

## Offton and Willisham Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held remotely, via Zoom, on Monday 1st February 2021  
7pm.

Present:	Cllr S Warnes (Chair)	Cllr A Cox
	Cllr A Bye	Cllr A Chaplin
	Cllr I Gilson	Cllr C Pinson-Roxburgh
	Cnty Cllr K Oakes	Dst Cllr D Pratt
	0 members of the public	Clerk - T Davis

### ACTION

<b>1</b>	<p><b><u>Meeting Administration</u></b></p> <p><b>a) Welcome by Chair and opening of the meeting;</b> The Chair opened the meeting and thanked everyone for coming.</p> <p><b>b) Apologies for absence;</b> Formal apologies were sent by Cllr A Rumsey and these were accepted.</p> <p><b>c) Declarations of Interest;</b> None</p>	
<b>2</b>	<p><b>To Approve the draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 7th December 2020, and for the Chairman to sign as a true record</b></p> <p><b>a)</b> The Chair asked if there were any matters arising from the minutes. Cllr Cox asked about the flooding inspection with BMSDC and Cnty Cllr K Oakes advised this is still being actively sought.</p> <p><b><i>It was unanimously agreed for the Chair to sign the minutes as a true record.</i></b></p>	
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Public Participation Questions and Information</b></p> <p><b><i>To hear reports from the County Councillor, District Councillor, and comments from the Public.</i></b></p> <p>The Chair invited Cnty Cllr K Oakes to speak. Cllr K Oakes report can be found in the addendum. Two questions were asked. The first to point out the clash of information for the up-coming Road Closure for Ipswich Road and Elmsett Road, which states either 8am-4pm or 8am-6pm depending on what information source you are reading. Cllr K Oakes will look into this. The Second question, from Cllr A Bye, was to ask if the isolation payments are being widely advertised as there was concern that people did not know about them. It was agreed that it would be a good idea to place this on the website and 'nextdoor' social media site.</p> <p>The chair then invited Dst Cllr D Pratt to speak. Cllr D Pratt's report can be found in the addendum. Two questions were also asked, one requesting information on if refunds would be given to the suspension of the brown bins, which was confirmed, and when would they resume. Cllr D Pratt advised he would find out as it was currently not known.</p> <p>Cllrs also asked about the progress on the Offton Village Green. Cllr D Pratt confirmed that again due to the covid-19 outbreak Council workers were being reassigned and this project was currently on hold until such</p>	

	time that resources became available to resume the project. The Chair suggested that this was placed on the agenda in June.	
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Chair Report</b></p> <p>The Chair confirmed a letter had been written to the now ex Cllr M Bolton, confirming thanks for the long service to both the council and the community. Cllrs thanked the Chair for this and time was taken to reflect on Cllr M Bolton's contribution over the years.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that Christmas cards were sent to those in lieu of the Christmas Luncheon.</p> <p>Following the numerous requests and information received from residents about the loss of the Tye Lane bench, and the due to the cut off date for Cllr D Pratt's locality budget being 31st January, the Chair, with agreement with the RFO applied for some of the locality grant to pay for a new bench for Tye Lane. It was confirmed that £650 will be paid by BMSDC to Offton and Willisham Council for a new bench. All Cllrs agreed this was an excellent action to take and were very happy to learn of the success of the application.</p>	
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Clerk report, with mention of emails &amp; correspondence received</b></p> <p>Since the meeting in December I can confirm that increased feedback has been received from residents. 4 requests, regarding a hole near a footpath, a litter picker, the Tye lane bench and the village sewer system, have been placed on the agenda at items 8, 11, 12 &amp; 13.</p> <p>The Precept request has been received by BMSDC (Babergh Mid Suffolk District Council for £9239. The first instalment of this should be received in April.</p> <p>In addition to this BMSDC will be sending an additional sum of £212 from the Local Council Tax Support Grant, which will also be expected in April.</p> <p>I have completed all tasks for the Cilca, 25 of those have been accepted and I have 5 waiting to be marked. The good news is that a further 3 months is allotted for any corrections or rewrites beyond the deadline of 3rd February 2021 and as I only began in November, this should be plenty of time. I am hopeful that, at the Annual meeting in May, the Council will be able to declare itself as qualifying for the GPC (General Power of Competence).</p> <p>Budgeted payments have been made over December as listed in item 15 and the 3rd Quarter accounts have been completed and are being reviewed by Cllr A Cox.</p> <p>In line with aspirations of becoming a quality council and following the recommendations learnt during my CiLCA, I have prepared a number of documents for review. These are listed under item 16.</p> <p>Having initially perused the costs of new bins, I have placed this on the agenda at item 10. Before providing quotes, I would like to ascertain what type of bin you require, and if you still need two bins approximately 10 metres apart and no bins in Willisham. The type of bench is also needed for item 11.</p>	

	<p>I would like to take this opportunity to thank Cllr A Cox for the time and efforts he has put into the repair of the Willisham Noticeboard. It was not easy and I am very grateful to Cllr A Cox taking on the task.</p> <p>My thanks also go to Cllr A Cox and Cllr C Pinson-Roxburgh who have safely dismantled the broken bench at Tye Lane.</p>	
6	<p><b>To discuss and decide on the Offton and Willisham position regarding the Local Electricity Bill</b></p> <p>Following a brief discussion on this item, it was <b>Proposed by Cllr I Gilson, Seconded by Cllr A Cox and carried by 4 votes to not comment on the Local Electricity Bill</b></p>	
7	<p><b>To decide next course of action regarding the Mobile Phone Signal strength</b></p> <p>A discussion took place in respect of the next steps for this, following Cllr N Bunton stepping down. Mention of a government initiative to aid roaming and a letter to MP D Poulter was raised. It was concluded that Cllr A Bye would look into things further on behalf of the Parish Council and to advise the Clerk when a report would be ready for a meeting in the future.</p>	
8	<p><b>To discuss current footpaths in the parish, including resident reported Hazardous Hole in field by public footpath, Elmsett Rd, Offton.</b></p> <p>A lengthy discussion took place in respect of the current status of the footpaths. One of which was reported by a resident which is near a large hole, near to Elmsett Road. This had been reported by the resident to SCC on their reporting map, the hole has since been covered with a temporary cover. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact the landowner once the weather has improved and if no improvement was seen that the Clerk would advise Cllr K Oakes for a more formal letter to the landowner. Clerk was to also advise the resident raising the topic. Cllrs then went on to highlight problems with other footpaths, such as the footpath from highlands to tollemache which is blocked by an electric fence, past the tennis courts right of tollemache house. It was agreed that Cllr D Cattermole, Cllr A Chaplin and Cllr C Pinson-Roxburgh would try to liaise with the Rights of Way Officer via the Clerk to obtain a meeting to go through all the problems and that Cllr C Pinson-Roxburgh would obtain a list of footpaths not currently listed on the 'Definitive list' held by SCC on their website.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk Cllr C Pinson-Roxburgh</p>
9	<p><b>To discuss Christmas/Spring tea party/lunch arrangements</b></p> <p>Cllrs agreed that in the current situation (covid-19 third wave) it was too early to discuss. The Clerk advised that an announcement had been put in the Link for suggestions and volunteers. It was confirmed that this would be best suited as an agenda item in June.</p>	Clerk
10	<p><b>To discuss the replacement of the two bins situated in St Marys Close, Offton</b></p>	

	<p>Cllr C Pinson-Roxburgh had visited the site where the two bins are situated. It was confirmed that the large bin was indeed in need of replacement. After a brief discussion it was decided that the Clerk would provide quotes for different types of bin to replace the larger bin and the smaller bin to be removed. BMSDC to be notified of the change to emptying once it had been removed.</p>	Clerk
11	<p><b>To discuss replacing bench at Tye Lane, Willisham (incorporating resident requests)</b></p> <p>As detailed in the Chair report, residents had been missing the bench. It was agreed that the bench should be replaced in the same spot and powers to arrange for quotes and choose a suitable option up to the value of £800 were delegated to the Clerk. Cllr A Cox, Cllr I Gilson and Cllr S Warnes were to be involved in the choice and Cllr A Cox offered to fit the bench and advised that the mounted brackets from the old bench that had been dismantled were safely stored.</p>	Clerk +
12	<p><b>Resident Request - to purchase long-handled litter pickers 102" £50 plus VAT or 50" £25 plus VAT</b></p> <p>This resident request took the Council into a lengthy discussion about appropriateness and need for long-handled litter pickers. It was identified that the channels and ditches were blocked by numerous things and that litter pickers had been seen helping to unblock them. The Council felt that although this was admirable volunteering, maybe this was a problem that should be reported to the Environment agency and SCC. They also felt that by purchasing a long-handled picker it would be council property which needed to be used for the roadside and not for clearing ditches. Ditch clearing was not covered for in a litter pick risk assessment and therefore would not be covered by insurance of volunteers using council property. The council also felt that purchasing and giving a long-handled picker to an individual did not meet their donations policy, which would have to be justified and qualify for Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972. Further discussion went on about the dumping by Middlewood cottages and the ongoing impact it had on properties by the river, causing flooding. It was concluded that the Clerk would contact the Environment Agency (EA) to see if they can contact local residents by letter, to highlight the problems and concerns and ask them to report anyone found dumping in the river.</p> <p>The Clerk was also asked to advise the resident of the decision.</p> <p><b>This was proposed by Cllr C Pinson-Roxburgh, Seconded by Cllr I Gilson and unanimously agreed for the Clerk to contact the EA.</b></p>	Clerk  Clerk
13	<p><b>Resident Request - to join village sewer system, closing Castle Rd with local access</b></p> <p>Unfortunately the resident was unable to attend the meeting to provide any further information. The Councillors discussed the request from the information given on the initial email sent by the resident. It was concluded that the resident needed to contact Anglian Water and Highways and maybe BMSDC as owners of the Village Green and that this</p>	

	<p>issue was not something the Parish Council has a responsibility for. The Clerk was asked to relay this to the resident.</p> <p><b>It was Proposed by the Chair, Seconded by Cllr Cox and unanimously agreed for the Clerk to relay this to the resident.</b></p>	Clerk
14	<p><b><u>Planning -</u></b>  <b>BMSDC Planning Consultation Requested -</b></p> <p>a) <b>BMSDC DC/21/00221 Driveway Paving, 1 St Marys Close, Offton (4th Feb)</b>  The Cllrs had no objections to this application</p> <p>b) <b>BMSDC DC/20/05923 Extensions, Ringshall House, Offton Rd, Ringshall (9th Feb)</b>  The Councillors had no objections to this application</p> <p>c) <b>BMSDC DC/20/05924 Listed Building Consent, Ringshall House, Offton Rd, Ringshall (9th Feb)</b>  The Councillors wished to defer to the expertise of the Listed Building Officer</p> <p>d) <b>BMSDC DC/21/00445 Extensions for Elderly Relative, Corner Bungalow, Tye Lane, Willisham (14th Feb)</b>  This was briefly discussed, the Cllrs had no objections this application</p> <p><b>BMSDC Public Planning Consultations -</b></p> <p>e) <b>DC/20/05046 Needham Market 279 House Development</b>  This application was of some concern to the Parish and therefore Councillors agreed that they will support the comprehensive Needham Market objections.  <b>It was Proposed by Cllr A Cox, Seconded by Cllr C Pinson-Roxburgh and unanimously agreed to support Needham Markets comprehensive objections.</b></p> <p>f) <b>Whatfield Neighbourhood Plan</b>  Although Councillors were impressed by the plan, there were no comments to make.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
15	<p><b><u>Finance</u></b></p> <p>a) <b>Current Bank Balances as at 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2020:-</b>  <b>Community Account = £4,385.83</b>  <b>Premium Account = £0.34</b>  <b>Premium Savings Account = £9003.52</b></p> <p>b) <b>Income – Interest £0.22</b></p> <p>c) <b>To confirm Heelis &amp; Lodge as the chosen Internal Auditors</b>  This was briefly discussed.  <b>It was Proposed by Cllr A Cox, Seconded by Cllr I Gilson and unanimously agreed to use Heelis &amp; Lodge again.</b></p> <p>d) <b>To confirm payments made to:-</b>  <b>SALC (payroll) - £54.00</b>  <b>Cllr S Warnes (Stamps) - £39.00</b>  <b>Clerk Wages December - £423.54</b>  <b>Clerk Wages January - £423.54</b>  <b>CAS donation - £30.00</b>  <b>The Link donation - £100</b>  <b>Offton Recorder - £75</b></p>	Clerk

	<p>e) <b>To approve payments and authorise cheques for signature</b>  <b>Clerk Office Allowance for Dec &amp; Jan - £36.00</b>  <b>Clerk Mileage &amp; Expenses (trips to noticeboards &amp; minute work/notebook) - £42.15</b>  <b>Cllr S Warnes (Viking printing supplies) - £38.50</b>  <b>Cllr S Warnes (Chairman Allowance) - £216.10</b>  <b>Cllr A Cox (Noticeboard Backing- Travis Perkins) - £55.66</b>  <b>It was Proposed by Cllr C Pinson-Roxburgh, Seconded by Cllr A Chaplin and unanimously agreed to make the above payments.</b></p> <p>f) <b>To confirm Barclays as chosen bankers</b>  It had been established that during the pandemic no change of bankers were to take place. Although still unhappy with the service provided by Barclays, to continue with them would be a better option in the current circumstances.  <b>It was Proposed by the Chair, Seconded by Cllr C Pinson-Roxburgh and unanimously agreed to continue with Barclays and review this in six months time.</b></p> <p>g) <b>To discuss and approve the 3rd Quarter Accounts</b>  The 3rd Quarter Accounts were discussed, Cllr A Cox reported that his review had been carried out and the accounts had no problems.  <b>It was Proposed by Cllr A Cox, Seconded by Cllr A Bye and unanimously agreed to accept the 3rd Quarter accounts as presented by the RFO</b></p> <p>h) <b>To discuss Grant Applications for 2021-22</b>  The Clerk confirmed that no applications had yet been received for grants.</p> <p>i) <b>To formally reduce Clerk hours inline with budget, following completion of Cilca</b>  It was briefly discussed that the budget for 2021/22 had detailed the Clerk hours would reduce following the completion of the CiLCA in February. The Clerk confirmed that all units had been completed and the clerk was waiting for the outcome of only 5 of the 30 tasks, which may or maynot have to be re-done.  <b>The Chair Proposed and it was Seconded by Cllr C Pinson-Roxburgh that as of 1st March 2021 the Clerk hours would reduce to 7.5hrs a week, any other hours needed being separately resolved as and when needed.</b></p>	<p>Clerk &amp; Chair &amp; co-signature e</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
16	<p>a) <b><u>Policies</u></b>  <b>To formally readopt the Suffolk Code of Conduct</b></p>	

	<p>b) <b>To review &amp; adopt the ICO Publication Scheme and Offton &amp; Willisham Information Scheme</b></p> <p>c) <b>To review &amp; adopt the under £25,000 Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities</b></p> <p>d) <b>To review &amp; adopt the Equality &amp; Diversity Policy</b></p> <p>e) <b>To review &amp; adopt the Grants &amp; Donations Policy</b></p> <p>f) <b>To review &amp; adopt the Action Plan (business plan) for 2021-22</b> The above policies were briefly discussed. <b>The Chair Proposed that the Council adopt all policies &amp; plans listed in a)-f), this was Seconded by Cllr C Pinson-Roxburgh and unanimously agreed.</b> The clerk will place these onto the website for the public to view.</p>	Clerk
17	<p><b>Clerk holiday request</b> The Clerk's holiday was agreed</p>	Clerk
18	<p><b>Consider &amp; Approve arrangements for APM in May</b> Due to the current situation with covid-19 it was decided that the Annual Parish Meeting would be best suited to a virtual meeting via Zoom. Under the current legislation this would have to be held before the 7th May 2021. It was unanimously agreed therefore that the meeting would take place following the Annual Parish Council meeting on 4th May 2021, at approximately 8:30pm.</p>	Clerk
19	<p><b>Date of next meeting, the Annual Parish Council meeting on 4th May 2021 at 7pm followed by the Annual Parish Meeting</b></p>	

## Addendum

### 1.County Councillor K Oakes Report for January 2021

#### **As of Monday 4 January, Suffolk is in line with national Covid-19 Restrictions – Moving into a national lockdown. Testing capacity has increased in response to demand.**

More than one third of Suffolk's total confirmed coronavirus cases were recorded in the last two weeks, government data has shown.

A total of 15,643 people have tested positive for the virus in the county as of January 2 – with 5,321 people testing positive from December 20 to January 2, making up 34% of all cases recorded in Suffolk by that point.

While the figures show cases are significantly on the rise, testing has vastly increased in recent months when compared to the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic. Mobile testing has increased

countywide, while a walk-in test centre has also opened at Portman Road, Ipswich, alongside the permanent test centre at Copdock.

## Support payments available for those told to self-isolate on low incomes

As of the 24<sup>th</sup> December, more residents on low incomes or benefits can now get financial help if they are told to self-isolate due to COVID-19.

Previously Test and Trace Support payments could only be given to people meeting certain criteria, including on benefits. Now Councils across Suffolk have extended this, using their discretion, to help those on low incomes but not on benefits.

Councils across Suffolk are helping administer the Government grant scheme to help people remain at home and do their bit to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Details about the Test and Trace Support Payments can be found on District and Borough Council websites and how to apply for it (**see below**). This is part of a range of measures that councils across Suffolk have introduced to support communities and businesses during the coronavirus pandemic.

Those who are eligible will need to meet all the following criteria:

You have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace on or after 28 September 2020.

You have responded to your notification from the NHS Test and Trace and engaged with the service by providing the legally required information.

You are employed or self-employed.

You cannot work from home and will lose income as a result.

You are currently receiving at least one of the following benefits: Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, income-based Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income

Support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit, OR (under the new discretionary powers) you have a household income of less than £37,400 (couple or single parents) or £19,200 (single person) and have savings of less than £3,000.

You made your application within 14 days of the last day of your NHS test and trace self-isolation period.

Applicants should ensure that they have the below information available before starting the application:

NI number

Your 8-digit test and trace ID number

Your most recent bank statement, proof of self-employment or wage slips

Visit your District or Borough Council websites for details on how to apply for the £500 Test and Trace Support Payment:

Babergh District Council:

[babergh.gov.uk/benefits/coronavirus-money-and-benefits-advice/](http://babergh.gov.uk/benefits/coronavirus-money-and-benefits-advice/)

Mid Suffolk District Councils

[midsuffolk.gov.uk/benefits/coronavirus-money-and-benefits-advice/](https://midsuffolk.gov.uk/benefits/coronavirus-money-and-benefits-advice/)

Additional help, including financial aid, is also available from Suffolk Support and Advice Service. This additional help is available for those facing financial difficulty or needing support – especially for those who have never asked for help before. On 1 October 2020, the Suffolk Support and Advice Service phonenumber was launched to help people across the county access information or support relating to debt, benefits, housing or employment.

People can contact the Suffolk Support and Advice Service on 0800 068 3131 between 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday or go to:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/suffolk-advice-and-support-service/>

## Suffolk 2020 fund projects to deliver over £2.5 million in new community-focused initiatives across the county

On the 18<sup>th</sup> December, seven new projects were announced as part of the Suffolk 2020 fund to support residents and improve the county for years to come.

As part of the council's investment in Suffolk's communities and its ongoing commitment to protecting the environment, the authority launched a special one-off fund in March with the aim of setting up and delivering a range of initiatives and projects that provide a positive, tangible impact in what has proven to be an extremely challenging year.

**The announced initiatives and projects are as followed:**

**New booking system and automatic number plate recognition at Household Waste Recycling Centres** – Improving the efficiency and customer experience across all 11 recycling centres by enhancing the online booking system using automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) and automated entry barriers.

**Adult Digital Learning** - Developing new virtual learning tools and techniques and setting up a laptop loan scheme to strengthen and extend access to the Adult Learning Service for those living in digital and/or rural isolation. This approach will enable people to enhance their knowledge and skills to secure employment. Building on the swift switch to virtual learning during lockdown, we will further develop virtual learning for adults across Suffolk and use new technologies to enrich and improve the quality of interaction and training, modernising the service's offer.

**Youth Work** - Developing and supporting growth of grass roots organisations to deliver accessible, high quality provision for youths across Suffolk. Includes creation of a virtual 'Centre of Excellence' to share best practice and provide a 'one stop shop' of support for youth groups across Suffolk.

**Discovering Suffolk** – raising awareness of Suffolk's countryside and the county's rights of way network, promoting local (Covid-safe) outdoor activities across all of Suffolk with the development of a smartphone outdoor app and QR codes to engage new audiences.

**Automated Numberplate Recognition Speed Indicators** – Devices will be installed at the roadside to tackle localised problems with speeding drivers. The devices will be periodically moved between sites of concern and the data will be forwarded to the Police to assist with targeted enforcement.

**Virtual Reality therapy** - Engagement and coproduction with people living with dementia and their carers to explore and develop interactive and therapeutic experiences to support wellbeing. These would be delivered through mobile virtual reality headsets and include bespoke content and interactions based around archive media of Suffolk.

**Mobile Community ‘Care Hubs’** - Digitally equip and staff selected community vehicles accessing rural communities within Suffolk. This will support digital inclusion and provide a way to share information and provide help around the opportunities available with care technologies and other digital skills.

The work involved in setting up and enabling these projects will begin in early 2021, setting in motion a range of new community projects that will benefit people for years to come. The council’s agreement to move forwards with these exciting projects listed above follows the successful launch of the first three Suffolk 20202 projects that were announced over recent months:

**EV Vehicle Charging Points** – Making grants available to install around 100 vehicle charging points throughout the county. Particularly targeting rural areas and sites owned and managed by not-for-profit organisations such as Parish Councils, village halls, sports clubs, libraries and charities.

**Tree Planting** - Increasing tree cover, through rural and urban planting schemes, planting approximately 100,000 trees over the next 18 months, establishing ‘healing woodlands’ to remember those lost to Covid-19, and increasing biodiversity along roadside verges.

**Quiet Lanes** - Encouraging the use of non-motorised vehicles and more considerate driving at lower speeds along a range of the community’s self-selected rural lanes, with a view to adding 200 new lanes across Suffolk.

## Help shape guidance for new housing developments in Suffolk

On the 17<sup>th</sup> December, Suffolk County Council launched the Suffolk Design: Streets Guide, and is asking members of public for feedback in shaping new residential developments (**details below**).

The Streets Guide is part of the Suffolk Design initiative which is where District and Borough planning authorities and the County Council are working together to improve the design criteria and guidance for new developments across the county.

The guide seeks to draw together national policies, guidance and other best practice and set within the Suffolk context. It covers more than just technical standards for roads, as requirements for footpaths, cycleways, utilities, sustainable drainage are also set out.

**Councillor Andrew Reid, Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Rural Affairs, said:**

“The Suffolk Design: Streets Guide sets out a different approach that focuses on the needs of all users rather than designing for motorised traffic first. By doing this, the opportunities for walking and cycling can be designed into and surrounding new developments and not treated as afterthoughts.

“The new guidance seeks to help designers and all local councils to understand and plan for streets that support sustainable travel, that are attractive places yet easy to maintain, and that reflect Suffolk’s heritage and landscape.”

**Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection, said:**

“I welcome this update to the existing guidance. Our streets function in many different ways, not just for cars to pass along or park. Streets are also places where people meet, where trees and other plants grow and how energy is conveyed for our homes and businesses.

“All these different elements need careful consideration as we look forward to a low carbon future and adapt to climate change.”

The consultation is open until **5pm on Wednesday 10 February 2021**. Members of the public can take part by visiting, [www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolkstreets](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolkstreets).

## Green light given for Council's new housing joint venture company

On the 9<sup>th</sup> December, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet gave the go ahead to create a joint venture company to lead new housing developments on some of its own land.

Since 2019 the county council, as a major landowner in Suffolk (the 3<sup>rd</sup> biggest in the County), has been investigating how it can do more with its own assets to support district and borough councils in their role as strategic housing authorities, boost the supply of much needed housing in the county and ensure more of its land is being used to create social value within communities.

The decision follows months of detailed preparation, which saw strategic real estate advisor Avison Young and multinational law firm Pinsent Masons appointed by Concertus Design and Property Consultants Ltd; the Service Delivery Group of the council's Corporate Property Division. Their role was to consider delivery and viability options for a range of potential sites across the county with a view to consider how best to bring each forward for development.

As part of this appointment, and in accordance with the original decision of Cabinet in January, the newly appointed advisors also assessed the option of creating a new joint venture company to manage development of the largest potential sites. A business plan for the joint venture was presented to a meeting of Suffolk County Council's Cabinet on the 16<sup>th</sup> where it was agreed to proceed to the next phase.

**Councillor Nick Gowrley, Cabinet Member for Housing said:**

"This is an important milestone for our housing approach, and I wish to thank Avison Young and Pinsent Masons for their work in pulling this comprehensive business case together. Whilst this new joint venture will represent a major part of bringing forward specific land assets for development, it will still only be one part of our overall approach to housing. Those sites not considered suitable for the joint venture, due to size or scheme objectives, will be developed in more traditional ways, such as by sale to a local housing developer."

## **2. District Councillor Report for February 2021**

### Recycling Awareness Campaign

Each year more than 10,000 tonnes of recycling from Suffolk is rejected each year due to residents placing the wrong items in their recycling bins. A new awareness campaign to get Suffolk's recycling right has been launched. A leaflet which explains which types of materials can and cannot be recycled will be delivered to all homes, and this will be followed up with social media and press articles.

### Garden Waste

Brown bin collections have been temporarily paused during lockdown to ensure that the Council delivers more critical services.

### Strategic Asset Management Plan

MSDC has approved and adopted a Strategic Asset Management Plan for 2020-2025. This is a document outlining how the Council uses and manages all the land and buildings in order to support the strategic priorities. The main objectives include generation of income, asset management and development of long term housing procurement. This plan covers the Council assets, not CIFCO's.

### Covid Vaccination Programme

A Suffolk wide webinar was held with officials from Health services for Councillors across the county to ask questions about the vaccination programme. Information is also available for members of the public. More information can be found at <https://sneevaccine.org.uk/>

### Covid-19 Support for Businesses and Individuals

Self-Isolation Support Payment - Mid Suffolk is administering the Self-Isolation Support Payment. This is a £500 compensation payment for those who have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace and meet the eligibility criteria.

National Lockdown Support Grants for Businesses - Government support grants available for businesses in Babergh and Mid Suffolk including the Closed Business Lockdown Payment and addition Local Restrictions Support Grants. For more information, visit: <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/business/business-rates/grant-funding-schemes/>

Suffolk Support and Advice Service - This helpline provides information and support relating to debt, benefits, housing and employment. The service is open between 9 am and 5 pm Monday to Friday: 0800 068 3131

Home, But Not Alone Helpline - The helpline is in place to support clinically extremely vulnerable people who may need additional information or support. The service will be staffed from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday: 0800 876 6926

Dr Daniel Pratt

Mid Suffolk District Councillor

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