

STOKE ASH & THWAITE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held Thursday 16 May 2024, 7.30pm at the Village Hall, Stoke Ash.

Present: Cllrs T Pulham, R Kember, Mrs V Lane, G Leggett, Mrs C Maisey, R Maisey and G Trancred. County Cllr A Stringer, District Cllr T Weller and two members of the public

1. Election of Chairman

Cllr Mrs Maisey proposed Cllr Pulham was re-elected Chairman, seconded Cllr Leggett. There were no other nominations, Cllr Pulham confirmed his willingness to be re-elected – proposal unanimously carried.

2. Apologies and Approval of Absence - none

3. To receive declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda

Item 12 – The Chairman declared an interest.

4. Election of Vice Chairman

Cllr Mrs C Maisey proposed Cllr Leggett was re-elected Vice Chairman, seconded Cllr Mrs Lane. Cllr Leggett confirmed his willingness to remain Vice Chairman – proposal unanimously carried.

5. PUBLIC FORUM: to receive the following reports:

Police – report available online at <http://suffolk.police.uk>. It was reported Police & Crime Commissioner T Passmore had passed on his thanks to Stoke Ash & Thwaite parishioners for their support.

County Councillor – Cllr Stringer presented his county report (copy attached to the Minutes). Despite the reported investment in highway uneven surfaces and potholes continued local uneven surfaces were raised. Cllr Stringer suggested these were reported via the CC website reporting tool.

District Councillor – District Cllr Weller presented his Annual and May 2024 report (copies attached to the Minutes). Cllr Leggett thanked the District Councillor for putting him in contact with the grant administrator at MSDC.

Cllr Stringer added the 'call for sites' stage of the local plan would be published for consultation. This was a stage the District Council was required to go through but ninety percent of the district housing allocation was already being built.

Parishioners and Public (meeting open for 10 minutes)

Fireworks – Stoke Ash: A parishioner raised concerns over very loud fireworks at a private party event in Stoke Ash. As well as being very loud they continued intermittently over a period of some two/three hours on a Saturday evening. Animals in the village became very stressed and the noise from the fireworks had disturbed parishioners. Similar firework events had been held in the past at the same property. It was believed this should be considered as a noise pollution issue and reported to MSDC Environmental Health. Cllr Leggett understood the event had been a 65th birthday celebration, was a one-off event and apologies had been received from the host of the party for any nuisance caused to parishioners. Cllr Leggett suggested a note was included in the parish magazine requesting that parishioners consider the wellbeing of other residents when holding such a events in the future. The District Councillor offered his support as the preferred method for dealing with such events in the first instance.

St George's Hall, Thwaite – a Thwaite parishioner referred to the Thwaite consultation with parishioners during March 2022 regarding suggestions for the future of St George's Hall. Mention of the consultation had been made in parish council minutes of September and November 2023 and the parishioner was concerned there had been no feedback on the consultation with parishioners from the parish council. Parishioners were now keen to know the outcome.

Cllr Leggett stated the response from the consultation had resulted in mixed views from parishioners. The Projects Group had taken advice from the Diocesan Architect, renovation of the Hall would be a major project due to the costs involved as well as any disturbance to the protected bats. There was a possibility of improvement works to the Old School Room, providing a wc and kitchen area, and this was being looked at by the Diocesan Architect. A similar project had taken place at Westhorpe and the Projects Group would be obtaining advice as to how that project was funded and managed. Funding would involve preparation of a business case to assess viability with evidence that the building would be used as a community facility at least once per week. The parishioner thanked members for the information provided and stated Thwaite parishioners would appreciate being kept informed of any progress made.

6. To consider Health and Safety items for report – none.

7. To consider for approval Minutes of the meeting held 21 March 2024

Cllr Kember proposed acceptance of the Minutes, seconded Cllr R Maisey – unanimously agreed.

8. Matters arising from the Minutes for report only

9. 7.5.19	Stoke Ash PC vacancies	Currently 3 vacancies – <i>advertised in parish magazine.</i>
17.5.18	Storage of PC documents at Ipswich Record Office	TP liaising with Record Office.
17.5.18 18.5.23 18.5.23 21.9.23 18.1.24	Thwaite Comm Projects Hardstanding at OSR Tree on Allotment land Prepare allotment land for letting Prune Fruit Tree on allotment land Request to donate Conifer tree to plant next OSR, Thwaite	<i>See Agenda item</i> Deferred To be removed Feb/March 2024. RM TP/Working Group RM Deferred until the autumn.
18.6.20	Review Emergency Plan	GL, TP, RK & GT. RK reported on a useful meeting with the Local Emergency Planning Officer at MSDC. An emergency plan template had been supplied. The Village Hall had been mentioned as a focal meeting point and rest centre. The draft plan had been sent back to the MSDC emergency officer. Pending - RK
18/5/23	Preparation of Village Welcome Pack	Draft Welcome Pack was available for consideration. Include next agenda.
21/9/23	Availability of grant funding – Stoke Ash VH & Thwaite OSR	District Cllr Weller stated capital funding could be available providing the application met with the funding requirements.
16/11/23	Stoke Ash: 1. Provide a double-sided High-Water Sign at the ford to give warning from both directions. 2. Provide Flood Warning sign at Stoke Ash Street/Deadman's Lane junction 4. Clear pipes under road at the Ford and Bridge 5. Ditches Wetheringsett side of Deadman's Lane ford	Suffolk CC declined. Cllr Stringer suggested making application via his locality budget and suggested an email application was sent to him. As above. Suffolk CC assessed but declined at present Request landowner clear ditches – Cllr Pulham had spoken to the landowner. This would probably be subject of the Stoke Ash s.19 report. Another request for clearance of pipe & ditches to be made via Suffolk CC website.
16/11/23	Thwaite: 1. River Dove clearance from Deadman's Lane bridge to Thwaite 2. Resolve flooding at A140/Wickham Road junction during rainfall 3. New manhole drain in Wickham Road at dip between Church Lane and OSR	Reported via Suffolk CC reporting tool Roadside ditches partially cleared. Cllr Pulham & Cllr Stringer to meet during June to discuss Cllr Stringer would have further detail to report at the next meeting.
18/1/24	Clear ditches adjacent Church Lane	TP/RK to speak to landowner
18/1/24	Deadman's Lane flooding	GL to send letter to River Authority. Complete.

18/1/24	Reinstate Church Lane SA 30mph speed sign/s	Cllr Weller to provide replacement sign.
21/3/24	Thwaite Allotments – investigate whether covered by Allotment Act	Cllr Weller
21/3/24	Letter of thanks to path clearance volunteer	GL. Complete.

9. To confirm Parish Council working groups and representatives:

Planning – all councillors

Finance Working Group – Cllrs G Leggett, Mrs C Maisey and T Pulham

Thwaite Community Projects Group – Cllrs G Leggett, Mrs C Maisey, R Maisey, T Pulham and R Kember.

Footpaths – Cllr T Pulham

Trees – R Maisey

Website – Cllr G Tancred

Play Area, Stoke Ash – Cllr G Tancred

Emergency Planning – Cllrs G Leggett, T Pulham and Cllr R Kember

Parish Plan – Cllr G Leggett

Lunch Club – Cllrs G Leggett and Mrs C Maisey

PIIP's – Cllrs T Pulham, G Leggett, Mrs C Maisey, R Maisey, Mrs V Lane and G Tancred

Neighbourhood Watch - Cllr R Kember

To confirm RFO and Internal Auditor – Clerk and SALC

Cllr Tancred proposed adoption of the above, seconded Cllr R Maisey – unanimously agreed.

10. To consider Planning Applications for recommendation to MSDC – none received

11. Planning Decisions received from MSDC

- DC/24/00594: Land to north of Clay Lane, Stoke Ash - Application under S73a for the Removal or Variation of Conditions following grant of DC/19/05400 dated 08/01/2024 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) - Change of use and extension of barn to form 1no dwellinghouse (following demolition of ancillary buildings). To vary Condition 2 (Approved Plans & Documents) As per revised details. Planning Permission Granted

12. Planning correspondence

Elmya Energy – proposed White Elm Solar Farm – land north of Mendlesham. Elmya Energy offered to make a presentation on the proposed application to a parish council meeting. It was reported County and District Councils would be consultees to any application. Councillors noted the proposal at this stage.

13. Neighbourhood Watch report – Cllr Kember stated there were no issues to report.

14. To consider complaint raised regarding loud fireworks in Stoke Ash, Saturday 4 May 2024

See item at Parishioners and Public above

15. Thwaite Community Projects Group report

Cllr Pulham reported he and Cllr Leggett had met regarding items 1, 2 and 3 below:

- Report on Allotment Lettings – the lettings plan was due to be implemented.
- Report on removal of tree on Allotment land – as well as the already identified tree to be removed, four weeping willows had been identified as in need of pruning or removal due to their condition. One of the willows had split. Cllr Pulham requested items 1, 2 and 3 were included on the next agenda for further report.
- Report on pruning fruit tree on Allotment land – work pending.
- Thwaite Projects Insurance – to confirm Schedule conditions. It had been confirmed to the insurers St George's Hall was a grade 11* building.
- Report on Old School Room refurbishment grant. Deferred to next meeting.

16. To consider a Thank You to a resident for long service to the community

Cllr Mrs Lane reported that the Church Warden, Mrs June Scott, would be moving from the village, she had been a very dedicated member of Stoke Ash Church for a very long time and had been a huge supporter of the village and events. It was agreed a gift in recognition of her service to the village would be obtained and funded by councillors with a presentation at the village fete on 29 June 2024. Proposed Cllr Mrs Lane, seconded Cllr Kember and unanimously agreed.

17. Rural Coffee Caravan report

Cllr Tancred reported the visits had been well attended and a good opportunity for parishioners to meet for

a chat over a coffee as well as providing information and assistance to anyone in need of advice, the helpers having been trained to give some advice or provide literature where necessary. The next visit would be Tuesday 4 June 2024. Cllr Tancred suggested the item could be removed from future agendas unless a particular item arose.

18. Finance

1. To consider s.137 donation requests

- (i) Stoke Ash & Thwaite Parish Magazine – Cllr Leggett reported that printing costs for the magazine had increased over the last two years and these had not been covered by income from advertisements. District Cllr Weller stated funding could be available from his locality budget, an amount of £300 was stipulated. The Chair recorded thanks to Cllr Weller for his offer which was much appreciated. Cllr Leggett would make application via Cllr Weller to MSDC.

2. Accounts for Payment/Receipts received

Date	Payee	Purchase/Service	Amount	Vat	Total	Agreed/Decld	Ch no.
16/5/24	SALC	Annual sub 24-25	£214.38	-	£214.38	Agreed	100543
16/5/24	Clerk	Sal-expen Mar-May 2024	£670.35	-	£670.35	Agreed	100544
25/4/24	E.on	Thwaite OSR electricity 4/3/24-3/4/24	£23.65	-	£23.65	Agreed	100311
16/5/24	E.on	Thwaite OSR electricity 4/4/24-3/5/24	£27.45	-	£27.45	Agreed	100312

Cllr Kember proposed payment of the above, seconded Cllr R Maisey – unanimously agreed.

3. To consider for approval year end Parish Council accounts 31.3.24

The year end accounts had been circulated to councillors prior to the meeting, these showed a year end balance of £15,534.25. As the council was no longer managing Wash Lane it was suggested the reserve of £649.49 remaining for that project was transferred to the council's general reserve, this was unanimously agreed.

Cllr Mrs Lane queried the Coronation income of £348.50. Details to be provided.

No further queries were raised. Cllr Tancred proposed adoption of the accounts for y/e 31.3.24, seconded Cllr Kember – proposal carried.

4. To consider for approval Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023-24 (AGAR) – circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting.

1. Certificate of Exemption

Cllr Tancred proposed acceptance of the Certificate of Exemption from a limited assurance review the parish council confirming its gross income and expenditure did not exceed £25,000, seconded Cllr R Maisey – unanimously agreed.

2. Section 1 and Section 2

Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR documents 2023-24 had been circulated prior to the meeting. Councillors confirmed Yes to questions 1 – 9 of section 1. No queries were raised. Cllr Leggett proposed acceptance of sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR document, seconded Cllr R Maisey – unanimously agreed.

19. Clerk's report/correspondence

MSDC - notification of availability of capital grants to assist communities with village hall, play areas, sports clubs and recreational facility improvements up to £10,000, closing date for applications 14 July 2024. Details had been circulated to councillors.

MSDC – notification of Supplementary Planning Documents consultation, including publication of the recent call for sites consultation. Comments invited until 15 May 2024.

Cllr Leggett raised a query as to how parishioners could be made aware of any 'last minute' issues arising within the community. Cllr Kember stated he had started a Parish Council news Bulletin, he would be informing parishioners of how to join the Bulletin list in the next newsletter.

20. Chair's report

The Chair reported that neighbouring parish council, Wetheringsett, was keen to provide a permanent solar powered vehicle speed indicator device on Brockford Street. The equipment would be purchased with the aid of grant funding. Suffolk CC Highways had been consulted as to the preferred location for the equipment and had identified the section of verge just north of Brockford Garage. This section was in the

parish of Thwaite. Permission was therefore sought from Thwaite for siting the equipment. Cllr R Maisey proposed no objections were raised, seconded Cllr Kember, all in favour.

21. Any other business for information exchange/agenda requests

Thwaite Churchyard - Some comments had been received regarding the length of the grass in the Thwaite churchyard. Cllr Kember stated he would speak with the mowing team to arrange a gradual cut back before June.

Allotments – District Cllr Weller would look into and report whether the Allotment Act applied to non-council owned allotment land.

22. Date of next meeting: Thursday 18 July 2024, 7.30pm at Stoke Ash Village Hall

Meeting closed 9.50pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

Summary of action points

7.5.19	Stoke Ash PC vacancies	Currently 3 vacancies – <i>advertised in parish magazine.</i>
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18.6.20	Review Emergency Plan	GL, TP, RK & GT. RK reported on a useful meeting with the Local Emergency Planning Officer at MSDC. An emergency plan template had been supplied. The Village Hall had been mentioned as a focal meeting point and rest centre. The draft plan had been sent back to the MSDC emergency officer. Pending - RK
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	5. Ditches Wetheringsett side of Deadman's Lane ford	pipe & ditches to be made via Suffolk CC website. LC Request landowner clear ditches – Cllr Pulham had spoken to the landowner. This work subject to the Stoke Ash s.19 report.
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21/3/24	Thwaite Allotments – investigate whether covered by Allotment Act	Cllr Weller
16/5/24	Gift for parish resident to present at village fete 29/6/24	All Councillors
16/5/24	Note in Parish Magazine re. loud fireworks in Stoke Ash	GL
16/5/24	Parish Magazine funding application – apply to District Councillor	GL
16/5/24	News Bulletin for Parishioners – report in Parish Magazine	RK

County Councillor Report – May 2024

Health Scrutiny

At Health Scrutiny Committee on 17 April, we heard from colleagues in the NHS about their digital integration work, trying to join up the different IT systems they use and to make information sharing easier between health and care providers. This is especially helpful given the UK's aging population. There was also a report from NSFT on mortality reporting between November 2023 and January 2024 – this relates to the deaths of current patients and those within six months of discharge, with their system of recording having recently been overhauled. You may have read recent articles in the press about their failure to record such deaths correctly in the past. Finally, the committee reviewed an improvement plan produced by James Paget University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust following the CQC inspection of their maternity services in 2023. Maternity services were found to be inadequate during the inspection, and the report detailed the actions they were taking to address the areas where they needed to improve.

Strategy for Care Leavers

On Tuesday 23 April, Cabinet reviewed the Leaving Care Strategy which detailed the ways in which the council wants to improve the service it provides to young people leaving our care. The council acts as a 'corporate parent' to all children taken into care, and must always ask itself with every decision: 'would this be good enough for my child?'. Plans in the new strategy for young people leaving care include help with housing, employment, mentoring and

extension of the current council tax exemption scheme for care leavers who are living outside of Suffolk. The Leaving Care service offers support to all young people leaving care up to the age of 25, and care leavers regularly attend meetings at the council to provide feedback and ideas for improvement.

New Appointments in Children's Services

As well as the council's new £4.4m investment in additional staff to improve SEND services (detailed in last month's report), two new appointments have been made to leadership. Sarah-Jane Smedmor will be the new permanent Director for Children's Services, with a start date of 8 July. An Independent Chair for the new SEND Improvement Board has also been appointed, Kathryn Boulton, who will start in June and lead the SEND improvement the council needs to deliver following the poor Ofsted/CQC inspection in November 2023. The council submitted an action plan after the report was published which has been approved by Ofsted, CQC and the Department for Education.

New Government Funding for SEND Schools

The council will be receiving an additional £10.9million from the Department for Education to create new specialist places for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The Department for Education also announced it was funding a new SEND school in Suffolk sponsored by the Unity Schools Partnership, which will provide 126 new places in Suffolk for pupils aged between three and 16 with severe learning difficulties. Earlier this month, the Chancellor also announced a new Alternative Provision (AP) free school, the SENDAT New AP Suffolk Free School, in West Suffolk. The sites for both schools are yet to be confirmed.

More Suffolk Homes Eligible for Energy Improvements

More families will be able to secure free assistance to make their houses warmer and more energy efficient using the Warm Homes Suffolk scheme. Residents and landlords of eligible properties can apply for energy efficient measures such as insulation, solar panels or heat pumps, with average funding of £18,000 is available for homeowners, and £12,000 for landlords and their tenants. Warm Homes Suffolk has been funding home energy efficiency improvements for two years, with funding from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. To be eligible, the following conditions must be met:

- Homes must have an EPC rating of D, or below
- Homes are not heated by mains gas

And then either of the following conditions:

- Households have a combined pre-tax income of under £36,000 (this was previously £31,000)
- Homes are in a certain postcode (you can use this [pre-qualified postcode checker](#)), which includes parts of Beccles, Bungay, Bury St. Edmunds, Felixstowe, Great Cornard, Haverhill, Ipswich, Kessingland, Lowestoft, Mildenhall, Newmarket, Rushmere St Andrew, Saxmundham, Sudbury

New Resurfacing Investment Gets Underway

Residents across Suffolk are set to benefit from 421 newly surfaced roads this year which is almost double the number of roads completed last year. This is a result of the extra £10 million investment by the council into resurfacing roads, which was announced last May immediately after the local election result. 102 roads will be surface dressed, whilst a further 319 sites will benefit from a full machine resurfacing during the year. Surface dressing and machine resurfacing. These treatments prolong the life of a road surface, remove potholes and level it out. During the last six months, Suffolk Highways has repaired over 9,000 potholes and resurfaced 41 roads, with a further 278 roads planned for resurfacing in this financial year. Having said this, winter weather always sees an increase in potholes and there is still a lot to do.

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Facebook - [Suffolk GLI - Green, Liberal Democrat & Independent Group | Facebook](#)

Website - [Suffolk Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent Group – The GLI Group at Suffolk County Council \(suffolkgli.wordpress.com\)](https://suffolkgli.wordpress.com)

Cost of Living help and advice:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/family.page?familychannel=6>

Benefits advice and support:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/adult.page?adultchannel=0>

Flood preparation advice: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolk-fire-and-rescue-service/fire-and-rescue-safety-advice-in-the-community/preparing-for-flooding>

Flood recovery advice and support: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/flood-recovery-information-for-suffolk>

District Councillors’ Report, Stoke Ash & Thwaite – May 2024

Housing IT system	The Cabinet at Mid Suffolk approved a new job management system for the council’s housing. The current system is not fit for purpose and the new system will allow tenants to book appointments when they request a repair, get the work programmed, reduce the need to chase for updates and improve the overall service for tenants.
Supplementary Planning Documents	At May’s Council meeting, councillors will discuss several Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which will support the Joint Local Plan. Although these are not planning policies they provide detailed guidance for applicants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing (including open market mix, community-led housing, affordable housing and self-build) • Biodiversity & Trees (including permitted development, biodiversity net gain, veteran trees and expectations of developments) • Intensive Livestock and Poultry (especially the impact on habitats and the local population)
Skills and Innovation Centre at Gateway 14	The Council will also consider the final funding proposal, approved by Cabinet, for developing the Skills & Innovation Centre site on Gateway 14. This is an £18 million investment helping to promote green skills and innovation across the district working with local companies and educational facilities. If agreed, planning permission will be applied for to progress the work.
Recycling	The Government is introducing “Simpler Recycling” which will include a food waste collection from April 2026. The first stages in this project (food waste collection) were approved at Cabinet this week as plans are put in place to ensure we have resources and facilities to meet this timetable. Note that in Suffolk over 50% of waste thrown into the black bin is recyclable!
Progress Power	This month’s stakeholder meeting with the developer included an overview update and site visit to the plant. The host (Yaxley) and neighbouring parishes were represented by respective parish and town council members, I attended along with Cllr Lucy Elkin (for Eye ward) and a planning officer from MSDC. Cllr Jessica Fleming attended for the update presentation. Among other matters, planting/landscaping schemes, flood mitigation and extended hours of operation (build phase) were raised and responded to by the developer. In summary; the project is progressing to schedule information is available on its website, which includes contact details for an resident enquiries: www.drax.com/about-us/our-projects/progress-power/

Cllr Tim Weller

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New Administration

The result of the May 2023 elections was that the 24 elected Green Party councillors officially became the administration at Mid Suffolk. Councillor Andy Mellen, as Leader outlined our initial priorities to lead and work with other bodies to address the challenges faced by our communities: cost of living, affordable homes, local services, public transport and climate change. A Plan for the next few years was adopted which places environmental and social responsibilities at the heart of everything the Council does.

A cabinet of six members was formed and, in addition to representing the Palgrave ward as your district councillor, I was appointed to Cabinet with the portfolio of Environment, Culture and Wellbeing. In line with the administration's position on collaborative politics, roles on key committees were given to Council members from across the chamber irrespective of political affiliation.

Budget

For 2023/24 the General Fund budget was for approximately £15.5 million with an expected £2.3 million surplus which will go into reserves. Funds have also had to be provided from the Housing Revenue Account for the backlog of repairs that has built up.

For 2024/25, net expenditure on services is budgeted at £18.5 million with a 2% increase in council tax. Council home rents increased by 7.7% and sheltered housing service charges also increased. This has been done to ensure the Council can afford the repairs and maintenance that are needed. All these increases are due to inflation, costs of energy and other cost increases.

The Council has reserves of over £28 million at the end of the financial year plus an expected dividend from the Gateway 14 business park in Stowmarket. A variety of work plans against this reserve are prioritised to include new foot/cycle paths, land for biodiversity and green spaces, regeneration of Stowmarket town centre, improved sports provision in the district and enabling community-led housing.

Approval was also given to increasing council tax on empty homes in 2024/25 and implementing increased council tax on second homes in 2025/26.

Thriving Towns and Villages

A group of Councillors have been working on issues around sustainable transport. A new rural transport grants scheme with a pot of £600,000 was set up to help provide passenger transport options across the district.

Approval was gained for the financing of a Green Skills and Innovation Centre at Gateway 14. This will in part act as a centre of excellence for local businesses and a training site for adults needing new skills. Also on the site, The Range has taken possession of the largest premises and a deal with a major producer of sustainable building materials, Assan Panel, was also recently agreed.

In Stowmarket, the first part of the sports project was approved and work will commence this year for new pitches, an athletics track and other improvements at Chilton Fields and next to the high school.

In conjunction with Suffolk County Council, Mid Suffolk provided much support to residents and businesses affected by the floods of Storm Babet and Storm Ciaran.

Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils were jointly awarded *Council of the Year* for their collaboration and innovation in working with partners to improve services and focus on communities.

Environmental Sustainability

The Council launched the *Cosy Homes* scheme, a £2 million project to insulate homes for free. Separately, a grant of nearly £1 million was received for retrofitting council homes.

A new *Pride in your Place* grant was established to provide every parish with additional funds to improve the environment for their community.

The Council continues to encourage local groups to improve areas for wildlife and a call for sites from landowners was made so that more trees can be planted across the district. The annual Tree for Life

scheme was again a success and tree, hedging and wildflower packs for communities across the district were provided.

The Council published its Carbon Reduction Management Plan with a focus for this year on improving sheltered housing and further work on the leisure centres.

Planning and Housing

In November 2023, Part 1 of the Joint Local Plan (JLP) for Mid Suffolk and Babergh was approved and adopted. The JLP sets out a planning framework to guide development in the districts over the period to 2037. JLP Part 1 provides a set of strategic and local development management policies against which planning applications and appeals will be assessed. There are 10 strategic policies (such as on affordable housing, climate change and tourism) and 32 local policies (such as on biodiversity, historic environment and sustainable construction).

With regards to Part 2, the Inspector had acknowledged that 90% of Mid Suffolk's housing target is already allocated (either via existing permissions or sites allocated via Neighbourhood Plans) and that this is central to future policies. Work has been continuing on this with public consultation expected later in 2024.

Separately, to support this, the Council is working on Supplementary Planning Documents. The first three, currently at draft stage, are on Housing, Biodiversity and Intensive Livestock and Poultry.

The Council continues to oppose the Norwich to Tilbury pylon project raising significant concerns, particularly over the impact on the environment and the effect on local communities.

Mid Suffolk's annual monitoring report showed that 1,257 new dwellings were built in the district in 2022/23, of which 299 were affordable. This met 144% of the Government target. There are 6,916 outstanding planning permissions (as at 01/04/23) which are either not started or under construction. Mid Suffolk has 10.88 years of housing land supply, well above the Government target of five years.

Over £1.5 million was provided to parish and town councils in the form of the Community Infrastructure Levy during the year.

Supporting the community

We support local events and community groups where we can and particularly link local groups with external fundraising via the Mid Suffolk community team. Almost £550,000 was allocated by Mid Suffolk District Council Direct to communities across the district from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

I'd like to convey my thanks, via the Parish Meeting, for the hard work undertaken by many residents on a voluntary basis in making Stoke Ash & Thwaite a wonderful place to live, work and visit.

I'm always happy to hear from residents if there's anything either Mid Suffolk District Council or I can do to support you.

Tim Weller
District Councillor – Palgrave Ward
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