

Gislingham Ward Mellis, Gislingham, Thornham, `Wortham & Burgate, Wickham Skeith Parish Councils

District Councillor's Report:

July 2025

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| Council Meeting 24 th July | Agenda: CIFCO, Report and Business Plan. New Sports and Community Pavillion at Chilton fields Stowmarket (SHELF 2) - To ensure there is adequate funding in place to deliver the pavilion and associated works, and that opportunities to secure external funding are maximised. Underwriting a funding gap for the Food Museum's Branching out project. Motion re Government funding. Motion re LGR. |
| Devolution and local government re-organisation update | <p>Since March the District and Borough Councils of Suffolk have worked together to develop a shared final submission. They have also carried out engagement with communities and partners including an online survey which will run to 27th July. This survey has identified across all councils that the priority is for: <i>"Being Local -Ensuring decisions that affect you, and where you live, are made close to you - by councillors and a council that understands your needs and represents your area"</i>. Accordingly, while Council will not make its final decision on a submission until after a further debate by Council in September 2025, it is intended by the district and borough councils of Suffolk that their remaining work and engagement will focus on developing a model for three new locally focussed sustainable unitary councils.</p> <p>This model is most likely to meet both the Government's criteria for local government reorganisation and our own local criteria, specifically the need to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> best reflect a meaningful sense of place and identity to support local democracy whilst also ensuring the need to create economies of scale. Bolster the future financial sustainability of public services by considering the right scale and ability to drive this vision with system partners, as well as provide resilience in the short, medium and longer term. Respect the character of Suffolk which is reflected in its diverse geography and local community identities ensure focus on the future growth of, and opportunities in, Suffolk and more widely across East Anglia. Provide the resilient, accountable leadership and capacity that the Suffolk system requires to meet community needs and deliver public sector reform; Give Suffolk's communities, businesses and residents a strong voice, including on the Suffolk and Norfolk Mayoral Strategic Authority, and enable them to support the wider devolution agenda and delivery |
| New Rural Support Fund | Mid Suffolk District Council's is planning to establish a Community Asset Fund, to run for the next two years to supporting communities in the purchase of property to enable social enterprises such as community pubs, shops, post offices, banking hubs and cafés to take root in communities which would otherwise lack these important spaces to shop and socialise. This will work |

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| | <p>alongside existing, aligned programmes that support our rural communities: Pride in our Place, Mid Suffolk Sports Infrastructure Fund, CIL & Neighbourhood CIL, Place specific S106, POLBEF - Port One Legacy Biodiversity Enhancement Fund, is a funding program, part of the development of the Port One Logistics Park in Great Blakenham and aims to enhance biodiversity within the local area. Trees, hedgerows & wildflowers scheme, Sustainable Communities Food Fund, Progress Power Community Benefit Fund, Locality Budgets, Shared Prosperity Funding – UKSPF, Rural England Prosperity Funding, LEVI funding for EV rollout – SCC led.</p> |
| Homelessness | <p>I am sad to report that the number of households in temporary accommodation has reached a new high of over 100, despite the Housing solutions Team preventing homelessness in 71% of applications. To reduce reliance on privately supplied accommodation, last year MSDC adopted a target of 30 units of temporary accommodation with appropriate facilities and high energy efficiency by 2029. By the end of this year 10 units will have been secured, 6 of them funded through the Government's Local Authority Housing Fund.</p> |
| Farming Sector | <p>A MSDC economic strategy report has highlighted that over a quarter of our workforce is employed in the food and drink sector, from field to fork, and that around 85% of Mid Suffolk is farmland.</p> <p>The new grants launched incorporate agricultural diversification with up to £15,000 available and Suffolk FWAG (Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group) have been asked to identify gaps in our local food supply chain – this is fundamentally much larger than MSDC but the evidence will enable us to push other stakeholders. MSDC will also be supporting farmers with free membership to Suffolk FWAG who are uniquely placed to give advice on both business and biodiversity of farming.</p> |
| EcoPower Suffolk | <p>EcoPower Suffolk have announced that the inaugural meeting of the Community Liaison Group (CLG) will be held on Wednesday 30th July at 3pm</p> |

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