


## District Councillor Report: Stuston Parish Meeting

November 2023

<b>Flooding – Financial Support</b>	<p>During and following storms Babet and Ciaran, the Council has been working hard to help residents in affected homes and businesses.</p> <p>Householders are urged to report flood damage via Suffolk County Council's reporting tool both for provision of assistance and to inform mapping for future mitigation.</p> <p><u>Residential</u> A Community Recovery Grant (£500) and Council Tax Discount will be available to eligible residents impacted by Storm Babet. Households displaced from their primary residence and/or temporarily accommodated for 3 or more months will be eligible for 100% Council Tax relief. Residents will need to complete an electronic form to make a declaration of eligibility and confirm payment details. Residents unable to access the electronic form will receive assistance, further details will follow.</p> <p><u>Business</u> MSDC will administer distribution of the Department of Levelling Up and Housing and Communities Business Rates Relief Grant (100% for 3 months) and the Department for Business and Trade's Business Recovery Grant (£2,500 per business). The process to claim these grants is expected to follow the residential process, but evidence may be required in addition to the declaration.</p> <p>Further information and electronic application forms is expected to be available on the Council's website from 27 November 2023.</p>
<b>Solar Farms</b>	<p>At Mid Suffolk's Council meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> October, a Position Statement on Solar Farms was agreed. This stated that solar farms should not be based on prime agricultural land and the landscape impact on our communities needs to be taken into account.</p> <p>In the absence of clear policy from Government, the Council cannot create planning policy regarding renewable energy such as solar farms or PV panels on roofs. Our position statement sets out how we wish to see developments proceed. Early next year a related Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will be drafted which will be consulted upon; greater weight can be attached to planning decisions by reference to an SPD.</p>
<b>Living Well in Winter – Grant</b>	<p>The Council recognises the value of 'Warm Spaces' and tackling isolation this winter by making this grant available to voluntary and community services (incl. Parish Councils) who provide these services to residents.</p> <p>Between £500 and £2,000 is available to support activities such as after school and lunch clubs and 'warm spaces'. Deadline for applications is Sunday 17 December. Full information is available on the Mid Suffolk District Council <a href="#">website</a>.</p>

<b>Sustainable transport</b>	<p>At the Council meeting it was also agreed to form a Working Group to review sustainable integrated transport in the district – particularly for walking and cycling. It is hoped to review this in relation to commencing schemes in villages in the district.</p>
	<p>The <b>Cosy Homes</b> initiative was launched on 15<sup>th</sup> November. Eligible households will be able to apply for energy efficiency measures in their own homes, including if privately rented. <b><i>This insulation assistance will be free of charge to the resident.</i></b></p> <p>Full details and application process is available on the <a href="#">Mid Suffolk</a> website</p> <p>Our message is helping people to save energy, save money and reduce their carbon footprint. Particularly vulnerable households can continue to access support via the wider Suffolk scheme, <a href="http://www.warmhomessuffolk.org">www.warmhomessuffolk.org</a></p>
<b>Council Housing</b>	<p>At the moment we provide a very poor level of service for maintaining our housing stock and have a very low level of tenant satisfaction.</p> <p>The new Administration at Mid Suffolk is focussing on the backlog of housing repairs that are needed. This backlog will be dealt with via a separate contractor allowing the in-house team to concentrate on day-to-day repairs.</p> <p>We are also investing heavily in the repairs and maintenance service for our Council stock.</p> <p>We have engaged external partners to monitor our service moving forward.</p>
<b>Homelessness strategy</b>	<p>Our vision is that rough sleeping is rare, brief and non-recurring and that homelessness is routinely prevented through early and upstream intervention.</p> <p>We are carrying out a general review of our service which will be validated by Shelter to ensure we are offering the best service possible.</p> <p>We use our own temporary accommodation stock, so we don't incur the costs for private rental and hotels incurred by other local authorities.</p>
<b>Pathfinder B-17F Memorial.</b>	<p>Along with many residents and visitors I was honoured to attend the unveiling of the memorial commemorating 13 USAF airmen, four British civilians (all staff of Suffolk County Council) and a working horse on 10 November, marking the 80-year anniversary of the incident which claimed their lives.</p> <p>After some doubt that it would be achieved in time, I was relieved that MSDC heritage and planning process supported approval and construction of the memorial in time for the ceremony.</p>