



# January 2020 Thedwastre North Newsletter

## **Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service rated “Good” in Government inspection**

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has undergone its most comprehensive, independent inspection in many years and has been rated as “Good” for its effectiveness, efficiency and how well it leads and manages its staff.

The findings come from a report published on Tuesday 17 December 2019 by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), who inspected Suffolk’s service earlier this year. Inspectors reviewed every aspect of the service, from how we respond to 999 emergencies, to looking at policies and interviewing a wide range of firefighters and staff.

The report praised many aspects of the service, particularly how well it collaborates with other emergency services and agencies, how it responds to fires and other emergencies, how it ensures fairness and promotes diversity, and the financially sound way the service is run.

## **New bridleway opens up traffic free link**

I reported in November that a new Public Right of Way was being created. It was officially opened on December 17<sup>th</sup> 2020 and links the south east side of the town with Suffolk Business Park.

The new path will provide an off road route for walkers and cyclists avoiding the busy A14 junction 44. Work started on reconstructing the bridleway on Monday 21 October 2019 and lasted for 7 weeks. The project cost approximately £150k to construct and has been surfaced using recycled materials from roadworks. The bridleway will also link through to Sustrans National Cycle Route 13, and provide access into the Moreton Hall estate, Suffolk business parks and the new Rougham Tower Avenue and Sybil Andrews Academy. The route is a continuation of Rougham Road, providing a route beyond the lorry park running parallel to the A14.

Suffolk Highways worked closely with West Suffolk Council, which identified the route as a possible new sustainable connection in the town, and the landowner.

As part of the improvement works, Suffolk Highways will also be trialling solar powered lighting. Much like road studs, these units will provide a delineation of the route to assist users along the bridleway. The lighting provides low level illumination to guide users, it is not designed to replace street lighting.

## Scrutiny previews the Budget figures for 2020/21

The General Election on December 12<sup>th</sup> had delayed the publication of the papers for the Scrutiny committee meeting and the meeting was delayed and will now complete its pre-Budget scrutiny on January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

The first draft of Suffolk County Council's budget was published on Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> December, and revealed a 1.99% increase on the county council's share of the council tax.

On top of that, a 2% increase will be from the social care precept element of the council tax, making an overall increase of 3.99% from the county council.

It means from the county's portion of council tax alone, a Band B property will pay £40 a year more.

Among the other key areas will be a £500,000 increase going forward for the fire service, and partway re-instating the Citizens Advice Bureaux grant of £120,000 a year for the next three years.

It also plans to increase its unallocated reserves by £10m over five years, up to £59.9m.

The budget proposals are to go before the council's scrutiny committee on January 7, and must then get the go-ahead of the cabinet on January 28 and full council on February 13.

[https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=\(19-12-2019\),%20Scrutiny%20Committee](https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=(19-12-2019),%20Scrutiny%20Committee)

## Scrutiny looking at SCC relationship with Kier - Highways

On 13<sup>th</sup> January there will be another Scrutiny meeting and this will examine the relationship between Kier and SCC Highways. The link to the agenda is here-

[https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=\(13-01-2020\),%20Scrutiny%20Committee](https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=(13-01-2020),%20Scrutiny%20Committee)

Wishing you all a Happy New Year and a stable 2020!

Jane Storey

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