

Belstead Parish Council

Approved Minutes of the Remote Council Meeting held on Wednesday 11 November 2020 at 7.30pm via Zoom

Present: Cllr Richard Clift (Chair), Cllr Trevor Beckett (Vice-Chair), Cllr Christine Eade, Cllr Chris Markham (arrived 7.35pm) and Cllr Ken Stowe

Attendance: Cllr Jane Gould (District Councillor), Cllr Christopher Hudson (County Councillor), Simon Ashton (Parish Clerk & RFO) and two Members of the Public

1. Apologies and Approval of Absences

There were no apologies and absences for approval as all Members were present.

2. Declarations of Interests by Members & Requests for Dispensation

There were no interests declared or requests received by any of the Members.

3. Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting on 9 September 2020

Minutes of the previous meeting of the Parish Council on 9 September 2020 were received and approved as a true record. It was agreed that arrangements would be made for the minutes to be signed by the Chair once the restriction on physical meetings was removed.

4. Reports by the District Councillor and County Councillor

Copies of the district council report received from Cllr Gould and the county council report received from Cllr Hudson had been shared with Members in advance of the meeting. Copies of these reports have been made available at the end of these minutes for information.

5. Contributions by Members of the Public

A member of the public expressed an interest in the Council's consideration of the proposed development (see 6a) and speeding within the village (see 10b).

6. Consideration of Planning Application Consultee Comments

(a) BDC DC/20/04278: Application Received (Comments Due 12 November 2020)

Holly House, Holly Lane, Belstead, IP8 3LZ

Members agreed that they did not object to this planning application.

7. Finance

(a) Members noted the Barclays Bank account balances of £18,499.98 and 6,357.98 as at 29 September 2020.

(b) The receipts and budget and payments and budget reports to 29 September 2020 were reviewed and the Council's latest budgetary position was noted by Members.

- (c) The bank reconciliation of activity to 29 September 2020 was reviewed and approved by Members.
- (d) Members considered David Cobbold's request to re-introduce a bi-monthly newsletter for distribution to residents of the village. Members showed their appreciation and approved an annual payment of £165.00 towards the costs of the printing on the basis of the presentation of invoices addressed to the Council.
- (e) Following discussion, Members agreed not to approve the donation requests received from Headway and Sudbury & District Citizens Advice Bureau.
- (f) Following discussion, Members approved the appointment of SALC as the Council's Internal Auditor for 2020/21.
- (g) A draft budget was presented to Members by the Parish Clerk which was reviewed and discussed. Members then agreed to finalise the budget and reserves and the setting of a precept for 2021/22 at the next meeting.
- (h) Payments were authorised in favour of the Parish Clerk's wages and office and personal expenses (£534.10), Suffolk Association of Local Councils for a payroll service (April to September 2020) (£54.00), G Faulds & Sons for village hedge cutting (2020) (£240.00) and Swarco Traffic Ltd for an annual SID maintenance contract (to 12 November 2021) (£334.97). These payments were approved by Members.

8. Governance

- (a) Members were advised that no further progress had been made in connection with matters relating to the Mill Farm Place Open Space. Cllr Gould agreed to pursue the matter on the Council's behalf. Cllr Eade therefore agreed to provide her with a copy of the Council's recent chain of correspondence with the BDC Public Realm Officer.
- (b) Members were advised that no further progress had been made in connection with matters relating to the Public Nature Reserve. Cllr Gould agreed to pursue the matter on the Council's behalf. Cllr Eade therefore agreed to provide her with a copy of the Council's recent chain of correspondence with the BDC Public Realm Officer.
- (c) Members agreed to the Parish Clerk's request to consider the Council's implementation of the GDPR matters raised in the internal audit report (2019/20) at the next meeting.

9. Consultations

- (a) Following discussion, Members agreed not to submit a response to the Bentley Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan consultation by the due date of 16 November 2020.
- (b) Following discussion, Members agreed not to submit a response to the LGBC Suffolk Divisions consultation by the due date of 23 November 2020.

10. Highways

- (a) Cllr Hudson agreed to provide support in connection with the funding of a replacement of the old A12 HGV sign. SCC Highways had agreed to provide him with an estimate.
- (b) Cllr Hudson agreed to provide support in connection with an extension to the 30-mph speed limit on Grove Hill. An enquiry had already been logged with SCC Highways and passed to the Highway Engineer from whom a response was still awaited.
- (c) Following the Council's recent hedge cutting exercise, the Parish Clerk shared feedback received from a resident who had objected to its funding as such maintenance was the responsibility of the appropriate land or householder. The comments were noted.

11. Matters for Future Consideration

There were no matters raised for future consideration.

12. Date of the Next Meeting

(a) 13 January 2021 (Urgent Agenda Items & Documents Received by 5 January 2021)

(b) 10 March 2021

(c) The meeting finished at 8.50pm.

Simon Ashton, Parish Clerk

belstead.pc@btinternet.com

13 January 2021

News and information from Jane Gould, Babergh District Councillor.

To the Parish Councils and residents in Orwell Ward

November 2020

Cross-party task force puts biodiversity at the heart of Babergh

Councillors are set to consider a raft of environmental measures developed by a cross-party task force tackling climate change and furthering the councils' ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' cabinets are due to meet this month (9 November) to consider the proposals. They have been developed following the extensive work of a Biodiversity Task Force, made up of councillors from all political parties; a subgroup of the councils' Climate Change Task Force, with advice from experts. If agreed, the proposals will form the councils' first Biodiversity Action Plan, setting out how they aim to protect and strengthen biodiversity in the districts. The action plan will link with the councils' Carbon Reduction Management Plan, and will play a crucial role in fulfilling their ambitions of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

Headline proposals, which follow the climate emergency motions passed by both councils in 2019, include:

- Developing a wildlife network map. This would be to identify and create wildlife corridors, as well as tree and hedge planting areas to enhance connectivity, and improve management of local wildlife sites in the districts
- Working with town and parish councils and local communities to identify areas where trees and hedges can be planted
- Increasing hedge planting through the DEFRA hedge planting grant scheme, and helping to fund planting which isn't eligible where possible
- Planting wildflower meadows to replace strict grass cutting regimes where suitable, to encourage bees and insects

- Developing a supplementary planning document linked to the Joint Local Plan, to strengthen protections for biodiversity, and set out the districts' expectations in terms of design, landscaping and open space for new developments
- Exploring the possibility of a green burial site

Residents are also being encouraged to [take action](#), however small, to increase biodiversity in their communities. This includes things such as installing bird and bat boxes, planting flowers to attract bees, creating hedgehog corridors, and being biodiversity-conscious when gardening. The councils' Tree for Life scheme also continues to offer local parents a tree to celebrate the arrival of a child, or remember babies sadly lost. The scheme will play an important role in the wider-districts' biodiversity, using native, locally grown and sourced trees.

Suffolk hedge species village survey

This was done in 1998 to 2012 by two thirds of the villages in Babergh and many more across Suffolk. All the records are still on paper and have yet to be digitalised. But many parishes may still have the records for their own village, and these are worth digging up in order to provide informed responses to planning applications which may threaten certain hedges or in helping to draw up a Neighbourhood Plan. A summary of the survey is available to download in pdf form here <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/environment/east-suffolk-greenprint-forum/suffolk-hedgerow-survey/>

Public Realm

Will Burchnall has now joined Babergh DC as the Public Realm Corporate Manager. Will joins us from The National Trust, and before that the Broads Authority.

Quiet Lanes

The cabinet has given Highways £235,000 from last year's budget surplus to promote Quiet Lanes where parish councils request them. I understand that these are generally

for roads where the national speed limit applies but there is low traffic and demand for use by pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders. The aim is not to calm traffic but to make drivers more aware and encourage more foot and cycle traffic.

Babergh to say no to proposed new housing quota formula

Government have proposed changes to the quota of new houses that councils have to build, the suggestion is to tweak the formula to bolster the number of houses. In Babergh the number would rise from the current requirement of 300 to 789. The response, which was a unanimous “no”, has been approved by full council.

Babergh’s latest 5 year housing land supply healthy

A report into the current 5-year Housing Land supply in Babergh has demonstrated that the council currently has enough approved developments for 6.75 years. The council is required to have 2184 properties, but actually has 2943 – 35% more. This means that more weight can be attached to the council’s existing local plan when considering applications.

Joint Local Plan

The revised Joint Local Plan is due to come back before Council next month before it goes out for Technical Consultation. The objective is to have the technical consultation completed by the start of the New Year so that the Plan can be submitted to the inspector for examination before March. Work will also begin on Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) to complement and strengthen the policies within the JLP. These will include Environment and Biodiversity SPDs.

White paper on “Planning for the Future”

This proposal is separate from the white paper on a new planning system that has received more publicity. The Government is proposing effectively to introduce zoning

with planning consent assumed in at least one of the three zones. There was a wide range of views in councillor session held for Babergh and Mid Suffolk members with many of our responses along the lines of “Yes, so long as....” The whole paper appears to lack detail and to be encouraging too much centralisation.

Planning

Cllr Jamieson, who is one of my Green Party colleagues on the council and the Green Party member who is on the planning committee, has put together some notes on planning which I thought some of you might find helpful. There is sometimes a mistaken notion that individual councillors can “stop” planning applications and I hope that councillor Jamieson’s notes explain why this is not possible.

Types of Planning

Outline planning

This is an application for planning permission which does not include full details of the proposal, usually only sufficient detail to identify the principles of the proposal; details not submitted at this stage are called ‘reserved matters’. Details of the Reserved Matters are then submitted to the local planning authority at a later stage.

Reserved Matters

If an outline application receives planning permission, it may specifically reserve for later consideration some matters not relating to the principles of the proposed development. Matters reserved at outline stage can include access, appearance, layout, scale, and landscaping. While it is possible to reject a reserved matters application the rejection can only relate to the matters reserved and it will not affect the planning permission previously agreed in outline. More often than not if there is an issue with a reserved matters application it will be deferred so the applicant can resolve the issues before coming back at a later date.

Full planning application

A full application will include all matters and will generally come with detailed drawings.

Five Year Housing Land supply.

If the council do not have a five year housing land supply then The 'tilted balance' principle comes into effect which states that a presumption in favour of planning permission being granted should be the case, unless there are “adverse impacts which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh its benefits.” When we do have a five-year housing land supply, as is the case now, then the tilted balance does not come into effect and we do not have to have a presumption in favour. Rejecting an application becomes easier. This became evident when we achieved the five-year supply last year. We went from approving almost every application to rejecting the majority.

Committee

Generally applications will only come before committee if they are for 15 dwellings or more, or if they have been called in.

Decisions

There are normally four scenarios that happen at committee

1) *Planning officer recommends acceptance – Committee agree and vote for approval*

No further action required – Application approved.

2) *Planning officer recommends refusal – Committee agree and vote to refuse.*

No further action – Application refused

3) *Planning officer recommends refusal – Committee disagree and vote to accept.*

Proposer will need to stipulate on what grounds they think application should be approved e.g. benefit to the community outweighs the grounds for refusal in

officer's recommendation. The reasons will need to stand up to a potential legal challenge.

4) *Planning officer recommends acceptance – Committee disagree and vote to refuse.*

The member who proposed refusal will again need to provide justifiable and legal reasons for refusal. These will need to be in line with policies taken from the Core Strategy, saved policies from the Babergh Local Plan and policies from any adopted Neighbourhood plans.

The more of these policies that can be incorporated to back up the decision the better as the developer is likely to appeal to the inspectorate.

Grounds for decisions

All applications have to be assessed on planning grounds only and committee members should not take any personal reasons, or predetermined decisions, into the meeting. If we are seen to, it could be grounds for appeal.

Each application is then decided against the policies set out in our existing local plan (The Core Strategy), saved policies from the Babergh local plan, any approved neighbourhood plan policies and the stipulations set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) . Each policy will carry varying levels of weight depending on the circumstances of the application.

The submissions from the statutory consultees are also important in the decision. For example if Highways say that they have no objections to an application then it becomes very difficult to reject it on grounds of traffic. If we do it would very likely be overturned on appeal.

This can make it very frustrating in terms of environment sustainability. If the applicant has met the requirements set out in the building regs and has satisfied the planning officer that they are doing what's required of the NPPF then it becomes difficult to

refuse on environmental grounds, even if the developer is clearly not doing enough in real terms. Again a refusal would lead to a strong appeal. Similarly, if the application shows a net gain, then they would be deemed to have met the requirements of the NPPF. This is not difficult if they are building in a farmer's field.

If the officer recommends refusal, they will set out the grounds for refusal and will detail which policies are not being met. However, as stated above, if the committee go against the officer and decide to refuse then they have to state why. This generally falls to the proposer and the members who voted in favour of refusal with the help of legal and the chief planning officer. The decision must be based on legally defensible grounds based on policy.

Politics

The current committee is made up of 5 Tories, 3 independents, 1 Labour, 1 Lib Dem and 1 Green.

2020 Innovation Awards

28 businesses from across Babergh and Mid Suffolk have been shortlisted in the first ever business Innovation Awards. The awards recognise and celebrate organisations who are thinking outside the box and finding new ways to either reach new customers, become more sustainable or grow their business.

Parking

Motorists parking in Babergh and Mid Suffolk can now scrap their paper ticket and go digital to help protect their health and the environment; this is thanks to the introduction of MiPermit. With around a million visits made to the council-owned car parks each year, opting for MiPermit could save millions of pieces of paper going in the bin annually. The cash option will remain but MiPermit offers a digital and paperless alternative. Virtual tickets are available online, via the MiPermit app, by phone, and by text both in advance and on the day – allowing visitors to choose an option to suit

them. Further electric vehicle charging points across the districts, and upgrading car park machines to include a card payment option, continue to be explored.

Self-isolation support payments for low income earners in Babergh

Residents on low incomes and unable to work because they have been asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace can now claim a £500 payment from the Local Authority to compensate for loss of earnings.

Good News

A recent survey has ranked Babergh as having the greatest life satisfaction in the county; this reflects the district's residents, businesses, heritage and natural beauty. The survey, carried out by the Office for National Statistics, rates life satisfaction with a score of 0 showing participants are "not at all satisfied" and 10 being "completely satisfied"; Babergh residents gave an average score of 8.24, well above the national average of 7.66 and placing Babergh in first place.

Please contact me if you have any issues that you think I can help with and all the very best to you all.

Jane Gould

Babergh District Councillor, Orwell ward

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October 2020 Monthly Parish Newsletter

Visit suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus for health advice, service changes, business support and schools' guidance.

Keep up to date on the latest guidance on Covid-19 from central government here: www.gov.uk/coronavirus

A message from Councillor Matthew Hicks, Leader of Suffolk County Council, on free school meals

While Suffolk County Council is not providing the Government-funded vouchers to schools for Free School Meals over this half term week, we are supporting families and children in need as we don't want any child to go hungry.

In August, DEFRA awarded Suffolk County Council £770,000 as our share of the hardship grant. Suffolk Public Sector Leaders provided further match funding of £800,000 in September. So far, the Suffolk system has spent £600,000 and this covers:

- The Local Welfare Assistance Scheme that funds supermarket, food and fuel vouchers; school uniforms; essential furniture items; white goods; and oil heating refills.
- The Suffolk Advice and Support Service phonenumber.
- A donation of £100,000 to the Suffolk Community Foundation to provide grants to organisations to help communities with immediate hardship.

Some of the help provided to date by the hardship fund includes:

- Supporting families with food and fuel vouchers, paying utility bills, and buying school uniforms.
- Buying a bike for a man to get to his new job, after losing his old job due to Covid-19 and having to sell his car to cover expenses.
- Buying special boots for a child with disabilities, which the family could no longer afford.
- Covering rent arrears for people.

On top of this, Suffolk County Council has also committed £250,000 to Suffolk Foodbanks and awarded a further £60,000 to the Suffolk Community Foundation's emergency hardship fund.

Schools receive government funding to provide free school meals. For maintained schools, this funding comes through Suffolk County Council and is forwarded to our community and voluntary controlled schools annually. In Suffolk, there are now about 19,000 children receiving Free School Meals.

In the early summer, we widened the support given in Suffolk by providing vouchers to families once they apply for Universal Credit and giving vouchers to children entitled to Free School Meals but who are not in school. As you will be aware, the Government funded an extension of the provision of meals for children throughout the school holidays. At SCC we provided extra funding to ensure that children who qualified for FSMs after the Government's deadline still got the vouchers throughout the summer holidays.

Families who need help to feed their children or with any other financial concern can access support in many other ways in Suffolk. In the early days of the pandemic, one of our main challenges was helping

those who were isolated and struggling for support. This was addressed through the Home But Not Alone phonenumber, which is ready to stand up again if needed. We recognise that the challenges that many families face now are financial – and many of these families will be facing hardship for the first time in their lives. The Suffolk Support and Advice Line has been set up to help address these issues. It can help with debt advice, budgeting, mortgage, rent or credit card problems and employment queries. The number is **0800 068 3131** and is manned Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. People can also go to: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/suffolk-advice-and-support-service/>

We appreciate that the needs of people across our county will change as we go into winter. We will work with our partners to ensure that we can adapt and flex to address these needs and offer the right support at the right time.

Council announces £228,000 for tree-planting, protecting hedgerows and verges across Suffolk

Suffolk's natural environment will receive investment for tree-planting, restoring hedgerows, and improving roadside verges for wildlife.

£228,000 from the Suffolk 2020 Fund will enable Suffolk County Council to enhance its work to protect and encourage biodiversity in the county. The authority will do this through a number of new schemes, as well as building on existing work.

Working with The Woodland Trust, Suffolk Tree Wardens, landowners, and county farm tenants, the funding will support the planting of around 100,000 trees, including replanting hedgerows in suitable locations across Suffolk over the next 18 months. It will also help establish around 10 community tree nurseries, which will support more planting in years to come. Local volunteers will be supported to collect seeds, set up nursery beds and grow trees in their communities.

The funding will also be used to trial better ways to manage roadside verges for wildlife. This includes exploring the use of new technology and cutting techniques, as well as developing new partnerships with parishes and landowners. The funding will help expand the existing Roadside Nature Reserve network managed by the council with the help of volunteers, seeing a 25% increase in the overall length of verges managed for wildlife.

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

“This funding will boost the council's existing work to protect Suffolk's environment and wildlife. Increased tree planting will allow us to offset carbon emissions, though we are continuing to work to eliminate the council's emissions where possible, as part of our commitment to our climate emergency declaration.

“But this is much more than just planting trees and walking away. We are setting up the support needed to allow trees, hedgerows and verges to thrive for years to come, including in urban areas. We are committed to a 'right tree, right place' policy and to working with others. This will be achieved through a new Suffolk Tree Partnership, involving many others across Suffolk, to support local communities and landowners to help manage and increase tree cover.

“We will also work with others to develop a 'healing wood' initiative as a way of recognising the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on our communities.

“With Suffolk's healing woods we will all have access to natural spaces, where we can reflect on our own experiences of the pandemic or take a quiet moment to grieve for loved ones.”

People in Suffolk can have their say on plans for a ‘healing’ woodland space in memory of those who died from Covid-19. A survey has now been launched online for people to share their thoughts and preferences on what they would like to see.

Among the questions people can answer are whether they believe there should be multiple woods spread across the county, and whether it should be on existing public ground. The potential locations are to be identified in the new year.

Councillor Richard Rout said:

“We’ve already had a really positive and personal response to this project, and whatever your background or beliefs, nature offers a place for all to reflect and remember.

“It’s really important to me, to hear from as many people as possible about how and where a healing wood will have the most positive impact for them.”

The survey will run online until 25 November. The council will then collate and publish the results with a plan for the next steps.

[Visit the website here to take part in the survey.](#)

New cycle parking installed thanks to Government’s Emergency Active Travel Fund

New cycle parking has been installed in two Suffolk towns thanks to the Government’s Emergency Active Travel Fund to help make cycling safer and easier.

One of the positives to come out of the COVID-19 crisis is the noticeable increase in people cycling. Whether that is for commuting to work to avoid overcrowding the transport network, for leisure, or as part of daily exercise.

This has resulted in reduced congestion and improved air quality, as well as supporting people’s health and wellbeing.

Suffolk County Council has used some of their grant from the fund to install cycle parking bays in Stowmarket and Sudbury.

In Stowmarket the parking bays have been installed outside the John Peel Centre, at the Stricklands Road junction with Ipswich Road and on Wilkes Way.

In Sudbury the parking bays have been installed on North Street near the Masonic Hall, King Street near to Rees Café and by the Belle Vue artwork.

The locations of the cycle parking were selected in partnership with Sudbury Town Council and Stowmarket Town Council.

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

“Many residents in Suffolk have embraced cycling during the pandemic, so we have a real opportunity here to make cycling safer and easier not just for this unprecedented period, but for the future as well to reap the associated health and pollution benefits

“To get more people cycling long term we need to ensure there are enough places for them to safely store their bikes, so I am really pleased it is now easier to access Stowmarket and Sudbury town centres on two wheels.

In line with the Department for Transport guidelines, the county council is delivering a raft of measures across the county to encourage active travel. This includes alterations to road layouts and providing temporary footpaths and cycle lanes, as well as offering free family cycling sessions and bike maintenance vouchers.

To keep up to date with how Suffolk County Council is making it safer and easier for residents to choose active travel – walking and cycling – visit suffolk.gov.uk/walkingandcycling

Council leader hails action on the environment, roads and housing, despite COVID-19 challenges

COVID-19 has not stopped Suffolk County Council from protecting Suffolk's natural environment the council's leader said on 22 October.

In his third executive statement to the council, Councillor Matthew Hicks thanked the authority's staff and councillors who have taken to kitchen tables, spare rooms and bedside tables to keep council services running and protect Suffolk's most vulnerable adults and children throughout the pandemic.

Speaking at the meeting, Councillor Hicks said:

"I want to pay special thanks to our outstanding staff, who time and time again have gone above and beyond expectations to support those who have been affected by the pandemic, and to ensure people across Suffolk get the tailored support and service they need to stay safe and well.

"Many staff, including our carers, social workers, foster families and firefighters, to name a few, continued to work at the height of the pandemic, facing exceptionally difficult conditions, delivering the same quality of care, compassion and professionalism, despite such uncertainty.

"I know I speak for every county councillor when I say we are exceptionally grateful to all our staff at this time."

He recognised that despite the challenges, the council has:

- Created new school places for children with special education needs, with 210 young people attending new, special units at schools in East Suffolk, West Suffolk and Ipswich.
- Made it possible for 98% of premises in Suffolk to access superfast broadband, with a plan for the remaining 2%.
- Maintained a stable budget, despite the increasing demand and cost of running public services.
- Agreed a new model for Family Hubs in Suffolk, releasing funding tied up in buildings to reinvest in more staff to help people.
- Fought for Suffolk's interests in the development of Sizewell C and other energy projects.
- Secured the funding and appointed a company to build the Gull Wing bridge in Lowestoft.

On the council's work to protect the environment and reduce carbon emissions, Councillor Hicks said:

"I am extremely pleased with the progress and momentum we have put into strengthening our environmental credentials this year, as part of our commitment towards addressing the climate emergency which we declared last March.

"I am also very pleased to confirm that the first three Suffolk 2020 projects have been launched to support local communities and focus on key environmental priorities. We are increasing the number of electric vehicle charging points offered across the county, with particular focus on rural areas. It is my hope that the, at least, 100 additional charging points will give Suffolk one of the best, if not the best, rural charging networks.

We are creating a series of 'quiet lanes', reducing the number of motorised vehicles using certain single track lanes, and have committed funding to plant at least 100,000 trees in the next 18 months, improve our maintenance of trees and hedgerows, and manage our roadside verges better for wildlife."

On the council's major programme to resurface a quarter of Suffolk's road network within four years, he said:

"In August this year, a fresh new road surface was laid in Eye as we accomplished our commitment to surface 1000 miles of Suffolk's road over a four-year period. A commitment we have delivered ahead of time."

On housing, he said:

"As the third largest landowner in Suffolk, the county council is in a prime position to support the growing local need for new housing and the supporting community infrastructure. I am really pleased that a great deal has been achieved during the last 18 months towards meeting my commitment to explore potential development opportunities and generate income for the county council.

"As an illustration of what's to come, we have now handed over the site at Chilton Woods near Sudbury to a commercial house builder to develop 1150 homes over the next 10 years, offering numerous community benefits including new school provision, new sports facilities and community woodland with children's play areas. We will invest the income from this site in a range of council services.

"Two further large schemes are currently being planned in North Lowestoft and West Mildenhall with consultations planned for later this year. These schemes will include over 2,000 new homes, with new schools and an array of supporting community facilities."

Building on work in the past 18 months, Councillor Hicks pledged to continue working collaboratively with district and borough councils, other public sector partners, businesses, and residents to find the best ways of delivering services to the people that need them most.

Ending his executive statement, Councillor Hicks said:

"My passion and my commitment remain as strong as ever. My approach is centred on the principles of listening, collaborating, being open and transparent, being supportive, and taking a pragmatic view when it comes to taking tough decisions."

[Read Councillor Matthew Hicks' speech in full \(PDF, 113KB\)](#)

[See the speech delivered on the recording of the October 2020 meeting of Suffolk County Council.](#) The full speech starts at 01:23:00.

Suffolk MP visits site at the A140 in Brome and is 'delighted' with the improvements

On 19 October, Member of Parliament for Central Suffolk and North Ipswich, Dr Dan Poulter, visited the junction improvement works at the A140 in Brome, near Eye Airfield.

The visit was hosted by Suffolk County Council and Interserve, the improvement scheme's contractor.

The works will improve journey time and road safety in the area and provide better access to the Eye Airfield Development Area. The improvements include:

- Two new roundabout junctions on the A140 Castleton Way and south of Rectory Road.
- A link road through to B1077 from the Northern roundabout.
- Restricted movements at the A140/B1077 junction: prohibit right turns in and out, improving journey times and safety
- Closure of the A140/Rectory Road junction.

- Landscaping and new pathways for walkers and cyclists.

Feasibility studies were carried out along the stretch of road by Suffolk County Council following concerns expressed by members of the public and local stakeholders about access to and from businesses based on the Industrial Park, with lengthy queues and delays entering and exiting the area.

The main access into the Industrial Park is via a busy junction and the flow of traffic is regularly slowed or halted by vehicles attempting to enter or leave the site, creating the risk of accidents and diminished road safety.

Dr Poulter has been working closely with Suffolk County Council and Interserve to monitor the progress of the of improvements to the A140.

There have been some delays to the original programme due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The project is now due to finish in early 2021.

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

"I would like to thank residents for their patience regarding these vital improvement works.

"There have been delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which have been unavoidable. We are trying to claw back some of the time we have lost, and we will keep the local community updated on the revised timescale.

"Once the improvement works are completed, the new road layout will unlock Eye Airfield for economic development. There will also be significant highway benefits, because access to the A140 will be safer and more efficient, resolving long standing safety and congestion issues."

Member of Parliament for Central Suffolk and North Ipswich, Dr Dan Poulter said:

"Works to improve the junction near Eye Airfield at the A140 in Brome are long overdue and I have been working closely with Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, and a number of businesses in the area to bring about the required change.

"For those businesses working in the road haulage or supply chain sector, scheduling is critical and delays such as those currently experienced are unhelpful at best, and potentially detrimental to the flow of business. The new improvements to this busy junction will help to greatly improve road safety and congestion issues for those living and working in the area, as well as greatly enhancing access to the Industrial Park and Eye Airfield Development Area.

"I am delighted to have helped secure vital Government funding for this project and to finally see the works underway."

To keep up to date with the project's latest developments visit the programme's dedicated website at <https://eyea140scheme.co.uk/>.

Changes submitted for Sizewell C project to cut HGV construction traffic

Significant changes have been put forward to the plans for the Sizewell C nuclear power station, to cut the number of lorries on Suffolk's roads and curb its impact on the environment.

EDF Energy has submitted 14 changes to the twin reactor project, with the full details released on 16 October. A 30-day public consultation will take place next month.

The main changes involve making more use of rail and sea to deliver construction materials for the massive project, with an increase in trains and alterations to the proposed beach landing facility.

EDF also plan to reduce the use of AONB land on the Sizewell estate by working closely with Sizewell A, which is being decommissioned, and by using existing land for critical buildings that need to be moved to allow construction to get under way.

In addition, EDF is proposing additional land for the creation of fen meadows to further increase the 'net gain' in biodiversity following completion of the project.

The changes are a response to feedback from Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council, as well as residents, MPs and other stakeholders.

The consultation on the changes will start on 16 November. The consultation will be operated in strict accordance with the pandemic guidelines. The next stage in the process is the public examination, which is unlikely to start until next year.

Suffolk County Council's Cabinet member for Environment and Public Protection, Richard Rout said: "Whilst I welcome the fact EDF Energy indicate they want to start listening to Suffolk's communities, at this point there remain a great number of concerns regarding their proposals for Sizewell C.

"I look forward to the start of this new 30-day period of public consultation from November 16, which will enable all concerned communities and this authority to fully understand every detail of what EDF Energy is prepared to change as part of any future submission for a new nuclear site.

"I am pleased they have taken our position seriously and have reflected that their current proposal needed much more work, particularly in terms of their proposed transport strategy. However, we remain deeply concerned by the proposed pylons at the main site and the impact of the proposals on our natural environment and AONB.

"I strongly encourage everyone who has a view on Sizewell C to take this opportunity to take part in EDF Energy's additional consultation and thoroughly review all aspects of the proposed changes to their development plan."

Other steps taken to improve the benefits from the project include an increase from 1,000 to 1,500 apprenticeships; the launch of Young Sizewell C to provide links through education into training and jobs with Sizewell C and other regional companies; a pathway for students leaving education now to start work on Hinkley Point C and then move to the Sizewell C project in an advanced role; and allocating an apprenticeship levy to enable local firms to take on apprentices in critical skills areas for the region.

Adopt East launches

14 October marked the launch of Adopt East, a regional adoption agency which has been established to recruit adopters across the East of England.

Adopt East will work across local authorities in Southend, Thurrock, Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Hertfordshire, Bedford and Luton to find families for children who are waiting to find their forever home. Adoptionplus, Barnardo's, and Adoption UK are also part of the partnership.

The Adopt East alliance will deliver the highest quality adoption service to children and families throughout the region by bringing together the expertise and skills of all its partners.

The scale of the organisation means that adopters will have access to a larger number of children waiting for adoption. This will help partners to match children with the right family for them, at the earliest opportunity.

Adopt East is committed to providing good quality adoption support services to support all families with their adoption journey.

Councillor Mary Evans, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills, said:

“In Suffolk we have been working hard to find loving and supportive families for children waiting for adoption. These children have not always had the best start in life and really do deserve to find their forever homes. The adoption process can seem daunting for families, but SCC have a wealth of experience and are there to support families every step of the way. Adopt East is great news for Suffolk as it will mean we can draw on expertise and skills from across the whole region to help us to find the right families for our children.”

To find out more about the Adopt East Alliance [visit the Adopt East website](#).

Councils ready with Test and Trace Support Payment for most vulnerable

Councils in Suffolk are helping administer a Government scheme to provide financial help to those on low incomes and benefits who must self-isolate.

Details about the Test and Trace Support Payments, and how to apply, can be found on District and Borough Council websites.

If you have been contacted by NHS Test and Trace and told to self-isolate, you are under a legal obligation to do so, and could be eligible for a £500 Test and Trace Support Payment.

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

- Told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace.
- Employed or self-employed.
- Cannot work from home and will lose income as a result.
- 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.

Applications are made for one person only and any further applications within the same household must be made by each individual. Payments are subject to tax but not National Insurance. People must make the application within 14 days of the last day of their NHS test and trace self-isolation period.

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

- NI number
- 8-digit test and trace ID number
- Recent bank statement, proof of self-employment, or wage slips.

If asked to do so by Test and Trace, you must self-isolate by law. Failure to do so will mean you are no longer eligible for the payment and steps will be made to recover the funds.

Please visit the [NHS Test and Trace](#) website for more details of the NHS Test and Trace self-isolation requirements for those:

- Testing [positive](#)
- Those who have been in [contact with someone](#) who has tested positive and now has been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace.

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

- Babergh District Council www.babergh.gov.uk
- East Suffolk Council www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk
- Ipswich Borough Council www.ipswich.gov.uk
- Mid Suffolk District Councils www.midsuffolk.gov.uk
- West Suffolk Council www.westsuffolk.gov.uk

Support to help businesses prevent spread of COVID-19

From 12 October, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), working with Suffolk councils, has been speaking to businesses to offer guidance and advice on how they can manage risk and protect workers, customers, and visitors from COVID-19.

All of Suffolk's district councils, working together as part of the Suffolk Resilience Forum's Safer Places Group, have agreed to work in partnership with the HSE to enable them to support thousands of businesses more quickly through a targeted approach.

Both the HSE and the councils are also working alongside local public health authorities to support the understanding of any patterns in confirmed coronavirus cases in the area.

David Collinson, the lead for the Safer Places Group said:

"We are talking to local businesses and inspecting sites in and around Suffolk to understand how they are managing risks in line with their specific business activity. Many will already have the correct measures in place, but equally others may welcome a bit more help to ensure they are doing all that they can to protect their staff, customers, visitors and ultimately their business.

"Becoming COVID-secure must be a priority for all businesses in Suffolk. It is a legal duty for businesses to protect their workers and others from harm and this includes taking reasonable steps to control the risk and protect people from coronavirus. This does require adjustments and we advise employers to work with their employees when implementing changes, to help increase confidence with workers, customers and the local community.

"All businesses are in scope for spot checks, which means businesses of any size, in any sector, can receive an unannounced check to ensure they are COVID-secure. By making sure that businesses have measures in place to manage the risks, we can benefit the health of the local community, as well as support the local and national UK economy."

The checks, which will be by telephone but with follow-up visits where required, will see the HSE give advice and guidance to manage risk and protect workers, customers, and visitors. Where some businesses are not managing this, action will be taken. This can range from the provision of specific advice, to issuing enforcement notices, to stopping certain work practices until they are made safe and, where businesses fail to comply, to prosecution.

For further information on how to manage the risk of coronavirus in different business sectors please read the Government guidance at www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19.

The Hold welcomes first visitors and opens inaugural exhibition

Monday 28 September saw the public able to access The Hold, Suffolk's flagship new heritage facility on Ipswich Waterfront.

This versatile new building will be the permanent home of the Suffolk Archives Ipswich branch and is shared with the University of Suffolk, who have dedicated teaching spaces within the building.

The creation of The Hold, and its associated countywide programme of events and activities, has been made possible thanks to a grant of £10.3m from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, and further funding support from other national organisations and local Suffolk heritage groups.

The public are currently able to access 'front of house' areas, including archive inspired displays, the café, shop, and toilets, including a new Changing Places facility.

First year History students were some of the first to try out the new facilities, with lectures and seminars beginning in the new facilities. The main area, known as 'The Street', as well as the café and shop, enjoyed a steady trickle of curious visitors and passers-by.

On 2 October, the long-awaited Exhibition Gallery also opened to visitors. The inaugural exhibition, *Global Events: Suffolk Stories*, examines how Suffolk has responded as a community to key global events over the past 100 years.

It focuses on the arrival of American service people during the 'Friendly Invasion' of World War Two, as well as the rising tensions and public messaging of the Cold War period, and the collective community response to the COVID-19 pandemic during 2020.

Through original archival documents, photos, music, and film, visitors will be able to explore the similarities and differences between these three global events and understand how Suffolk has changed as a result.

In order to manage numbers and ensure everyone's safety, all visitors are asked to reserve a time slot and purchase tickets in advance, via the exhibition section of the Suffolk Archives website: www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/exhibitions/global-events-suffolk-stories/.

Councillor Paul West, Portfolio Holder for Heritage, said:

"Although there is still some way to go before The Hold is fully ready, it is very exciting that the major milestone of public access has been reached. We hope people are excited to see how this major development has progressed, and we encourage visitors to take advantage of the building being open to come and see the progress so far.

"The archives service has been waiting a long time for the ability to display documents and artefacts in a way that is accessible to the wider public and we are very pleased to have our inaugural exhibition up and running so we can get this next crucial phase of our work under way."

Enabling public access to certain areas of the building is stage one of a gradual and phased approach to bringing The Hold fully into use, trialling public access and testing out the new COVID-19 requirements that have been put into place to ensure a safe and secure environment.

The move of the local studies and strongroom collections was delayed by the lockdown earlier this year - just two weeks into the Ipswich branch closure and the move preparations. Work is now under way once more but is likely to take until at least the end of this calendar year to complete the move.

It is expected that the official opening of The Hold will take place early next year once the building is fully completed, and all the archives have been moved into the strongrooms.

The public areas of The Hold are open from 9.30am - 4.30pm, Monday to Friday (café open from 8.30am), and 10am - 4pm on Saturday and Sunday.

Visitors are very welcome to discover the displays, enjoy a spot of lunch, browse the gift shop or, with booked tickets, explore the exhibition.