

Parish Report – April 2023

Councillor: Andy Mellen

Division: Thedwastre North

Councillor contact details

Mobile: 07790 992619

Email: andy.mellen@suffolk.gov.uk

For information on local support during the Cost-of-Living Crisis, visit:

www.suffolk.gov.uk/CostOfLiving

For information on supporting Ukrainian refugees in Suffolk, email:

refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk or ukrainesupport@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk

Opposition motion voted in: Recommitment to Net Zero

At Full Council, our opposition group proposed a motion for SCC to recommit to its climate emergency declaration and the intention to achieve Net Zero by 2030 (ie where emissions of carbon dioxide from the council's activities are reduced, and any remaining are balanced by actions which draw carbon from the atmosphere). The original declaration, made in 2019, was made by an earlier group of councillors. Since then, we have had an election which means 31 new councillors had not yet had the opportunity to formally commit themselves to Net Zero by 2030.

In January, it was announced in the Carbon Budget that SCC is not on track to achieve Net Zero by 2030. In proposing the motion, Opposition Spokesperson for Achieving Net Zero, Cllr Annette Dunning wanted to ensure the Conservatives would prioritise building a clearer roadmap to protecting our environment. There was agreement across the chamber and the motion was passed almost unanimously, with 2 Conservative Cllrs abstaining.

New Woman's Flag up in SCC

Women's History Month was celebrated throughout March, with International Women's Day being on 8th March. Last year, GLI Spokesperson for Women, Cllr Caroline Page, wrote to Suffolk County Council, asking that them to purchase a Suffragette Flag to fly proudly in celebrating a women's story.

Our Group can confirm that the Council listened to us, and the flag flew throughout the month. It has also been confirmed that this will now be best practice moving forward. This comes as news in March shows Suffolk County Council's mean and median gender pay gaps have reduced in the last year, by 0.5% and 1.0%, respectively.

Cabinet Meeting (21st March)

The Cabinet agreed an additional £32m investment to increase school provision in the county. With the new funding, 11 new schools will be built, (including in Woolpit) as well as maintenance and expansion of current schools. Our Group welcomes additional support and will ensure there is a thorough process to the development and planning of new infrastructure.

In addition, £10.8m was agreed to help deliver new walking and cycling bridges in Ipswich, as well as providing financial support to the recommendations outlined by the Ipswich Policy

Development Panel. Projects include boosting employment opportunities for young people and sustainable travel.

While we welcome additional investment, our Group highlighted that there are infrastructure projects throughout the county that need investment urgently and that the administration needs a more coherent delivery plan to address shortages outside of Ipswich.

SEND Report: Update

The Government's assessment of the SEND services progress in Suffolk has been described as 'reassuring' after SCC adopted all the recommendations given in the Council's report back in 2021.

In November 2021, a report into SCC's SEND services found failings and inadequacies linked to a lack of engagement with parents/guardians, a failure to meet targets, and a lack of effective training in staff.

This comes as recent news from SCC said they have hired a Special Advisor for SEND Services, to support existing improvements. We will ensure via the Education Scrutiny Committee that this process is rigorously tested.

Homes for Ukraine: SCC Commit to More Money

Suffolk County Council has announced additional financial support for households homing Ukrainian refugees.

Those who have homed a Ukrainian refugee for a minimum of 6 months will receive an additional £150 per month (in addition to the £350 monthly payment, which will rise to £500 after guests have stayed 12 months).

However, once the £500 monthly payment has been received, the council will stop its additional funding.

For more information, please visit: www.suffolk.gov.uk/ukraine