

District Councillor Report: Elmswell Parish Council

Sept 2021

Gateway 14	Planning permission for the controversial Gateway 14, 156-acre business and logistics park which is to be sited between the A14 and the A1120 at Stowmarket have been approved, despite heavy opposition from local people, ward Councillors, Creting St Peter Parish Council and the Gateway 14 Residents Campaign Group. Concerns about the increase in traffic, HGVs using narrow country lanes and the reduced landscaping areas around the site were raised.
Needham Market HQ site development	MSDC and Norse Group open show homes on the former Needham Market office complex. This joint venture was set up to deliver housing and promote sustainable growth across the district. There will be a total of 133 new houses, flats and bungalows, a natural community space, walk and library. Green party councillors were disappointed that the homes were not exemplar social housing built to the highest passive standards, which would have provided much needed homes for local people and secure an income for the Council for years to come.
Woolpit Health Centre Car Park	Construction has now begun on the community car park at Woolpit Health Centre which will see an additional 120 spaces created. MSDC brought this project forward in response to the COVID emergency, working in partnership with the Health Centre, Suffolk County Council, NHS West Suffolk CCG, David Wilson Homes and Woolpit parish council.
Taxi licensing policy	MSDC Licensing Committee voted to update its vehicle hire policy so that taxi drivers will need to transition to zero emission cars by 2030 without financial support from the Council. Green and Lib Dem members argued for financial incentives and support and the decision was made only with the chair's casting vote.
Biodiversity Gain	MSDC has purchased approximately 3 acres of land to provide a green space for flora and fauna in Wash Lane, Great Finborough as part of the Council's drive to increase biodiversity and improve the environment for local people.
Afghan Refugees	MSDC along with other district, borough and County Councils have stated they are committed to re homing Afghan people who have fled their homeland but as of yet details have not been confirmed as to how this will be implemented.
Parking strategy	MSDC and Babergh Cabinets are working on a new parking strategy. This will include both on- and off-street parking. There will be consultation with town and parish councils and the new strategy should be launched by Sept 2022. The parking meters at the Meadow Centre in Stowmarket were faulty at the beginning of August and parking charges were suspended. I understand that charging for parking has now resumed as normal.
Local Energy Showcase event	The Council is organising a 2-day event about Local Energy solutions at Whersted Park on 21 st /22 nd October. Tickets are free but you have to book via Event Brite https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/local-energy-showcase-21-22-october-2021-tickets-163475761403
Student skills events, Oct half term	MSDC are working with local schools and businesse to put on several session for young people during the October half term. Details should be publicised in due course.

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