to reflect the winning design before being proudly displayed at the Suffolk show along with 59 other Little Hoots, ahead of joining the trail in Ipswich over the summer, launching on 19 June.

Suffolk's children and young people's service currently have over 850 children in care and with more children coming into care in Suffolk every year, the need for foster carers and adoptive parents to come forward has never been greater.

These children need someone who can understand what they have been through, look at the world through their eyes and provide warmth, consistency and emotional support.

To find out more about fostering or adopting in Suffolk, visit: [www.suffolk.gov.uk/fosteringandadoption](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/fosteringandadoption) or call 01473 264800.

## **Thank you to responders who kept us safe and Suffolk moving during the storms**

In late February, Suffolk faced an unprecedented deluge of strong winds and torrential rain in a very short time, but our collective response once again stood-up quickly, worked together and kept people safe and the county moving. It was an enormous endeavour and Suffolk's councils, including Suffolk Highways, health bodies, utility companies and emergency services were incredibly busy responding to the storms.

Just to give an extent of the collective response, at 5pm on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> February, Suffolk police had dealt with 339 calls to 999 and 431 to 101 and Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service attended 51 incidents; Suffolk Highways had reported one of their busiest periods with 342 reports of fallen trees and road obstructions. Teams worked overnight to clear the debris and keep the roads clear. Nearly 15,000 homes lost power at some point on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> or over the weekend and UK Power Networks worked around the clock to restore power. A key for Suffolk partners was to make sure that vulnerable residents without power, were safe and secure. SCC worked with UK Power Networks to map where those vulnerable homes were and the welfare vehicle was dispatched to dispense information, hot drinks and enable mobile phones to be charged.

The fact that Suffolk partners have been working so closely together throughout the pandemic, meant that the structures, lines of communications and governance were already in place to step-up our storm response quickly and effectively. Suffolk has, historically, worked well with partners. We recognise the power and benefit of a collective approach and work hard to get it right. We know it delivers enormous positives to Suffolk residents.

**As a reminder, in the event of bad weather, members of the public are encouraged to:**

- Report fallen trees and obstructions on roads and paths to Suffolk Highways on **0345 606 6171**
- Avoid coastal areas due to an increased risk of erosion posing danger to life
- Plan their journey well in advance and check for travel disruption before leaving. Visit <https://one.network/> and using the 'Weather' layer to find out about road closures
- Following [@SuffolkCC](#) on Twitter or Suffolk County Council on Facebook
- Monitoring the weather forecast at [www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/forecast/uk](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/forecast/uk)
- Get the latest information on Orwell Bridge closures at [www.twitter.com/highwayseast](http://www.twitter.com/highwayseast)
- Get advice on flooding and flood alerts at [www.gov.uk/flood](http://www.gov.uk/flood) or on Floodline: **0345 988 1188**. More information on Twitter at [@envagencyanglia](#)