

Annual Report 2016/ 2017

Stuston Parish Meeting

By County Councillor Jessica Fleming, Hartismere Division, Suffolk

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Firstly - thank you for your support and participation. A year ago we were looking at the prospect of devolution to a mayor and combined authority, now this project has stalled and local authorities are reinventing themselves in response to changes in how central government intends to fund local services. We can soon expect most revenue to be raised through business rates and growth related levies such as CIL. Waveney and Suffolk Coastal Districts agreed to merge in 2019 to form East Suffolk Council; Mid Suffolk and Babergh are increasingly working together and will both join the County at Endeavour House later in 2017.

During 2016 the County Council successfully received government backing for several large projects including the Ipswich Wet Dock Crossing and the Lowestoft Third River Crossing. An architectural competition for Ipswich bridge design was won by Forster & Partners Ltd. – refer to <https://www.flickr.com/photos/suffolkcountycouncil/> Also work has started on a new archives centre, The Hold in Ipswich, which will house most of the County's historic records and offer much better public access. It is due to open in 2019.

For highways, considerable investment has been made on road resurfacing over the past year. Speeding and heavy vehicles remain of concern all over Suffolk. Following audits of dangerous junctions on the A140 last year a full road safety study is planned for this route south of the A143 later in 2017. Network Rail has consulted on plans for closing or altering level crossings in Suffolk. Some footpaths, bridleways and agricultural crossings are likely to be closed.

The County re-tendered Community Transport to 7 principal operators last year based broadly on District/ Town boundaries, the Mid Suffolk operator is based in Stowmarket and can be reached on 01449-614271. The operator coordinates with the Diss Border Hoppa and other services such as community cars and Good Neighbour Schemes which can offer a 'door-to-door' service. No one should feel that they are stuck unable to leave home or get to appointments.

There is increased interest in Neighbourhood Planning as a way to influence growth; 3 plans are now adopted in Suffolk (Lavenham, East Bergholt and Mendlesham) and 14 others have started including Rickinghall-Botesdale and the Diss Area Plan to include Palgrave, Stuston and Brome & Oakley. The County Council plays an active role in Neighbourhood Planning given the need for school places, health care and other services to support new communities.

Protecting our natural and historic environment is one of the Council's key obligations and, as a Historic Environment Champion and Green County advocate, one of my own as well. The Suffolk Waste Partnership is keen to support community clean-up and locally organised litter picks. The Partnership hosts a gallery of photos submitted by community volunteers, add to the gallery by emailing any photos to: waste.management@suffolk.gov.uk