

Annual Report 2017/ 2018

Palgrave Parish Council

Councillor Jessica Fleming, Hartismere Division, Suffolk

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State of the County — Districts and Boroughs in Suffolk are taking steps toward joining together (and East Suffolk Council 'super-districts' was approved by Parliament last week) and a West Suffolk District is anticipated. The County Council is working with its partners to streamline functions and finance as the Government's current approach is to wean us from central support. The County has a new Chief Executive (Nichola Beach) starting on 21st May, and will form an administration with a new Leader (Mathew Hicks) at the Council Meeting of 24th May.

Budget — The Council continues to be fiscally solvent but is under increasing pressure as the revenue support grant reduces. Our contingency reserves are about E40m, however Adult Social Care and Young People's Services (not education) take about E370m of our total current E498m annual budget. We have raised general council tax this year by 2.99% for the 1st time in 7 years and adopted an Adult Social Care precept which will continue until 2020.

Highways - Suffolk Highways established regional customer service centres at Rougham, Halesworth and Ipswich during 2017. The web based reporting system is now in place for road and drainage issues. More money has been allocated to pothole repair programmes during 2018. As a reminder: Report a defect/ pothole <https://highwaysreporting.suffolk.gov.uk/>

To check on area roadworks - <https://roadworks.org/>

Local Traffic Management — The County Council has been working with the Parish Council, Primary School and local residents to reduce speeding and improve compliance in the village. A scheme to upgrade the junction at Priory and Lion Road has recently been approved, and we continue to seek ways to control traffic on the restricted Access Road. Denmark Hill has been white lined and this area will continue to be under review. I am grateful to the local Speed and Lorry Watch groups for their hard work on behalf of the community.

Home to School Transport — Consultation has recently closed about proposals to change the way Home to School Transport is supported in the County, the main changes would limit free transport to the nearest geographic school (rather than catchment) and remove subsidy for post-16 transport. The results of the consultation are under review, any changes would be decided upon this summer.

Local Transport - Commercial bus operators continue to reduce services as use and route viability decline. Community Transport can provide an alternative to commercial services. The Council sponsored Connecting Communities offers minibuses and in some areas community cars, please contact Bury St Edmunds Volunteer Centre on 01284 766126 to arrange transport, or to volunteer.

The Rickinghall-Botesdale Good Neighbour Scheme offers pre-arranged or door-to-door transport in this area such as shopping trips and to doctors' appointments, phone 01379-897109 to arrange.

Planning - Locally, the County Council advises and comments on District residential planning applications and Neighbourhood Plans. It is taking an active part in the developing Diss Area NP.

County determines applications relating to highways, most schools, and major infrastructure; it maintains traffic data and models flow and congestion. The Council has received Government support over the past year for The Orwell River Crossings in Ipswich (below) and the Lowestoft Third River Crossing; consent was granted for The Hold records repository in Ipswich; and partial funding is promised for 2 new roundabouts on the A140 near Eye.

SCC continues to participate in ongoing major projects, such as Sizewell C, the Eye Airfield Gas Fired Power Plant (likely to go ahead in 2019), and Scottish Renewables' offshore wind farms. Anglia Three (green) received planning approval in 2017 with construction expected to commence in 2022. Anglia One, Two and One — North are at various stages of planning and construction. These projects all demand major supporting infrastructure such as power cables and grid connections in East Suffolk, many areas of which are environmentally sensitive.

If you have comments on our priorities or any of this report please get in touch as I would like to hear your views. Thank you for your support and participation over the past year.