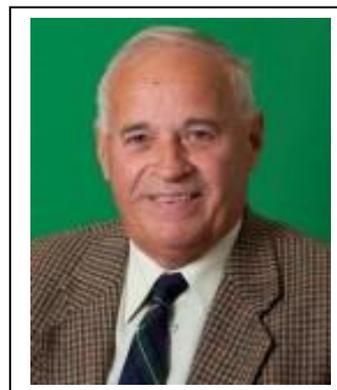


# Parish Report November 2023

## Councillor

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### Information Updates

Cost of Living help and advice: <https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/family.page?familychannel=6>

Benefits advice and support: <https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/adult.page?adultchannel=0>

For information on supporting Ukrainian refugees in Suffolk, email: [refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk) or [ukrainesupport@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk](mailto:ukrainesupport@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk)

### Storm Babet Flooding

Suffolk County Council and my group would like to extend their thanks to those of you around the county who helped other residents whose homes and travel were affected by the rains and flooding that struck Suffolk on Friday 20 October. The way the emergency services, volunteers, farmers and local communities worked together to help children get home from school, move people to safety and protect buildings from flooding was truly inspirational.

If you have been affected by the Storm Babet and the recent flooding, please use link below for SCC support and advice: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/flood-recovery-information-for-suffolk>

### Budget Consultation

Suffolk County Council is keen to hear from Suffolk residents, businesses and local communities as it decides how it will spend money next year and has launched an online consultation to give Suffolk residents a say in budget setting for the financial year 2024-25. There will also be a number of focus groups to explain the council's current financial situation, along with the chance for Suffolk residents and businesses to have a say on Council Tax proposals.

There are three key questions, the first is on which services people have recently used, the second asks for thoughts on seeking a greater contribution to Council Tax to help fund public services, and the third on which service area you would like to see more money spent. The online survey can be found at the link below – please give us your views! [http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/Budget24\\_25/](http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/Budget24_25/)

### Suffolk Pharmacies

On 11 October, councillors from my group attended Health Scrutiny which was looking at the service provided by pharmacies in Suffolk and the challenges they face with funding, staff recruitment, medicine shortages and pharmacies closing.

Representatives from the NHS, Suffolk GPs and the Suffolk Pharmaceutical Committee joined the meeting and recommendations were made to write to minister about funding, and work with local schools and the University of Suffolk to promote pharmacy as a career path. It was noted that in order to provide extra services (such as blood pressure checks, cholesterol tests and asthma advice) which take pressure off GP surgeries, more space and consulting rooms would be required than Suffolk pharmacies currently had available.

## Supporting Suffolk Farmers

The council meeting on Thursday 19 October saw councillors vote to approve a motion supporting local farmers and food producers by ensuring that local meat and dairy, as well as plant-based produce, is served at council events.

The council's facilities and catering arm, Vertas, has 68% of its spend with Suffolk suppliers and 86% with regional suppliers. In order to tackle the county's environmental priorities and boost the local economy, the council also pledged to encourage Suffolk residents to buy local produce and shop locally wherever possible.

## Walking and Bridleway Access

At Cabinet on Tuesday 10 October, members of the Suffolk Local Access Forum joined the meeting to provide their annual report, which included the work they are doing to improve and maintain footways and access around the county, particularly with Network Rail and National Highways to make sure that new developments take foot traffic and walkers into account.

They are keen for the council to promote the East Anglian sections of the newly named King Charles III England Coast Path. The forum expressed concern about the significant large-scale energy infrastructure projects planned for the county and could impact on Suffolk residents' enjoyment of the green access network and impact on the county's natural environment.

## Council seeks your views for next years budget

Suffolk County Council is keen to hear from Suffolk residents, businesses and local communities, as it decides how it will spend money next year.

[An online consultation](#) has been launched, and a number of focus groups will be held, to explain the council's current financial situation, along with the chance for Suffolk residents and businesses to have a say on Council Tax proposals.

The council's budget setting process will take into account the responses to the consultation, advice from council officers, elected members from political groups, businesses and partners in health and other public service organisations across Suffolk. Results of the consultation will be included in the report considered by the council when agreeing the budget in February 2024.

The council's budget consultation helps to explain the council's finances, what it has been doing to save money, and how it can generate more money to spend on public services. The two main ways in which the council can increase the budget, are an increase in the money it receives from government, and/or through Council Tax.

There are three key questions, the first is on which services people have recently used, the second asks for thoughts on seeking a greater contribution to Council Tax to help fund public services, and the third on which service area you would like to see more money spent.

The online consultation opens on 25 October and closes on 4 December 2023, and can be found at [www.suffolk.gov.uk/budget](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/budget). Focus groups are also being organised with local community groups and members of the public, details of which will be shared on the council's website and social media channels.

## New Highways Services arrive in Suffolk as multi-million pound partnership goes live

Suffolk Highways' new partnership has launched, as Milestone Infrastructure and Suffolk County Council join forces to deliver highways services fit for the future. The new contract, which is worth in the region of £800 million - £1 billion, will deliver highway projects and improvements across Suffolk for up to 20 years, including maintaining roads, pavements and rights of way, improving drainage, hedge trimming, construction of new road schemes, snow-clearing and gritting and much more.

Milestone Infrastructure, part of M Group Services, was awarded Suffolk's new highways services contract back in February and since then has been working with Suffolk County Council to mobilise the new contract ahead of it commencing on 1 October.

When seeking a new highways partner, the county council wanted a keener focus on delivering greater social value, building on the council's commitment to carbon reduction and protecting the environment, using local skills and talent, and giving young people the opportunity to work in the sector.

With this in mind, the new partnership was built around six key contract objectives, which will form the basis for all that Suffolk Highways delivers going forward. These objectives are:

- Collaboration and Partnership
- Social Value
- Environment and Net Zero Carbon
- Customer Communication and Engagement
- Commercialism and Enterprise
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

To read about the new Suffolk Streetlighting contract with McCann, visit: [Go Live! Suffolk County Council Street Lighting Services Contract Gets Underway - McCann \(mccann-ltd.co.uk\)](https://www.mccann-ltd.co.uk/news/2023/04/27/go-live-suffolk-county-council-street-lighting-services-contract-gets-underway-mccann)

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