

Parish Report – June 2022

Councillor: Andy Mellen

Thedwastre North division

Councillor contact details

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Latest SCC information is available here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/>

For information on supporting Ukrainian refugees in Suffolk, email:
refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk

Welcome Guidance for Ukrainians arriving in the UK:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/welcome-a-guide-for-ukrainians-arriving-in-the-uk>

1) Motion Passed, further commitment to Suffolk rivers

Full Council convened on the 19th May. Our Group proposed a motion for greater commitment towards improving rivers in Suffolk. Currently, all Suffolk rivers have been reported by the Environment Agency to have failed government standards. Increased pollution comes from a rise in untreated sewage discharges, as well as chemicals and other pollutants that run off into waterways.

Our motion committed SCC to improving rivers, investigating what more can be done to enhance waterways, and increase engagement and support with farmers and environmental groups in any future strategies. The motion was amended with input from the administration and was subsequently passed unanimously.

2) Pressure for rail improvements

Council also agreed to request Network Rail to make progress with strategic works on the network, specifically improvements to the Haughley junction to improve the flow of traffic through the junction, in particular freight trains coming to and from Felixstowe - this should remove more freight traffic from the road. Alongside this, other minor improvements to the network were also mentioned, such as the improvements to Thurston station and the replacement footway at Elmswell. Again this was agreed unanimously

3) Current petition for in-house Suffolk Highways maintenance contract

The opposition group has started a petition, requesting that SCC considers an in-house bid for the new Suffolk Highways contract. The contract, which will have been held by Kier for 10 years, is up for renewal in September next year.

Recently we have seen astronomical price quotes for the maintenance of Suffolk's highways, including £5,000 for a pair of dropped kerbs, £7,500 to cut down a single tree, and £10,000 to design (not build) four humps in a road. These seem to result from Kier's financial losses in other parts of the contract and hence the need to claw back costs on small works.

Our Group believes an in-house bid from SCC to take back control of Suffolk Highways is needed. The bid would also provide a necessary benchmark for any competitive bid coming from external companies, making sure Suffolk taxpayers get value for money.

We need 3,675 signatures to bring this to debate at the Council. If you agree with this initiative you can sign here (ensure you make your name public, or it won't count!):

<https://www.petitions.net/for-suffolk-county-council-to-develop-an-in-house-bid-for-suffolk-highways-maintenance>

4) National Grid consultation

National Grid are consulting on their proposal to install a new line of overhead high voltage power lines, supported by pylons, across Suffolk's countryside. The justification for this is the need to connect electricity produced by off-shore wind farms into the grid. Our Group are strongly against this development, which will have a severe impact on Suffolk's rural landscape and cultural heritage. The proposals have even been criticised by Conservative MPs Dan Poulter and James Cartledge. The emerging consensus is that power should be brought down the north sea using undersea cables as part of a strategic network, rather than over land.

We are hoping to see a cross-party response from the County Council and meetings are going on this week in order to facilitate this.

If you would like to voice your opinion on the matter, click here (Deadline is the 16th June):

<https://eastangliagreen.participatr.io/index.php?contentid=13>

Our website - [Suffolk Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent Group – The GLI Group at Suffolk County Council \(suffolkgli.wordpress.com\)](http://suffolkgli.wordpress.com)