

STOKE ASH & THWAITE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held Thursday 20 July 2023, 7.30pm at the Village Hall, Stoke Ash

Present: Cllrs G Leggett (Vice Chair), R Kember, Mrs V Lane, Mrs C Maisey, R Maisey and G Tancred.
County Cllr A Stringer attending later.

1. **Apologies and Consent to Absence** – apologies were received and approved from the Chairman, Cllr Pulham. In the absence of the Chairman, Cllr Leggett chaired the meeting.
2. **To receive declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda** – none.
3. **PUBLIC FORUM:** to receive the following reports:
Police – report available online at <http://suffolk.police.uk>. No queries were raised.
County Councillor – deferred.
District Councillor – no report available. MSDC latest generic report circulated.
Parishioners and Public – none.
4. **To consider Health and Safety items for report**
Ride-on Mowers - Cllr Leggett stated a few parishioners used a ride-on mower to cut various grassed areas in Stoke Ash and he reported on a recent incident involving a ride-on mower and motor cycle in The Street, Stoke Ash. Unless registered to do so a ride-on lawn mower should not be used on a public highway. Cllr Leggett stated he would speak to the Church grass cutter informing him the ride-on should not be used on the road.
Bus Stop opposite Walnut Tree PH – Cllr R Maisey reported the area at the rear of the bus stop seat was overgrown and in need of maintenance.
Blocked drain next corner of Roman Way – Cllr Leggett stated he had reported the drain and had been informed it would be cleared within the next few weeks.
- 5 **To consider for approval Minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held 18 May 2023**
Cllr Tancred proposed acceptance of the Minutes, seconded Cllr Mrs Maisey – unanimously agreed.
6. **Matters arising from the Minutes for report only**

1.5.19	Stoke Ash PC vacancies	Currently 3 vacancies – advertised in parish magazine.
17.5.18	Storage of PC documents at Ipswich Record Office	TP liaising with Record Office.
17.5.18 18.5.23	Thwaite Comm Projects St George’s Hall	<i>See Agenda item</i> Projects Group to make further contact with Thwaite parishioners on future and/or sale of the Hall and/or joint Thwaite/Stoke Ash Village Hall – deferred pending decision re. OSR improvement
18.5.23	Improvements to Old School Room to be pursued via Church Architect, David Wymark.	GL
18.5.23	St George’s Hall woodwork and quinquennial inspection	Deferred. Cllr Pulham to look into work required with local contractor
18.5.23	Ditch clearance – Church Lane, Thwaite	To be carried out during summer 2023.
18.5.23	Hardstanding at OSR	RM to arrange pruning of Allotment field tree
18.5.23	Trees at St George’s and Allotment land	
18.5.23	Stoke Ash exercise equipment	To confirm ownership and maintenance taken over by Village Hall – confirmed. Item complete.
18.6.20	Review Emergency Plan	GL, TP, RK & GT. Group awaiting guidance notes from Suffolk CC Emergency Planning
29/9/22	Hill Farm, Huggins Lane – query to P Isbell requesting clarification of ‘controversial without guidelines’ as quoted by MSDC	Chase response from P Isbell

29/9/22	Allotments, Thwaite – preparation for letting	TP
17/11/22	Road flood at Wash Lane	Clear pipe – TP/GT
16/3/23	Pond adjoining play area – discuss fencing with adjoining landowner	GT progressing. Complete.
16/3/23	Wash Lane ownership – provide procedure and any possible costs	GT.
18/5/23	Motor Cycling rallies – speeding A140	CM to contact PCC T Passmore. Response received stated motor cycling groups were generally not motor cycling clubs but individual group without promoted routes. Rec. any future incidents, date and time should be recorded and forwarded to Suffolk Constabulary.
18/5/23	Preparation of Village Welcome Pack	VL - progressing
18/5/23	Neighbourhood Watch – inform Thorndon of SA&T changed rep	VL – complete.

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

8. Planning Decisions received from MSDC

1. DC/22/04071 – Appeal: Junedale, Chapel Lane, Stoke Ash - conversion and extension of outbuilding to form one dwelling. Appeal Allowed.
2. DC /21/06054 – Appeal: Hill Farm, Huggins Lane, Stoke Ash – change of use of agricultural barn to Dance Hall. Appeal Dismissed.
3. DC/23/01871: Land adjacent Brookside, The Street, Stoke Ash - Amendment to access and visibility relating to Conditions 4 and 5 - alteration to access to enable 59m visibility splay. Amendment Approved.
4. DC/23/00303: Rose Cottage, Church Lane, Thwaite – discharge of condition 12 (windows and doors). MSDC part approved conditions.

9. Planning correspondence - none

10. Neighbourhood Watch report – Cllr Kember was pleased to report no issues to record.

11. Thwaite Community Projects Group – items 1 – 5 deferred to next meeting

1. Ditch Clearance – Church Lane, Thwaite – to consider work and quotation/s
2. Hardstanding next Old School Room, Thwaite – report on work to date
3. St George’s Hall – report on further contact with parishioners regarding the future of the Hall
4. St George’s Hall inspection and woodwork report and improvements to Old School Room – deferred pending decision on future of the Hall
5. Report on Allotment Agreements and Rentals 2022-23
6. Report on work to tree on Allotment land

Cllr R Maisey reported a tree surgeon had inspected the tree and had advised removal of the tree. A verbal quote of £500 had been given. A second quotation would be obtained. It was unanimously agreed a sum of up to £1,000 could be spent on removal of the tree if it was deemed necessary to carry out the work before the next meeting.

12. Stoke Ash Exercise equipment - report on transfer of ownership and maintenance to the Village Hall

Cllr Tancred reported that at the last Village Hall meeting transfer of ownership from the Parish Council to the Village Hall had been discussed. The Village Hall Committee had agreed to take over ownership, maintenance and insurance of the equipment. Cllr Mrs Lane proposed transfer of ownership of the Exercise Equipment comprising Triple Twister and Ski Trainer & Twister to the Village Hall, seconded Cllr Kember and unanimously agreed. The items would be removed from the Parish Council Asset Register.

8pm – County Councillor A Stringer arrived

Item 3 – County Councillor report – Cllr Stringer presented his monthly report and a report on his attendance at the LGA conference held 4 – 6 July (copies attached to the minutes). This included the Government’s proposed changes to waste services and separation of waste including food waste which would need additional vehicles and changes to the current Viridor contract. An announcement on the changes would be made when available.

Questions raised included the introduction of 20mph default speed limits. Cllr Stringer stated it was

proposed this would apply to restricted roads but not all current 30 mph speed zones.

13. Wash Lane report

Cllr Tancred reported a representative from Suffolk Wildlife Trust had been to view the lane and was in the process of preparing a 7-year plan. In the meantime the lane continued to be maintained and Cllr Tancred was looking into replacing a piece of rotted fencing, this would not exceed £150.

14. To consider a Stoke Ash & Thwaite Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Stringer reported that MSDC was looking at making available a lighter weight neighbourhood plan. This would involve less preparation and would be based on an enhanced parish plan but would protect parishes from large scale development. The smaller plan could be carried out before deciding whether to embark on a full neighbourhood plan. It would still need to be vetted by MSDC, would need to define the area involved, a consultation would need to be held with parishioners as to where they would prefer development and the type of housing required. Cllr Stringer would provide details of the lighter version for consideration by parish council members.

15. Finance

1. To consider s.137 donation requests – none received.

2. Accounts for Payment

Date	Payee	Purchase/Service	Amount	Vat	Total	Agreed/Decld	Ch no.
20/7/23	Clerk	Sal-expen May-July 2023	£709.20	-	£709.20	Agreed	100582

Cllr Tancred proposed payment of the above, seconded Cllr Mrs Maisey – unanimously agreed.

3. To approve Cil return 2022-23

The Cil return for year-end 31.3.23 showing a balance of £2468.17 was proposed for approval by Cllr Tancred, seconded Cllr Mrs Maisey and unanimously agreed.

4. To consider annual Internal Audit report 2022-23

The annual report had been circulated to all parish councillors. No queries were raised as to the management of the Council’s finances. Cllr R Maisey proposed acceptance of the report, seconded Cllr Tancred and unanimously agreed. The Finance Committee would consider and report on any administrative items raised.

5. Finance report on balances and banking

The Council’s bank reconciliation at 30.6.23 stood at £11,523.57.

Cllr Mrs Maisey verified the reconciliation, seconded Cllr Kember and agreed.

Receipts 1.4.23 – 30.6.23:

11.4.23 - £6237.00 - MSDC first half parish precept

25.5.23 - £348.50 – Coronation Street party

5.6.23 - £24.77 – Bank interest March – June 2023

Thwaite Projects Group – the finance group reported the cheque totalling £3030.00 in payment for the new metal footbridge to St George’s Churchyard had not been met by the bank. It was understood this was due to the unusual level of payment from the account. The payment had finally been made via a bank transfer.

16. To consider the following Policy documents for adoption 2023-24

1. Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020
2. Multicultural & Inclusivity
3. Equality and Diversity
4. Standing Orders
5. Financial Regulations

The above policy documents had been circulated to members for perusal prior to the meeting. No queries or amendments were requested. Cllr R Maisey proposed adoption of items 1 – 5 above, seconded Cllr R Kember – unanimously agreed.

17. **Clerk’s report/correspondence** – none.

18. **Chair’s report** – none.

19. **Any other business for information exchange/agenda requests**

Cllr Kember recorded thanks to Cllr Stringer for his assistance with an incident in Church Lane, Thwaite. The plastic bollards were due to be replaced they being an important safety feature.

20. **Date of next meeting: Thursday 21 September 2023, 7.30pm at Stoke Ash Village Hall**

Meeting closed 9.10pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

Summary of action points

1.5.19	Stoke Ash PC vacancies	Currently 3 vacancies – advertised in parish magazine.
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 18.5.23 18.5.23 18.5.23 18.5.23	Thwaite Comm Projects St George's Hall Improvements to Old School Room to be pursued via Church Architect, David Wymark. St George's Hall woodwork and quinquennial inspection Ditch clearance – Church Lane, Thwaite Hardstanding at OSR Trees at St George's and Allotment land	<i>See Agenda item</i> Projects Group to make further contact with Thwaite parishioners on future and/or sale of the Hall and/or joint Thwaite/Stoke Ash Village Hall – deferred pending decision re. OSR improvement GL Deferred. Cllr Pulham to look into work required with local contractor To be carried out during summer 2023. RM to arrange removal of tree on Allotment field following receipt of a second quotation
18.6.20	Review Emergency Plan	GL, TP, RK & GT. Group awaiting guidance notes from Suffolk CC Emergency Planning
29/9/22	Hill Farm, Huggins Lane – query to P Isbell requesting clarification of 'controversial without guidelines' as quoted by MSDC	Chase response from P Isbell
29/9/22	Allotments, Thwaite – preparation for letting	TP
17/11/22	Road flood at Wash Lane	Clear pipe – TP/GT
16/3/23	Wash Lane ownership – procedure and possible costs	GT.
18/5/23	Motor Cycling rallies – speeding A140	CM to contact PCC T Passmore. Response received stated motor cycling groups were generally not motor cycling clubs but individual group without promoted routes. Rec. any future incidents, date and time should be recorded and forwarded to Suffolk Constabulary – complete
18/5/23	Preparation of Village Welcome Pack	VL – progressing
20/7/23	Inform church grasscutter not to use ride-on equipment on public highway	GL

Deploying new models of delivery to make effective change.

In 2022 Havant Borough Council exited a long-standing partnership with a neighbouring council, possibly heading for a full merger. This relationship came to a head and each side agreed the best way forward for both was to go their separate ways as councils.

Led by senior leaders of the council, Havant Borough Council used this opportunity to reframe its identity and redesign how they operate by establishing an innovative management structure using models such as Decision-Making Accountability tool set, and how streamlined the decision making process and create a more dynamic working environment in the face of significant change. They removed directors and put in place Executive Heads with more cabinet briefings and online staff briefings every two weeks, not fronted by the Chief Executive, using less cabinet papers and more autonomy.

Should growth be a statutory responsibility?

This session had a large audience, most it transpired were attracted by the “clickbait” title, and as the various speakers admitted, growth for purely growth’s sake is not a “nirvana” unless the rest of society rises economically and socially as a result. It was acknowledged that the “beauty parade” of bidding rounds, sometimes multiple rounds to get government funding, makes partnerships with the private sector a huge challenge and needs to be changed.

At the end of the session, the audience of officers and elected councillors voted on the proposal and a majority voted that Growth should not be a statutory responsibility.

Power Up: councils and the grid in powering net zero and growth

Decarbonising buildings and transport will only be achievable by electrifying heating and vehicles. This is systems change not seen since the roll-out of the gas grid network. It will require significant growth in home grown renewable energy generation, feeding into the grid and considerable reinforcement of the grid to meet demand. This session will explore how and when councils will be involved in the planning and deployment.

Tim German from Energy Systems Catapult, explained that to achieve many of these goals requires a Community Energy Strategy, to make sure the needs and requirements for decarbonization can be accommodated, and to double check the assertions of National Grid and UKPN in infrastructure needs.

Hampshire County Council – Delivering Better Value for SEND

Hampshire CC used Delivering Better Value (DBV) funding to improve their SEND services, with a focus on early intervention to keep down numbers of EHCPs, SENCO hotline for schools to access advice. Educational Psychologists undertake planning meetings with families where there is a “No to assess” decision, to build trust with parents. They offered additional training and support for schools to reduce the number of specialist schools needed.

SEND transport cost pressures were also discussed, with Hampshire suggesting local ‘pick up points’ for SEND schools transport rather than collecting from individual homes.

Slides for this session:



LGA Conf - DBV -
BCP Council and Ham

Wasted: The Future of Waste Services and moving to Zero Waste

Waste is a bell-weather for Net Zero – stuff that we make, sell, throw away and replace. West London analyse their waste composition regularly with carbon measurement to identify how to best lower emissions.

Also, reuse and repair initiatives: £4.39 of every £1 spend in social value. For repair of electronic items it is more like £6. These initiatives bring people together. Bicycle repair valuable for sustainable transport and lower emissions.

Yorkshire and Humber have been supporting circular economy initiatives, many of which wanted to be become more involved with local government. Food waste cafes, libraries of things for example. Councils need to work closely with the community to use procurement to support these business initiatives.

Food waste: there is still a high amount of food waste, and a lot of it edible, even from the most deprived areas. Need to support people and reduce the amount that is thrown away. Increase in composting – labelling needs to be clear and honest, otherwise it is just greenwashing (e.g. leaf symbol on paper cups – these cannot go in compost).

Also need work with people to encourage them to buy loose items rather than food in plastic packaging.

Avoid – Shift – Improve. Do We Need to Change the Way We Travel? Panel session

Look at who is travelling and why – do they have a choice of how they travel? Most trips by car are under 2km. Not all people are mobile, but most are. Need get tougher on unnecessary car journeys and give people more choice.

Need reliable public transport, and policies that reduce reliance on cars CAN be popular - need to listen to the majority rather than loud pro-car minority. Also, if you ask the community a question and they don't respond, that can be acquiescence... they clearly don't feel strongly enough about it to speak out.

There is the high cost of treating health effects of inactivity, and needs to be 25-30% less driving to hit carbon targets. Encouraging primary school children to walk to school can have a powerful impact, and does not cost much money. This can be difficult in rural areas where schools are not within walking distance.

Walking groups are great for health and loneliness. Walking improves local areas, local businesses benefit from foot traffic. Road pricing: the panel agreed some form of charging could work, if simple and straightforward like congestion charge.

Need to create good examples rather than "hating cars". Do people want their kids to be able to safely cycle around their neighbourhoods? For their children to have travel independence? People will welcome the reduced cost of only running one car rather than two, if their children can safely cycle. The psychological element is key - what will people get from it, and what are they losing out on now? What bugs people locally about roads/transport?

When people buy an EV, their travel goes up. Once people are charging with decarbonised electricity, they will wonder why they need to reduce their driving? Change in people's habits is key, and other options of transport for short trips. The benefits of small differences.

It can be powerful listening to children and their opinions on this.

Centre for Ageing Better – How to address poor quality homes through local support and innovation

UK has an ageing population, we need to think about homes and infrastructure to adapt to this. There aren't many accessible homes for people to move into when they downsize from larger homes.

People need to be able to ask for help with this transition without the only option being somebody trying to sell them something. Ideally this support will be provided at a local level so people can get independent advice and practical support, and linked in with disability grants.

Ageing Better worked in partnership with Lincolnshire CC to create a Good Home Hub. Consulted with community groups to get residents' input.

Healthy home assessments – training package for workforce. Used gov grants to fund case workers to support the most vulnerable to access the service.

Somerset Independence Plus – one of the most elderly demographics in the country, dementia rates rising and a big rural county. SIP is a partnership of commissioners and providers to prevent crisis and need for care services

Proactive and holistic approach to improve client journey and partnership working – including fire service, mental health. There is also a hoarding service – specialist team dealing with behaviour change.

Somerset CC topsliced the Disabled Facility Grant element of Better Care Fund money to develop and provide this service.

Ahead of the next general election, what are the key asks and messages from our new independent and green council leaders? Panel session

- Onshore wind – objection from just one person during the planning process means it can't go ahead, but majority of the public are in favour. Govt out of sync on this matter and need to relax the planning regulations.
- Solar panels on farmland mean food production is limited, but also heritage issues and fear of the countryside being industrialised. The Govt lacks a joined up plan and national policy on energy and food production.
- Affordable housing: it is likely that some of your social housing providers are selling housing stock in small villages incrementally (sometimes because they can't afford to retrofit them by 2025). Devon Housing Commission have been looking into this, chaired by Lord Best and backed by Exeter Uni.
- Low trust in politicians and public services incredibly stretched - new constituencies won't fix that. Devolution could help – give us the power and tools to change things.
- Levelling up – fairer distribution of funds needed
- Govt must listen to concerns about Infrastructure levy
- Housing targets – need clarity on these
- Resource and waste strategy needs to be clearer, with more freedom on how to deliver the targets

- Local govt finance is no longer fit for purpose. Census data is not properly used – could be a new job for Oflog? Huge pressures on children’s and adult services, will need to make massive savings to avoid financial crisis through use of reserves
- Looking after civil servants: Govt should leave it to South Cambridgeshire to trial their four day week, they can see if it works, and we can all learn from it

Birmingham City Council – using theatre to engage the community in council budget setting

Bordesley Bear play - management of expectations about council budgets. The budget looks like a lot of money, a lot already set aside by government/statutory services.

Play shown at 15 venues across Birmingham to show people how the money worked. Flatpacked set and props so easy to move and set up. Coffee shops, bars, youth centres – small places.

Also offered a free training course for community leaders and citizens – to build people power and effect change.

Also made a video version for training and information – for officers and members, but also citizens.

Growing an Inclusive Digital Economy

Importance of internet access was really thrown into the spotlight during the pandemic. Digital literacy is a massive and growing skills gap, but also digital exclusion - some people have the skills, but no access.

One project officer isn’t enough, also, don’t assume libraries can do it all. Need to be bold and ambitious.

Build on what is there – don’t reinvent the wheel. Digital inclusion hubs – any local organization can link in with this work.

Select Committee called for a new digital inclusion strategy: Govt departments need to work together to embed this.

Data poverty and Digital Right of Way – rights of access for all. GP surgeries could have iPads so people have access to services, for example.

ISPs should lead consumers towards social tariffs, also put some Broadband money to help fund the National Data Bank.

Greater Manchester Combined Authority have found that disabled people, over 75s, under 25s and those from disadvantaged backgrounds are most likely to be digitally excluded.

Need to build digital skills in education and business, with three core areas of support: understanding need (where and what is required), innovation of supply, digital training and support, and developing digital services (how to get the right services to the right people at the right time.)

Key projects (all in partnership and collaboration with businesses, charities, housing associations):

- Housing associations match up with ISPs to get ISPs to take responsibility for digital inclusion with social tariffs
- Care leavers project – this group is likely to be digitally excluded
- Local recycling device schemes

Manchester approach is all about collaboration. They recommend LAs use digital inclusion as part of procurement process and requirements for suppliers/providers to really embed this.

Parking payment via apps was flagged up as this is a real challenge for people. This is a public service, but councils are outsourcing it to private companies who have little regard for digital inclusivity.

Improving the SEND System for Children, Young People and Families – LGA and Council for Disabled Children

Some areas seeing this still as a medical issue – a problem with the child - rather than focusing on the child and how to support them in the world.

Common challenges:

- increase in EHCP demand
- not understanding the child’s needs
- lack of focus on earliest identification of need and support
- parents’ lack of understanding and trust in system and process
- workforce vacancies and problems with officer capacity
- Historical system is not helpful or practical, or financially sustainable.

New improvement plan:

- Be able to access best school for their needs – keep children local
- Good and consistent outcomes
- Early identification and intervention – meeting needs earlier

- Once children enter the education system, escalating into special schools when they could/should be educated locally instead
- 96% of tribunals rule against LAs, who often don't have correct paperwork, nor are confident/able to identify a 'good enough' placement locally
- Accountability – how do we know we are getting value for money, and what does good look like?
- Is it possible for an LA to throw off the poor system and start something new? Better integration – excellence in leadership – this is how to improve.

Schools aren't good unless they are good for SEND pupils. Challenging schools who say they can't accommodate straight off the bat. Need a good schools system, not a good SEND system.

Efficiency savings in ICBs are a problem: they are cutting children's teams as they can't cut things like cancer care. Early diagnosis and support would improve outcomes for the child and reduce system pressures later on.

Schools asking for support with increased demand and challenge due to significant rise in students with complex needs/diagnoses. Trauma and mental health support in schools – need to understand the cohorts, rather than classing them all as 'children with problems'

Far fewer children excluded in Scotland – need to look at what they are doing differently.

Goal is to support schools so they don't feel isolated and are able to cope with children with SEND and complex needs.

Climate Change Panel 2023

Centre for Alternative Technologies (CAT): environmental education charity. Have written a Zero Carbon Britain report, using only current technology. Carbon Literacy training – also Developing Carbon Awareness programme, which just covers just the main themes.

CAT helped London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea – 35 staff given bespoke training, put the LA's Green plan into the training. Not just one Climate Change officer – need to embed change across organizations.

Local Partnerships: have Greenhouse Gas Accounting Tool – councils can use to calculate emissions:

<https://localpartnerships.org.uk/resources/greenhouse-gas-accounting-tool/#:~:text=More%20about%20Greenhouse%20Gas%20Accounting%20Tool&text=The%20tool%20has%20been%20reviewed,councils%20in%20England%20and%20Wales.>

Cambridge CC Climate Change officer:

- streamline carbon footprint data collection process for officers
- explore data from suppliers – may not be accurate, or will refuse as this reporting not specified in the contract. Ask for data in formats readily available

Cambridge CC developed a Waste GHG Calculator based on waste processes – to calculate emissions, highlight emissions hotspots. Need to keep it simple. Can be robust sometimes with suppliers, but must recognise differing capacities of the supply chain.

Emily.bolton@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

City of Westminster: developed Fairer Westminster, an environmental justice measure. Those who have done the least to impact the environment suffer the most – in the UK, not just globally. 82% of the UK's carbon measure is under councils' remit.

They took 10 environmental indicators combined with social, economic, education and health outcomes and mapped them at LSOA level. Proximity to bus stops, tree canopy, air quality sensors, flood risk, heat risk, combined with areas of deprivation.

They use it to inform what they need to do in each area - where to plant trees, where to retrofit. Good for engaging transparently with residents, showing why you are doing certain things in some areas rather than others.

They published all their methodology online and it is available for anyone, please use it:

<https://www.westminster.gov.uk/about-council/data/environmental-justice-measure>

The future of evidence-based prevention in adult care – Norfolk County Council

Norfolk CC are using a digital platform which uses AI to access free text boxes in assessments etc to predict who is most likely to need support. Targeted and personalised.

Piloted for falls, which put pressure on health and care system. They gave the system information on residents and who had fallen in the past, then took away data on who had previously fallen and asked the system who was likely to fall, and it was 70% correct (which is considered high accuracy). It then connects residents to local preventative services.

49% of people presenting at Norfolk social care front door show the potential to have their need prevented, reduced or delayed and 39% of the preventable cases could have been helped to be more independent through the use of community resources.

Process: they identify cohort, contact them by letter, follow up with phone call to see what interventions might help – chair-based exercises, Age UK befriending, fire service home safety visit, money and debt advice, housing and handyman services. They are still not far enough into the process to measure the impact of the interventions.

The more people in the system, the more data, and more accurate it will be. They are also looking into how can they scale up – to assist with loneliness, hoarding etc.

Issues:

- Information gov and data sharing issues – resolve issues early on to protect council. A lot of people consulted thought their information was being shared already.
- Ethical considerations – work in co-production with service users, and take expert advice!
- **Celebrating the work of LGA Peers.**

LGA peers provide critical support for councils across the country. Their excellent insight and experience ensure that the LGA can deliver a range of support to councils to enable transformation, challenge management and drive change.

The work of peers is crucial to improvement and learning, Remind members that they can ask for peer support for their council, or most importantly, ask to become a peer to support others.

Getting to grips with local plans

Councillors from different stages of their local plan journey, discussed what has worked what has been a challenge. Many Local plans - despite being evidenced at every stage - have had Government Inspectors pause or significantly delay their progress. Many plans have had sustainability conditions that go above building regulations stripped out or found unsound due environmental sustainability conditions going above and beyond current building regulations, to help address declared climate emergencies etc.

The result is despite many councils spending time and resources to provide a sound plan, Government seems determined to delay the roll out of increasing environmental performance of developments.

15 Minute Neighbourhoods

Despite the huge online controversy that surrounds 15 Minute Neighbourhood issue, the London borough of Waltham Forest is leading the way in creating 15 minute neighbourhoods, to achieve inclusive fair, accessible, vibrant, and healthy places. With its partners the Council are pioneering a new way to tackle key challenges of climate, health, inequalities, cost of living, and community resilience.

Waltham Forest found the key to avoiding the issues that have faced other similar projects, has been to allow the process to be totally locally lead, by a series of consultations making sure that all along the journey, communities are driving the pace and direction of change. It is this approach that has avoided the setbacks that many other schemes have found.

County Councillor A Stringer Report – July 2023

Remembering Caroline Page

A silence was held at the beginning of the Council meeting on Thursday 13 July to honour Councillor Caroline Page, a much-respected member of our group and a passionate campaigner for her division of Woodbridge since she was first elected in 2008. Our thoughts are with Caroline's husband and family.

Annual Safeguarding Reports

At Cabinet on 11 July, annual reports were tabled on safeguarding adults and children in the county, with numbers of referrals and trends explained by SCC officers. Some of the issues raised included mental health of children and young people, and for adults, self neglect and hoarding. If you have concerns about the safety of a child, young person or adult, you can make a safeguarding referral by contacting Suffolk County Council's Customer First on 0808 800 4005 or by emailing customer.first@suffolk.gov.uk

Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report and Children in Care Council

On 13 June, Cabinet reviewed the annual report of the Corporate Parenting Board. Suffolk County Council acts as the corporate parent for all children who are taken into care and is responsible for finding them a place to stay and their

health and wellbeing. The annual report assesses how well the council is doing in this role. The Cabinet also received a report from the Children in Care council (C2C and Brighter Futures) who outlined the work they had been undertaking during the year, including interviewing applicants for CYP social care roles, campaigning for 'Care Experienced' to be a Protected Characteristic, and the Watch Your Words campaign to change some of the language used by practitioners around care experienced young people.

Suffolk Libraries

Suffolk County Council's contract with Suffolk's Libraries Industrial and Provident Society Limited ends on 31 July 2024, and a number of options were put forward at Cabinet on 13 June about how the libraries service in Suffolk should be run after this date. After some discussions, it was agreed that there should be a 10 month extension to the current contract to allow for extensive consultation with people of Suffolk and a competitive tender process to be carried out, which is essential for a contract of this size, the new contract will include £200,000.00 for the operator to run the vehicles for the mobile library service.

The public consultation period will be for 14 weeks from October 2023 to January 2024 and we would encourage everyone to have their say on what they think libraries and libraries outreach should look like in the county.

Dental Services in the County

Health Scrutiny Committee met on 12 July to look at dental services in the county, amid news reports that 9 in 10 dental practices in the UK were not accepting new NHS patients. In Suffolk, some people have reported having to extract their own teeth, and the most disadvantaged groups in the county are the worst affected.

NHS Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) in the county have been working with providers to improve services, aiming to ensure that 10% of dental work undertaken is urgent dental work. There are also plans to develop a brand new Centre for Dental Development at the University of Suffolk in Ipswich which will train new dentists and dental nurses to improve numbers of practitioners.

Motion denied on safer speeds on Suffolk roads

At Council on Thursday 13 July, our group proposed a motion to make it easier for communities to lower speed limits on rural roads where the safe speed is clearly lower than the current National Speed Limit. The motion suggested that on these roads, a lower speed limit than 60mph would encourage many drivers to slow to a more appropriate, safer speed, thereby reducing accidents and making roads safer for all users. This motion was voted down by the SCC administration.

Motion passed on upholding minimum parking standards

The Council meeting on 13 July also discussed a motion proposed by the SCC administration to uphold minimum parking standards in new developments in the county. This motion was passed by the council, although our group observed that it was difficult for Highways planning officers to object to development plans unless the impact of the plans could be proved to be severe. It was agreed that the council had a real opportunity to shape plans for local communities by making sure residents' concerns were taken into account when in consultation with developers.