

## County Councillor Report

January 2023



### Stuston Parish Meeting

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**The 'County Deal'** – Council Leader Matthew Hicks has signed a 'minded to' agreement with Government for provisional devolution of powers and funding. If it proceeds, this would provide new money for sustainable building, regeneration of brownfield land and other areas aimed to stimulate the local economy. Neighbouring counties Norfolk and Essex have signed the same provisional agreement and we are working closely with them. The 'deal' includes acceptance of different local governance arrangements including a directly elected County leader. Details and public consultation are planned before debate at full council where a decision will be made.

**Police & Crime Commissioner precept survey** – The Police and Crime Panel is considering a proposal to raise the policing precept by £15 a year (for a Band D property) which is considered essential to maintain an efficient and effective service. Please take part in the survey (link below) - click [here](#). Information about the work of PCC Tim Passmore is [here](#).

**Highways** – With regards to reports of dangerous potholes on the B1077 on approach to Diss, I have passed recent communications about road condition on to our local highways engineer who has requested a further inspection following the winter period. Please keep reporting any new defects under report no. CR 367372 to: [Report a highways issue - Suffolk County Council](#)

**Site Visit** - Local Highways Engineer Josh White and I drove down the parish recently and looked at various areas previously reported by residents as needing attention, including the approach to Diss.

**Cycle Path into Diss** – This project remains under review, I will let everyone know as it progresses.

**Domestic Abuse Update** - Suffolk's Violence Against Women and Girls strategy was published last year and some funding set aside for victim support and training. Domestic Abuse Champion training is free to anyone who lives or works in Suffolk. To book training please visit Eventbrite's website and search 'Suffolk Domestic Abuse Champions Network' or email [dachampions@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:dachampions@suffolk.gov.uk)

**Warm Spaces** - There are also more than 250 voluntary warm spaces across Suffolk, where residents can meet up with members of the community in a warm, safe space, at no charge. A map of warm spaces in Suffolk can be found on the Rural Coffee Caravan website: <https://ruralcoffeecaravan.org.uk/map/> Also Suffolk Libraries are registered as warm spaces this winter. Information and opening times for Suffolk Libraries can be found at <https://www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/>

Communities can set up their own Warm Space for local residents, refer to the Rural Coffee Caravan and Community Action Suffolk at: <https://ruralcoffeecaravan.org.uk/winter-warmth/#warmspaces>

**Council Budget** – A residents’ survey of council priorities conducted in October shows that adult and young persons social care are highest priorities for council expenditure, with mental health services roads and pavements, and local transport following. Under the proposals, the budget would increase by 9.6% (from £625.3m to £685.3). Additional funds would come from a total 3.99% overall increase in Council Tax, 1.99% in general Council Tax and a 2.00% increase dedicated to funding adult care. The budget will be debated at the February County Council meeting.

A Band D property would pay £28.70 per week (£1.10 pence per week increase from 2022-23).

**East Anglia Green** - A letter has been sent by Minister of State Rt Hon Graham Stuart MP to interested parties impacted by new transmission infrastructure, offshore wind connections, or interconnector projects. Information about the project can be found on: [Pylons East Anglia](#) and [Check out \(participatr.io\)](#) The proposed route is located west of Stuston, coming in near Roydon.

This letter addresses the following points:

1. A request for review of *existing* connections in East Anglia by MPs will not take place, as;

*“In most cases, offshore wind developers in the region [Check out \(participatr.io\)](#) already have connection contracts in place with National Grid Electricity System Operator (ESO) and the Government will not, and cannot, force changes to these contracts; any attempt to mandate changes to connection contracts at this stage would be open to legal challenge by developers”*

2. Revised Energy National Policy Statements (These policies set out how the Secretary of State should determine applications for energy National Infrastructure Projects such as, pylon lines, windfarms and Interconnectors, when they are in the scope of the Planning Act 2008).

*“Our proposed changes to National Policy Statements (which set out the expectations against which planning proposals are tested) will strengthen emphasis on the coordination of transmission infrastructure and include the need to demonstrate a reduction in environmental and community impacts through coordination. Communities will be able to respond to the consultation on these changes in early 2023. Following the consultation, the revised documents will also need to be approved by Parliament, ensuring full democratic accountability both locally and nationally.”*

3. Reducing onshore impacts and supporting coordination by voluntary means

a) *Nautilus Interconnector*

*“In recognition of the significant volume of infrastructure planned for development in East Anglia, my Department is working closely with developers to encourage voluntary coordination of connections for projects that already have grid connections. This could reduce landing points in East Anglia, and we have already seen progress. National Grid Ventures has confirmed it is investigating an alternative brownfield connection point for their Nautilus multi-purpose Interconnector, on the Isle of Grain in Kent, as an alternative to Friston, Suffolk.”*

b) *Coordination of offshore wind and interconnectors*

*“I launched the Offshore Coordination Support Scheme (OCSS). This is an open competition grant scheme with up to £100m available, targeting well advanced offshore wind and certain offshore energy assets (such as interconnectors) in Great Britain.*

*It will provide funding to successful applicants to develop feasible coordinated designs for their transmission infrastructure, which could reduce connection infrastructure. We are engaging with developers in East Anglia who we hope will apply. The scheme will close for applications in February 2023, with funding allocated by the middle of 2023”*

4. A review of revised connections by National Grid

Given the potential outcomes of achieving coordination through incentivised voluntary means and the potential alterations to connection arrangements

*“The Electricity System Operator (ESO) is exploring how it could undertake a study into the implications of coordination on the network, onshore and offshore, in and around East Anglia. This study would be independently conducted by the ESO It is important to note that this would follow on from the conclusion of the OCSS grant scheme.”*

5. Community Benefits

*“While steps are being taken to coordinate and reduce infrastructure where possible, new infrastructure will be needed. Communities that host network infrastructure are playing a vital role in enabling a cheaper, cleaner and self-sufficient energy supply for Britain and it is only right that they benefit from this. A consultation on gov.uk is planned in the first quarter of 2023 on community benefits for communities hosting onshore transmission network infrastructure”*

6. The future role of the Minister of State will be changing

*“Given my intention to engage actively with local MPs, developers, and other interested parties on all of the issues here, I should make clear that I will not be the decision-taking Minister for these forthcoming planning applications in East Anglia”*

7. Future meetings with MPs and project developers

*“Last month I met with East Anglian MPs and separately with developers of projects in the region, to understand community concerns and encourage efforts to reduce infrastructure. I will be meeting with both groups again on this matter early in 2023.”*